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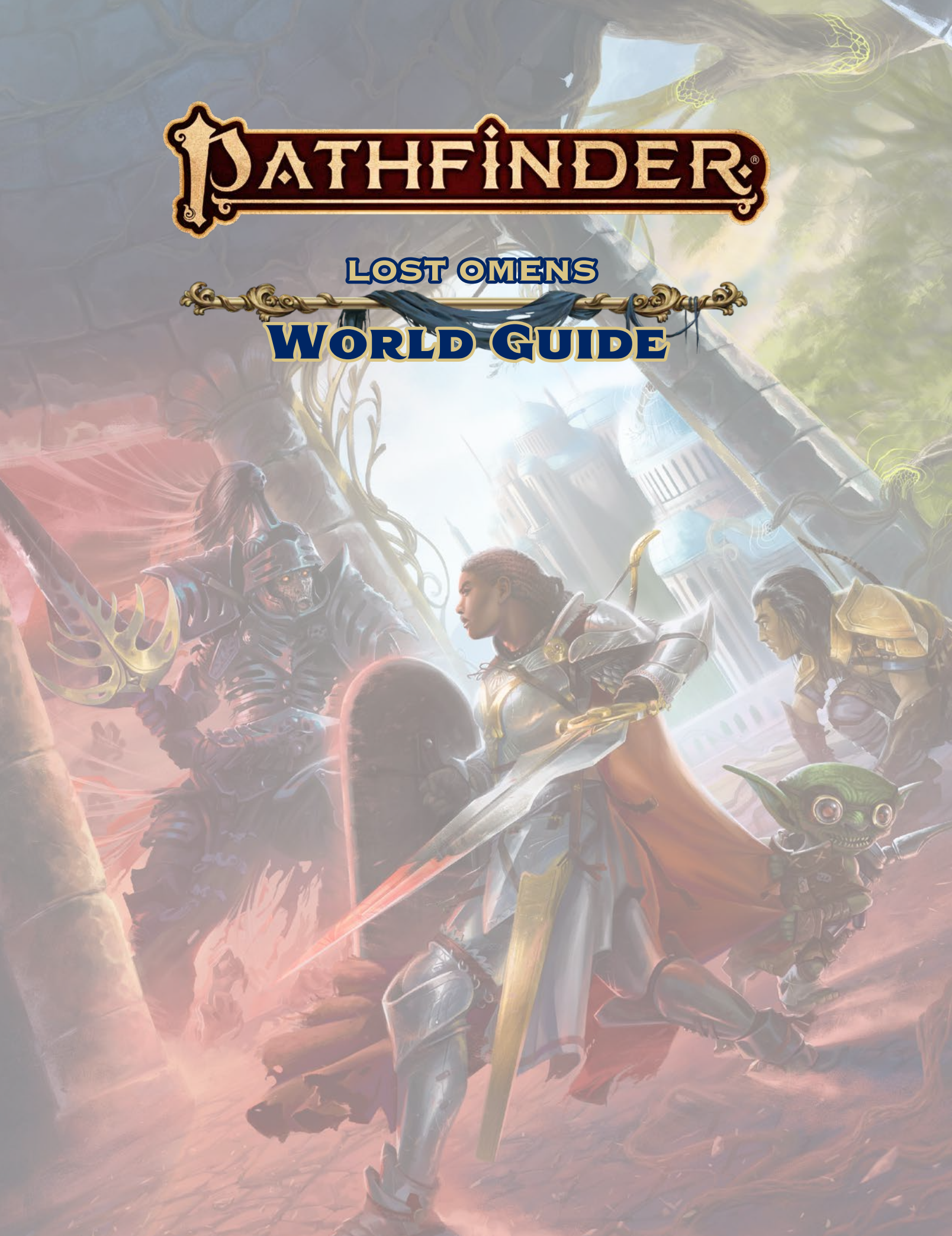
LOST OMENS

WORLD GUIDE

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WORLD GUIDE



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One of the oldest and most influential cities in Golarion, Absalom was founded by the living god Aroden and is home to the legendary Starstone Cathedral. Several mortals have traveled across the Inner Sea to Absalom and gained godhood from the Test of the *Starstone*, and countless aspirants line the streets of the city, hoping to become the next to ascend.

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Home to the mighty nation of Taldor, the homelands of the elves and the dwarves, the democratic bastion of Andoran, and the blood-soaked nation of Galt, the Shining Kingdoms are host to some of Golarion's oldest noble lines and finest knights, as well as centuries of deadly intrigue.

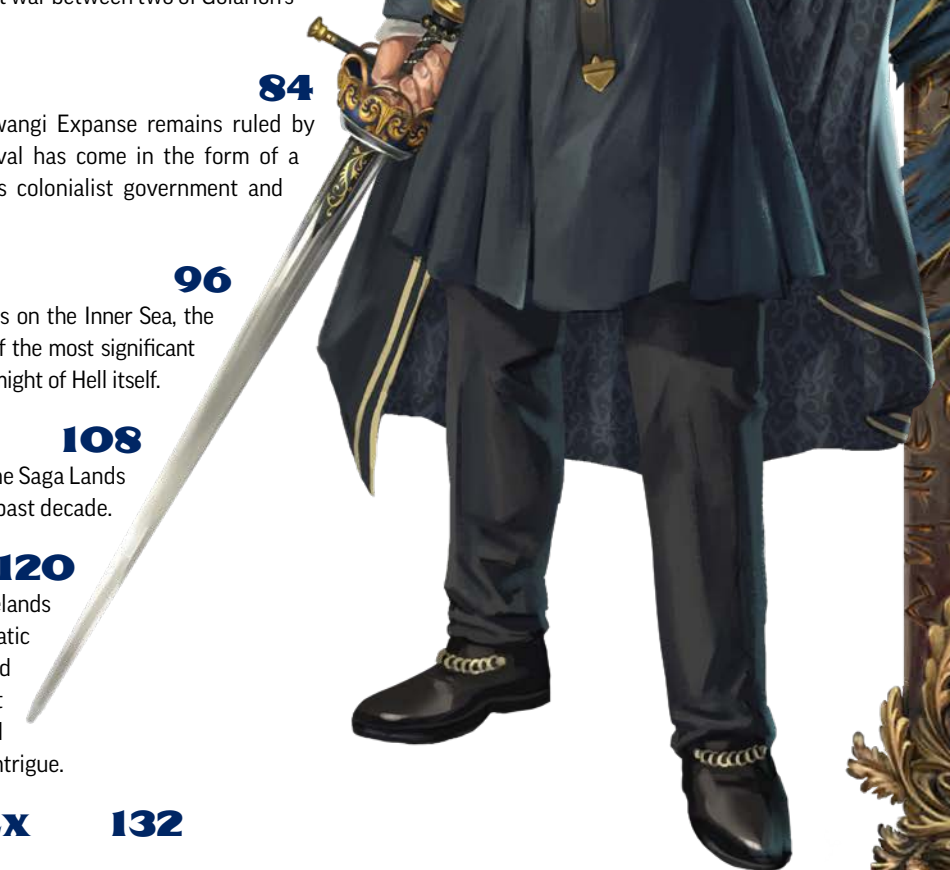
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GOLARION TIMELINE

The following is an incomplete summary of major events in Golarion's history, with a focus on those affecting the Inner Sea region. All dates are noted in Absalom Reckoning (AR), counting forward (or backward) from the founding of the titular city. Due to the relative lack of verifiable records, eras before the Age of Darkness are not covered. These include, in order, the Age of Creation, in which mortal life first appeared; the Age of Serpents, in which serpentfolk founded Golarion's first great empire; and the Age of Legend, in which the first human empires rose to power, most notably Azlant.

AGE OF DARKNESS

- 5293 AR The monstrous algholthius call down Earthfall to destroy their rebellious human servants. The meteorites' impacts form the Inner Sea, destroy the empires of Azlant and Thassilon, and kick off a thousand years of darkness. The elves leave Golarion via the Sovyrian Stone, or else retreat into the secluded corners of the world.
- 4987 AR The dwarves complete their Quest for Sky, emerging onto Golarion's surface for the first time, driving the orcs before them.

AGE OF ANGUISH

- 4202 AR Gnomes first arrive on the Material Plane, fleeing a mysterious and now forgotten calamity in the First World.
- 4120 AR The Jistka Imperium rises in northern Garund as the first human empire in the Inner Sea region since Earthfall.
- 3923 AR The Pit of Gormuz opens in Casmaron, setting the massive Spawn of Rovagug loose to rampage.
- 3502 AR Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors reintroduce wizardry to the Inner Sea for the first time since Earthfall.

OVERVIEW

Heroes aren't born, they're forged: forced by extraordinary circumstances to rise above and shaped by the world they inhabit.

This book is a guide to that world. In its pages, you'll learn about the heart of the Pathfinder setting, known as the Inner Sea region, from the towns and cities your heroes call home to the wild frontiers and monstrous lairs where they'll risk everything in search of fortune and glory. The information presented here provides players with a sense of the setting as a whole and is perfect for both fleshing out existing character concepts and inspiring you when you're not sure what to play. Is your wizard a necromancer from haunted Ustalav, raised to battle the undead armies of the Whispering Tyrant, or a young student at the Arcanamirium in Absalom, the City at the Center of the World? Perhaps you're a daring priest from the burning deserts of Qadira, blasting manticores and genies with the blazing light of the sun goddess Sarenrae, or a troll-hunting warrior from the icy Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Regardless, here you'll find the rich details you need to give your character the perfect backstory, as well as new backgrounds, gods, feats, spells, and other rules to help you customize your ideal hero.

Likewise, Game Masters will find a rich and exciting world filled with hundreds of inspiring characters, plots, and adventure locations to get their creativity flowing, as well as new gear and magical items to reward their band of adventurers. Will you take your group to the rugged land of Numeria in search of alien technology from a crashed spaceship? Might they fight devils in diabolical Cheliax, or instead ally with the denizens of Hell themselves to reforge a troubled empire? They could venture into the ancient pyramids of Osirion, where mummies guard magic from a lost age, or battle dragons in the fractious orc hold of Belkzen. Whether you want your party to face pirates or giants, elves or dwarves, vampires or sphinxes, there's no end to the threats and treasures lurking in the ruins of lost empires, in temples to forgotten gods—or just beyond their campfire's light.

The Inner Sea awaits. Are you ready?

THE WORLD OF GOLARION

While the multiverse is a big place, most Pathfinder adventures take place on Golarion: a planet of magic and mystery, where mortal heroes can ascend to godhood and terrifying monsters threaten entire civilizations. This book focuses on the Inner Sea region, the traditional heart of the Pathfinder campaign setting, which consists of the entire continent of Avistan and the northern third of the continent of Garund directly to the south. Yet Golarion is much larger than any one nation or continent, and adventurers from the Inner Sea may travel far and wide in pursuit of greatness. Below is a brief overview of Golarion's different major regions.

ARCADIA

Millennia ago, the mighty Razatlan Empire spread across this vast continent, gobbling up weaker nations and marking its victories with vast pyramids. When the devastation of a meteor impact shattered the Razatlani civilization, the nations that were reborn from the wreckage found themselves forced to cooperate with each other to survive. Arcadia's myriad cultures have remained surprisingly peaceful and insular ever since, focusing their energy on the wellbeing of their citizens. From the engineers in the Land of Northern Lakes, who craft clever machines from unusually abundant skymetal deposits, to the hero-gods of Xopatl and the distant south, Arcadia's peoples both embrace a settled lifestyle among their terraced mountaintops and bayou stilt-houses and expand westward across the vast plains of a still lightly populated region. Most Arcadians remain suspicious of foreign cultures that are inclined toward conquest. Eager colonists from Avistan are thus restricted to a narrow strip of shoreline along the Grinding Coast, cordoned there by the Segada Protocol, which allows only those few exceptional

individuals who have won the locals' trust to pass beyond the shielding mountains into the continent's interior.

AVISTAN

Settled by immigrants and refugees from all directions, this northern continent is a hodgepodge of cosmopolitan cultures. The southern shores of the Inner Sea hold urbanized political powerhouses vying for dominance: Hell-allied Cheliah, the crumbled and decadent empire of Taldor, and the upstart democracy Andoran. In the north, danger—and opportunity—waits for adventurers over every hill in orc-ruled Belkzen and the demon-ravaged landscape of the Sarkoris Scar. The north's established nations are only marginally safer, from the rugged wilderness of Varisia and witch-ruled Irrisen to the shadowed moors of gothic Ustalav and sadistic Nidal. Avistan also has the distinction of being the center of several nonhuman cultures in the Inner Sea region, as dwarves attempt to reforge their lost empire in the Five Kings Mountains and elves guard the reclaimed lands in forested Kyonin that have been their stronghold since their return to Golarion after the Age of Darkness.

CASMARON

Dominated by the landlocked Castrovin Sea, Casmaron is at once densely populated and eerily empty—its bustling empires are interspersed with the ghost-haunted wastes of lost civilizations. To the west, the Padishah Empire of Kelesh rules unquestioned through genie magic and deft politics, while the south belongs to the Impossible Kingdoms of Vudra and their mighty rajahs. Traders flock to the archipelago of Iblydos, where legends walk the streets under the tutelage of cyclopean sages, while xenophobic Kaladay bans foreigners from its fabulous cities. Countless caravans travel the trade routes between these nations, rolling through the nomad-controlled Grass Sea. Yet no matter how these empires spread their wings, they are constantly reminded of their own mortality by the ruins of those vast civilizations that came before—places like Iobaria, fallen in the wake of the plague known as the Choking Death, and great Ninshabur, razed to the ground by the Spawn of Rovagug, the monstrous offspring of the god of destruction.

CROWN OF THE WORLD

Frozen and forbidding, the Crown of the World stretches across Golarion's arctic circle, containing its polar ice cap—called the High Ice—as well as an outer ring of bleak mountains, evergreen forests, and stormy seas. Its primary human residents are the Erutaki, whose hundreds of different tribes live in scattered fishing villages or follow mammoths and caribou across the ice, while Ulfen and Tian enclaves dot the taiga called the Outer Ring, forgoing the comforts of southern nations for the freedom of the wildlands. They are joined by scattered settlements of snowcaster elves, dwarves, and frost giants, as well as more predatory residents like wendigos, dragons, and remorhazes. Yet the majority of the Crown consists of icy desolation, trackless wastes occasionally interrupted by strange ruins. The most famous of these ruins is the Nameless Spires, an alien city of star-shaped buildings and 2,000-foot-tall towers positioned at the North Pole, believed by some scholars to date back to the planet's formation. Despite the obvious danger it presents, the Crown of the World sees plenty of visitors due to the Path of Aganhei, the overland trade route connecting Avistan to Tian Xia. Every summer, caravans looking to avoid the dangerous and costly sea routes between the two continents race across the ice in a journey that can take several months.

THE DARKLANDS

Golarion's crust is riddled with cracks, and immense networks of tunnels and caverns connect every continent. It's from these deep places that the dwarves and orcs first emerged, yet few surface dwellers look upon these underground worlds fondly, for their lightless depths are home to predators both monstrous

AGE OF DESTINY

- 3470 AR Ancient Osirion is founded.
- 2323 AR Shory aeromancers establish Kho, their first flying city.
- 1281 AR Descendants of Azlant join with local humans to establish Taldor, Avistan's first human empire since Earthfall.
- 892 AR The wizard-ruled nations of Geb and Nex begin a centuries-long magical war.
- 632 AR The Tarrasque, greatest of the Spawn of Rovagug, devastates Avistan before being defeated and sealed away.

AGE OF ENTHRONEMENT

- 1 AR Aroden, the Last Azlanti, raises the Starstone and the Isle of Kortos from the depths of the Inner Sea, becoming a living god. Absalom is founded.
- 1893 AR Norgorber passes the Test of the Starstone and achieves godhood.
- 2632 AR The elves return to Golarion from their refuge in Sovyrian, reestablishing the nation of Kyonin.
- 2765 AR Cayden Cailean drunkenly survives the Test of the Starstone and ascends to godhood.
- 3203 AR Having already been killed once by Aroden, the wizard-king Tar-Baphon returns as the lich known as the Whispering Tyrant, uniting the orc hordes to terrorize Avistan.
- 3313 AR Witch-Queen Baba Yaga conquers part of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, founding the winter-locked realm of Irrisen.
- 3660 AR The Dragon Plague begins in Taldor, and magically controlled dragons rampage across the nation for a dozen years.
- 3754 AR Taldor launches the Shining Crusade, a 70-plus-year war against the Whispering Tyrant. The lich is eventually imprisoned in Gallowspire, though not before he murders Aroden's herald, the warrior goddess Arazni. The nation of

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Lastwall is established to keep him contained.

3832 AR Iomedae, hero of the Shining Crusade, passes the Test of the Starstone and becomes Aroden's new herald.

3980 AR The Rending. Droskar's Crag erupts, rocking southern Avistan.

4081 AR Cheliox breaks away from Taldor, taking with it Andoran, Galt, and Isger in a decade-long civil war dubbed the Even-Tongued Conquest. The new Chelish empire begins centuries of expansion.

4307 AR The Pathfinder Society is founded in Absalom.

AGE OF LOST OMENS

4606 AR Aroden dies mysteriously, leaving the Empire of Cheliox without a divine mandate. Iomedae takes on many of Aroden's followers and legacy, becoming known as the Inheritor. The Eye of Abendego forms off of Garund's western coast, drowning the nations of Lirgen and Yamasa. The Worldwound opens in northern Avistan; demons pour forth and destroy the nation of Sarkoris.

4622 AR The weakening Church of Aroden launches the First Mendevian Crusade, hoping to close the Worldwound.

4640 AR After decades of civil war, House Thrune allies itself with Hell to seize control of Cheliox, ushering in the current dark chapter in Chelish politics.

4667 AR Democratic fervor sweeps through eastern Avistan, prompting the endless Red Revolution in Galt, as well as the more successful People's Revolt in Andoran in 4669 AR.

4697 AR The Goblinblood Wars ravage Isger, drawing soldiers from across the Inner Sea region.

4709 AR Golarion learns of the existence of evil subterranean elves called drow.

4713 AR Mendev's Fifth Crusade finally defeats the demon lord Deskari

and refined. Scholars divide the Darklands into three layers. The uppermost—Nar-Voth—is the closest to a conventional cave system. Its tunnels are inhabited by isolated tribes of xulgaths, deros, duergar, calignis, and other surface creatures who descended into the dark for safety and found themselves twisted by isolation and dark energies. The middle section, Sekamina, once boasted a vast serpentfolk empire yet is now most notably inhabited by drow—elves who fled underground to avoid Earthfall and were transformed into sinister demon-worshippers by the leaking thoughts of Rovagug. The deepest level, Orv, is a series of impossibly large caverns, maintained since the beginning of the world by unknown and alien magic, each containing its own pockets of ecosystems. Orv's residents are feared and revered by the inhabitants of higher levels.

GARUND

A land of scorching deserts and impassable jungles, Garund's northern half is closely linked with Avistan due to the prosperous trade routes across the Inner Sea but is home to civilizations far older than most of those in its northern neighbor. In the sandy north, Osirian adventurers seek ancient secrets in their ancestors' pyramids, while Thuvians peddle elixirs of immortality and atheistic Rahadoumi refuse to bow to gods, even to gain their aid. To the east, the ancient magical kingdoms of Geb and Nex wage an endless war of subtle spells and undead soldiers, while the western coast is drowned by a massive hurricane called the Eye of Abendego, whose ravaging winds shelter pirates and assassins. In the distant south, dinosaur-riding lizardfolk share the land with the celestially appointed matriarchs of Holomog. In the middle of them all, the verdant jungles and savannas of the Mwangi Expanse house thousands of independent tribes, nations, and traditionalist coalitions.

RUINS OF AZLANT

Long ago in the Age of Legend, what most scholars believe to be one of humanity's first great empires arose on the continent of Azlant, having been guided by the alien knowledge and magic of the aquatic alghollthus. Over time, however, the Azlanti grew arrogant and defied their masters. In retribution, the alghollthus called down the cataclysmic event known as Earthfall. Its impact produced massive tidal waves that drowned the empire and sank much of the continent beneath the sea. Today, Azlant is an uncharted maze of shattered islands. Its ruins are inhabited by monsters, guarded by Mordant Spire elves—mysterious warriors who watch over the lost continent lest greedy fools inadvertently trigger a second apocalypse—and picked over by the few bold adventurers in search of ancient magic who manage to dodge their attention.

SARUSAN

The smallest and most mysterious of Golarion's continents lies south of Tian Xia's Valashmai peninsula, isolated from the outside world by vexing currents and powerful storms. According to legend, the continent was once connected to Tian Xia by a land bridge and inhabited by an empire called Taumata, before the gods shattered the bridge into the archipelago known today as the Wandering Isles. Yet while the archipelago remains inhabited by the nautical Tian-Sing people, whose appearance suggests descent from unknown Sarusan cultures, even their legends of the shrouded continent are scattered and fragmentary. In their songs and the records of lost empires, Sarusan is a wild and mysterious land where giant mammals long extinct on other continents still roam immense frozen deserts and dense woodlands. Those few modern expeditions that venture near the shores speak of forbidding cliffs lined with smooth monoliths, while those who land and venture into its interior invariably disappear. What's more, those sailors who do return home often mysteriously forget the details of their voyages shortly afterward, suggesting that the continent's isolation may not be completely natural.

TIAN XIA

Often dubbed “the Dragon Empires,” the myriad nations of Tian Xia are renowned for their close relationships with wise and ancient dragons who serve as rulers, advisors, and gods, from the Celestial Dragon who grants wishes to the leaders of Quain to the sovereign dragon who rules Xa Hoi in human form. Much of the continent belongs to the Successor States, those nations east of the Wall of Heaven mountain range that have risen to prominence since the fall of Imperial Lung Wa a century ago. In addition to those peoples commonly found in Avistan, these quarreling nations are populated by terrifying oni, crow-headed tengus, vulpine kitsune, reincarnated samsarans, and more. Farther east, the samurai of Minkai rub shoulders with kami in the Forest of Spirits, while to the south the serpentine nagas and their humanoid nagaji rule humid swamps at the edge of the Valashmai Jungle.

THE OCEANS

The Inner Sea is among the most heavily trafficked waterways on Golarion, and thus it's no coincidence that Absalom, the island nation at its heart, is often called the City at the Center of the World. Yet Golarion has many larger oceans, each teeming with its own unique dangers and treasures. In the Antarkos Ocean, brave sailors ride the freezing southern gales, dodging aquatic giants and deadly icebergs, while voyagers on the Embaral must contend with a becalmed, lifeless marine desert full of strange ruins and deadly doldrums. Flotillas of traders hug the coasts of the Obari Ocean, reaping huge profits from trade between Garund and Vudra by way of Ibydos, yet kept from faster blue-water routes by flame cyclones and marauding dragons. In the Arcadian Ocean, the magical ruins of ancient Azlant challenge sailors with strange currents, making an already pirate-plagued journey more fearsome, while sailors on the Okaiyo must contend with the empire of shark-loving sahuagins that rules the waters above the Sintos Trench. Only the truly foolhardy or depraved delve down to the Sightless Sea, the subterranean waterway that lies beneath the Arcadian Ocean and runs through the deepest layers of the Darklands.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Like most planets, Golarion is part of a solar system containing other worlds, many of which are inhabited. Closer to the sun are the machine-ruled world of Aballon and the steaming jungle world of Castrovel, home to the psychic lashuntas. Just past Golarion is Akiton, a desert world of fierce warriors and ancient secrets, followed by technologically advanced and tidally locked Verces. Next comes the Diaspora, an asteroid belt inhabited by angelic beings who fly on wings of light, and then follows dread Eox, ruled by undead spellcasters who were transformed by an ancient apocalypse that set fire to the planet's atmosphere. Skimming between all of these inner worlds is Triaxus the Wanderer, whose erratic orbit leads to seasons that last centuries, resulting in two alternating ecologies. Farther out, the gas giants Liavara and Bretheda host skies of sentient blimps and myriad moons full of fantastical terrestrial cultures, while the strange technology inside half-hollow Apostae's warren of corridors suggests the whole planet may once have been a starship fallen to an unknown disaster. Last comes Aucturn, also called the Stranger, a living world of horrifying magic whose unknowable thoughts and gibbering cultists reach out to enact dark designs on distant Golarion.

THE GREAT BEYOND

Golarion's universe—sometimes called the Material Plane—is only one part of the vast puzzle of reality. Other dimensions and planes of existence, known collectively

and performs a ritual to close the Worldwound.

- 4714 AR In Numeria, the artificial intelligence Casandalee ascends to godhood.
- 4715 AR Civil unrest in Cheliax leads to the secession of Ravounel. A similar uprising is crushed in Isger by Chelish agents.
- 4717 AR Absalom outlaws slavery, drastically reducing the Inner Sea's slave trade.
- 4718 AR The Runelords return from millennia of hiding, establishing the nation of New Thassilon in the region of Varisia.
- 4719 AR The current year. Tar-Baphon has recently broken free of his prison, destroying the nation of Lastwall and ravaging Avistan before finally being forced back onto the Isle of Terror.

TIME

Like Earth, Golarion spins on its axis once roughly every 24 hours. A week has 7 days and a year has 52 weeks. To keep the calendar synchronized with the astronomical year, an extra leap day is tacked on to the second month of the year every 4 years.

MONTHS AND DAYS

The names of the months of the year are as follows in the Inner Sea region:

Abadius (January)
Calistril (February)
Pharast (March)
Gozran (April)
Desnus (May)
Sarenith (June)
Erastus (July)
Arodus (August)
Rova (September)
Lamashan (October)
Neth (November)
Kuthona (December)

The names of the days are as follows:

Moonday (Monday)
Toilday (Tuesday)
Wealday (Wednesday)
Oathday (Thursday)
Fireday (Friday)
Starday (Saturday)
Sunday (Sunday)

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ACCESS TO RULES ELEMENTS

Sometimes, a stat block for an uncommon rules element might include a bold Access entry that lists specific criteria. A character who meets the criteria listed in the Access entry, often hailing from a particular locale or being a member of a particular organization, gains access to the rules element. For instance, a character from Taldor gains access to the Lion Blade archetype, even though it's uncommon.

ARCHETYPES

Applying the archetypes provided in this book requires you to select archetype feats instead of class feats. Once you have the archetype's dedication feat, you can select any feat from that archetype in place of a class feat as long as you meet its prerequisites. The archetype feat you select is still subject to any selection restrictions on the class feat it replaces.

Archetype feats you gain in place of a class feat are called archetype class feats.

Occasionally, an archetype feat works like a skill feat instead of a class feat.

These archetype feats have the skill trait, and you select them in place of a skill feat, otherwise following the same rules above. These are not archetype class feats (for instance, to determine the number of Hit Points you gain from the Fighter Resiliency archetype feat).

Each archetype's dedication feat represents a certain portion of your character's time and focus, so once you select a dedication feat for an archetype, you must satisfy its requirements before you can gain another dedication feat. Typically, you satisfy an archetype dedication feat by gaining a certain number of feats from the archetype's list. You cannot retrain a dedication feat as long as you have any other feats from that archetype.

Sometimes an archetype feat lets you gain another feat. You must always meet the prerequisites of the feat you gain in this way.

as the Great Beyond, are equally important to the daily life of Golarion's residents, both for the magic and monsters they birth, and for the Cycle of Souls that every mortal spirit must follow.

While it's difficult for mortal minds to grasp the true shape of the multiverse, it can be thought of as an immense fruit: the skin that holds in the rest of reality is the Outer Sphere, the Astral Plane is the flesh of the fruit, and all the other planes are formed around and atop each other in the middle like a seed. At the very center is the Positive Energy Plane, which creates soul energy that takes shape and wakes to consciousness as mortal beings on the Material Plane, only to die and flow outward in the River of Souls to an afterlife in the Outer Planes, where it's eventually reabsorbed to keep reality running.

Below are brief descriptions of the various major planes.

ASTRAL PLANE

This silvery void connects the Outer Sphere to all the other planes and is mostly empty save for the River of Souls, which carries mortal spirits to their afterlives in the Outer Sphere.

ELEMENTAL PLANES

These four realms are each devoted to an element—Air, Earth, Fire, and Water—and wrap around each other like the layers of an onion. They are the birthplaces of elementals, genies, and other such creatures.

ENERGY PLANES

Sometimes called Creation's Forge or the Cosmic Fire, the Positive Energy Plane is the blazing wellspring from which souls appear and begin their journey. Its twin, the Negative Energy Plane, is a devouring maw of entropy where only undead and other abominations can escape destruction.

ETHEREAL PLANE

This misty, ghostly realm binds all the planes of the Inner Sphere, allowing those within it to see or travel between the worlds.

FIRST WORLD

A "rough draft" of the Material Plane later painted over by the gods, this realm of unbridled nature and inconsistent physical laws lies just behind the mortal world and is the ancestral home of gnomes and fey.

MATERIAL PLANE

The Material Plane contains Golarion's universe alongside countless others, and is where most mortal beings live out their existences.

OUTER SPHERE

When most mortals speak of the afterlife, they're talking about the Outer Sphere—realms ruled by gods and populated by the transformed souls of the dead. Here the River of Souls ends in the Boneyard, where the goddess Pharasma judges each individual and assigns them to a realm according to their morality and beliefs. These souls eventually become outsiders, or fade into the very fabric of the planes themselves. The Outer Sphere contains everything from the righteous mountain of Heaven and the chattering rifts of the Abyss to the mechanized city of Axis, the mind-bending chaos of the Maelstrom, and more.

SHADOW PLANE

This dark and twisted reflection of the Material Plane doesn't follow the same laws of space and distance, making for a useful—albeit dangerous—means of magical travel.



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EYE OF DREAD

EYE OF ABENDEGO

STEAMING SEA

FEVER SEA

LAKE OF MISTS AND VEILS

LAKE ENCARTHAN

OBARI OCEAN

LANDS OF THE LINNORM KINGS

REALM OF THE MAMMOTH LANDS

SARKORIS-SCAR

MENDEV

BREVOY

NUMERIA

BELKZEN

USTALAV

KODAR MOUNTAINS

NEW THASSILON

VARISIA

RIVER KINGDOMS

RAZMIRAN

ISLE OF TERROR

MINDSPIN MOUNTAINS

NIRMATHAS

KYONIN

GALT

HERMEA

TANGLEBRIAR

NIDAL

MOLTHUNE

DRUMA

RAVOUNEL

MENADOR MOUNTAINS

ISGER

FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS

VERDURAN FOREST

CHELIAX

ANDORAN

TALDOR

ISLE OF KORTOS

THE INNER SEA

ARCADIAN OCEAN

RAHADOUM

THUVIA

QADIRA

OSIRION

BARRIER WALL

MEDIOGALTI ISLAND

KATAPESH

SODDEN LANDS

KIBWE

USARO

NEX

JALMERAY

SHACKLES

NANTAMBU

MANA WASTES

BLOODCOVE

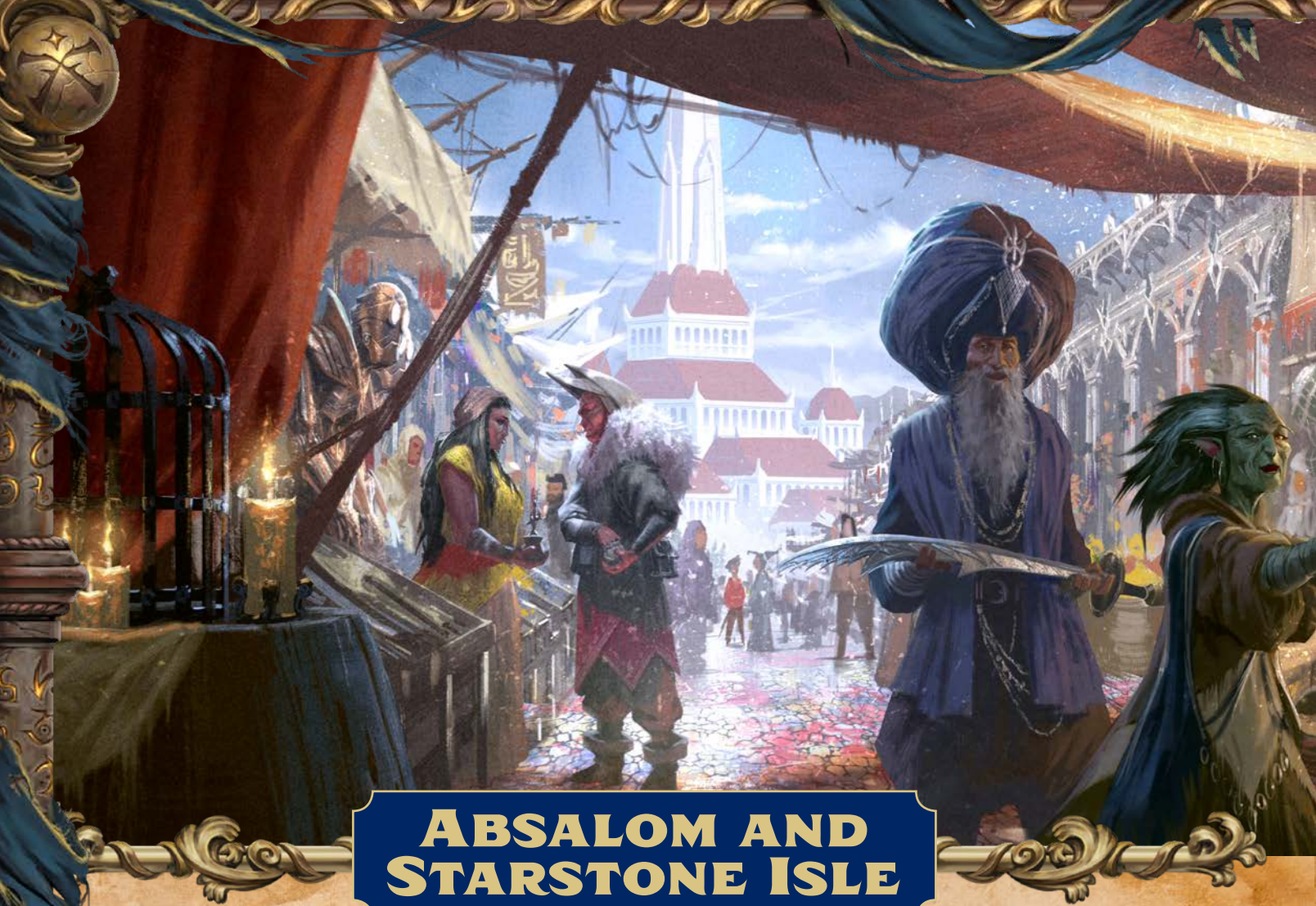
SHATTERED RANGE

GEB

SENGHOR

VIDRIAN

MZALI



ABSALOM AND STARSTONE ISLE

NATIONS



ABSALOM [N]
Grand Council
Capital: Absalom (303,900)

PEOPLES

All

LANGUAGES

All

FACTIONS



Firebrands



Knights of
Lastwall



Pathfinder
Society

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Irori



Cayden
Cailean



Norgorber



Iomedae



Shelyn

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Armor/
Weapons



Books/
Lore



Jewelry/
Gems



Lumber



Luxury Goods
and Art



Magic Items



Ores



Seafood



Ships



Skymetal



Textiles



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AND
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BROKEN
LANDS

EYE OF
DREAD

GOLDEN
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HIGH SEAS

IMPOSSIBLE
LANDS

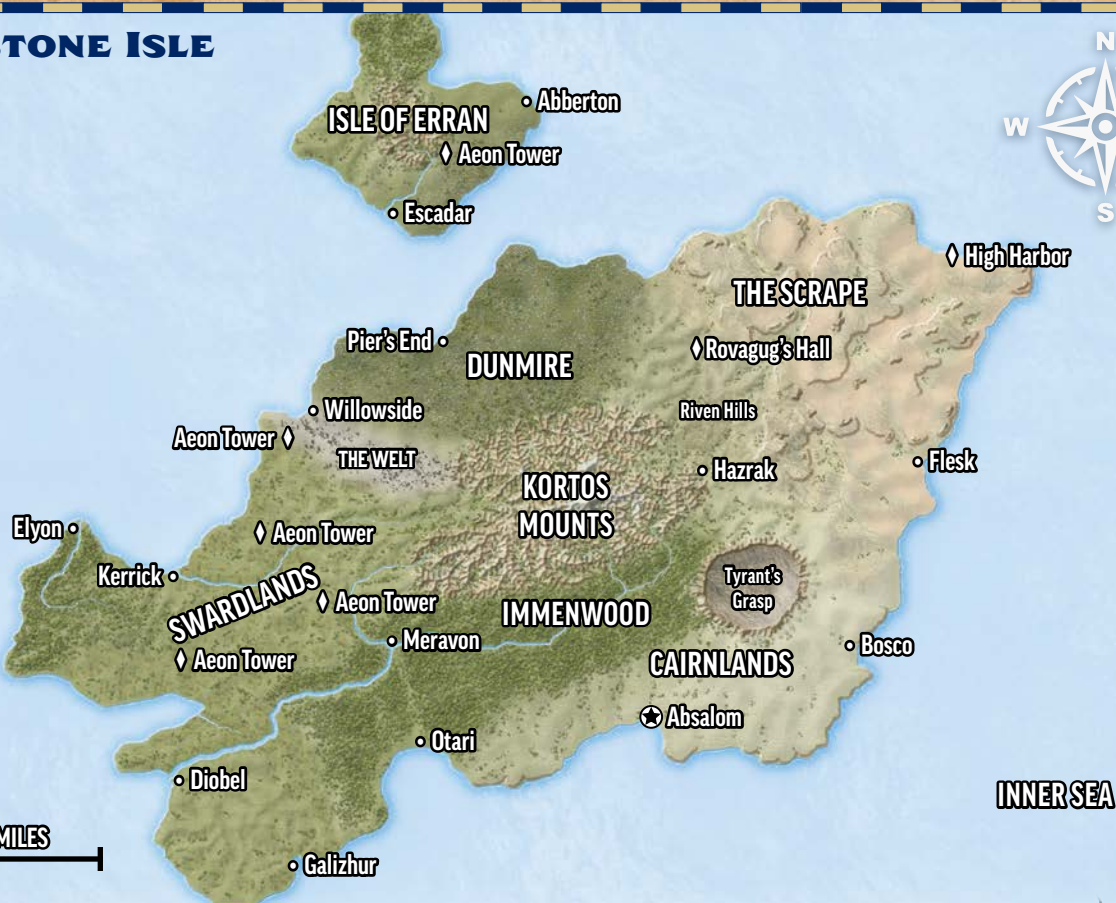
MWANGI
EXPANSE

OLD
CHELIAX

SAGA
LANDS

SHINING
KINGDOMS

STARSTONE ISLE



TIMELINE

- 1 AR Aroden raises the *Starstone* (and the Isle of Kortos itself) from the depths of the Inner Sea and becomes a living god. He founds Absalom as a new home for the thousands of faithful flocking to the newly risen island to honor the site of his apotheosis.
- 23 AR First Siege of Absalom. Voradni Voon attacks Absalom, mustering vast centaur armies across the island's eastern plateau to overwhelm the young city's defenses. With the sweep of his hand, Aroden sunders the plateau in a great upheaval, slaying Voon and trapping his minions in the hinterlands of Kortos.
- 166 AR The Archmage Nex unsuccessfully besieges Absalom, erecting the mile-tall Spire of Nex outside the city in what is now known as the Cairnlands.
- 430 AR The Pirate Siege of Absalom. After Aroden leaves Absalom to more fully embrace his divinity, villains from across the Inner Sea seek to take advantage of his absence by conducting a series of raids and naval blockades against the city. Absalom is forced to rely on foreign mercenaries to protect itself, which they do in exchange for grants of land and titles.
- 1298 AR The mysterious Prophet Kings attack Absalom in the Siege of Prophets. Starwatch Keep is built in response to the threat.
- 2850 AR The Conjured Siege. The Arclords of Nex attack Absalom, but are eventually turned away by the city's defenders.
- 3637 AR The Numerian "Machine Mage" Karamoss assaults Absalom in an attempt to claim the *Starstone* as an unparalleled power source. His metal automatons are defeated by the city's druids.

Thousands of years after Earthfall tore a rift across continents to form the Inner Sea, the legendary hero Aroden emerged from the darkness of history to claim his divine destiny. Using arcane power gathered over millennia, the last survivor of Old Azlant raised an otherworldly crystal, the heart of the weapon that slew his homeland, from the depths of the Inner Sea. Aroden's interaction with this alien gem, the *Starstone*, tested his character, and he emerged from the experience a living god. Immediately thereafter, he lifted the whole of the Isle of Kortos from the ocean depths and founded the settlement of Absalom at the site of his apotheosis to serve as the gathering point of his growing cult. He named the island Kortos—"Starstone" in the ancient Azlanti tongue. Nearly 5,000 years later, despite the death of the god who founded it, this settlement has grown to become one of the largest metropolises on Golarion, known to many as the City at the Center of the World.

Aroden declared himself the patron not just of the Azlanti, but of all humanity, and called mystics from all the human lands to gather in Absalom and share their secrets. Pilgrims came to Absalom from Osirion, Qadira, Taldor, and beyond to honor the city's mighty god-king, marvel at his seemingly impossible accomplishments, and strive to accomplish fantastic deeds of their own, many founding orders and institutions of esoteric learning that continue to the modern day.

The swiftly growing riches of Absalom—and the priceless jewel at its heart—drew more than just pilgrims in those early days. Lured by far-flung tales of Aroden's ascension via the *Starstone*, the minotaur warlord Voradni Voon, conqueror of central Casmaron, plotted to wrest the stone from humanity's god and take his own place among the deities. Voon constructed the massive Brazen Gate upon the great eastern plateau of Kortos, and through it marched his horde of minotaurs, harpies, and centaurs from the distant land of Iblydos to Kortos, and thence to Absalom. Voon's attack, later remembered as the First Siege of Absalom, reached all the way to the walls of Azlanti Keep before being turned back by Aroden himself. The Last Azlanti pushed Voon and his army back to the plateau, wracking it with a series of powerful earthquakes that shattered the Brazen Gate and scattered the minotaur's forces. Voon's assault was but the first, however; would-be conquerors have besieged Absalom more than 100 times in the 5 millennia since the First Siege. Yet the city has never fallen.

Not every would-be god came to Absalom with an army at their back. Over the years, at least three humans—Norgorber (1893 AR), Cayden Cailean (2765 AR), and Iomedae (3832 AR)—used more subtle means to gain access to the *Starstone* Cathedral and use it to ascend to godhood. Their followings, as well as those cults dedicated to countless hopefuls who weren't so successful, added to Absalom's growing religious communities, with new temples attempting to make converts among the city's assembled religious truthseekers and fanatics.

The Whispering Tyrant Tar-Baphon, an old foe of Aroden, is Absalom's most recent would-be conqueror, having launched a surprise attack on the city just 2 months ago in a bold assault that drew parallels to the initial siege of Voradni Voon. Adventuring heroes came to Absalom's defense, as they had so many times in the past, to defeat the lich-lord and send him back to the Isle of Terror. Absalomians are certain that the Tyrant will return again in the coming years with an even greater force of undead horrors, however. The only question is how many would-be conquerors will show up outside Absalom's walls between now and then.

ABSALOM

Absalom boasts some of the finest—and oldest—buildings and monuments on the Inner Sea. Over nearly 5 millennia, Absalom has been built, rebuilt, and rebuilt again, resulting in a tapestry of architectural styles as diverse as the countless citizens and visitors who throng its streets and markets. Nearly a dozen districts huddle within the city's walls, each as large or larger than the capitals of other nations,



ABSALOM

and each with numerous neighborhoods and intrigues tempting to both common residents and thrill-seeking adventurers alike. These districts include the following.

ASCENDANT COURT

Shortly after raising the Isle of Kortos, Aroden used his newfound divine power to erect the Starstone Cathedral, a bewildering, ever-changing series of trapped passages and confounding chambers meant to thwart anyone who might follow in his footsteps. The cathedral perches upon a lonely tor at the center of a seemingly bottomless chasm at the heart of Absalom. Enormous, ostentatious temples to the great gods of Golarion ring the chasm and the ancient neighborhoods stretching out from it, flanked by lesser churches and shrines dedicated to deities mighty and forgotten. The district's oldest temple of Aroden—the first of its kind in Absalom—is among the architectural triumphs of the Inner Sea. As perhaps the best symbol of the fall of Absalom's founding father, the earthquake-damaged edifice now serves as the Embassy of Cheliax.

AZLANTI KEEP

Aroden himself designed and erected this multitowered fortified keep, and the structure's traditional ancient Azlanti style has been widely imitated throughout Absalom and the Inner Sea region over the ages. The keep is the headquarters for the First Guard—Absalom's army that polices external threats. The keep's Grand Vault once served as a refuge for the city's entire populace in dire emergencies, as it did during the First Siege, but although the vault is immense, the city's population is now too great for all to shelter there. The vault also holds the huge tablets containing Aroden's First Laws of Absalom, the foundation of its civic government.

THE COINS

Much of Absalom's mercantile activity takes place in this sprawling hive of crowded streets and teeming markets. From dawn to dusk, hawkers tout their wares to

4137 AR Under the banner of the expansionist prince Haliad I, Cheliax unsuccessfully lays siege to Absalom for the first time, following up with three additional attempts in the next 3 centuries.

4307 AR The Pathfinder Society is founded in Absalom.

4606 AR Aroden dies, triggering the beginning of the Age of Lost Omens.

4717 AR The Fiendflesh Siege. Acting Siege Lord Wynsal Starborn orders the manumission of all slaves in Absalom willing to fight in defense of the city. Slave trading and slavery in Absalom is thereafter abolished by popular decree of the Grand Council.

4719 AR The current year. The same month that adventurers thwart the Whispering Tyrant's surprise attack on Absalom, Watcher-Lord Ulthun II of the fallen nation of Lastwall and his decimated retinue arrive to a heroes' welcome.

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MWANGI EXPANSE

OLD CHELIAX

SAGA LANDS

SHINING KINGDOMS

NOTABLE FIGURES

The following figures are important to Absalom and the Isle of Kortos.



SCION LORD AVID OF HOUSE ARNSEN, TERIARCH OF DIOBEL

Lord Avid hopes to use the disappearance of Lord Gyr of Gixx to find a way to get himself named Primarch in his stead.



WYNSAL STARBORN

The High Council named Wynsal Starborn, respected retired captain of the city's First Guard, Siege Lord of Absalom during the Fiendflesh Siege of 4717.



WATCHER-LORD ULTHUN II

Lastwall's final Watcher-Lord fled to Absalom only months ago. This Nidalese paladin lord remains hugely influential even in defeat.



THE DECEMVRATE

The masked ruling body of the famous explorers' organization known as the Pathfinder Society, this council is composed of 10 of the most experienced Pathfinders.

streetwise customers, haggling in a hundred languages amid bleating livestock, performing musicians, and the grind of wagon wheels on cobblestones. The city's largest market, the Grand Bazaar, is said to contain nearly any object a buyer could ever want, provided they take the considerable time to search through the plaza's hundreds of brightly flagged stalls and semipermanent shops to find it. By night, many of the district's seedier neighborhoods become havens of violent crime, as pickpockets and thieves from the Puddles and the Docks wander north in search of heavy purses.

One of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the Coins was once one of its most lucrative: an elevated stone platform known as Misery Row, the center of Absalom's now-outlawed slave trade. Today, the neighborhood is the center of a run-down slum avoided by the district's famously corrupt watch (known cynically as the Token Guard). The squalid chambers within the raised causeway, formerly known as the Slave Pits of Absalom, are today inhabited by some of the city's most desperate and depraved criminals.

THE DOCKS

Absalom's teeming waterfront is a district of taverns, flophouses, and warehouses echoing with sailors' chanteys, barking dockworkers, and the trundling of wagons carrying cargo through crowded streets. Hundreds of ships from all over Golarion dock in Absalom's harbor every day, and goods from scores of nations flow through the Docks to the city's markets. A maze of half-sunken ships called the Flotsam Graveyard guards Absalom's harbor from invasion by sea, as do detachments of the city's navy and hippocampus-mounted Wave Riders, who patrol the Bay of Kortos and the waters around the Starstone Isle from their base in Escadar.

EASTGATE

It sometimes takes 2 hours or more to get from Eastgate to districts on the far side of town, but most residents find the long commute a fair exchange for the relative safety of Eastgate's cozy neighborhoods. A few manor homes of minor nobles peek above the thatched roofs of this district, which houses many more workers and artisans than hobnobbing members of high society. The Low Azlanti enclave of Gilltown—the city's largest gathering of this ancient line of aquatic humans—is also found here, situated out of sight of major roads behind a row of inexpensive housing for the district watch, laborers, and clerks.

Eastgate's verdant Green Ridge neighborhood is home to the Grand Holt, the oldest and largest tree on the Isle of Kortos. This multi-trunked fig tree spans several city blocks, with buildings demolished or modified to account for its increasingly fecund growth (especially in the last decade). Even as blights like the Tyrant's Grasp and the Welt seem to rob Kortos of its vitality, the Grand Holt grows stronger year after year. A fanatic cult called the Circle of Stones cares for the tree, as well as for Iolanthe, the immortal dryad queen who dwells within. The Holt provides a refuge for nature-loving adventurers like druids and rangers, whom the cult hires to tackle all manner of adventures designed to further Iolanthe's influence in the city and Greater Kortos.

FOREIGN QUARTER

Absalom's Foreign Quarter boasts whole neighborhoods that take on the character of distant lands. Taverns, hostels, and inns crowd the streets nearest the district's largest thoroughfares, attracting those who come to Absalom by road or by sea to rest a while among cordial strangers chattering in a symphony of languages. Foremost among the district's attractions is the Irorium, an immense coliseum that hosts gladiatorial combats, mock sea-battles, religious festivals, historical pageants, and more. The largest open-air arena on the Inner Sea, the Irorium boasts multiple public battles each day, and its gladiators count themselves among the city's most influential celebrities. The imposing structure takes its name from Irori, and that deity's clergy administers an influential temple and fighting college in the arena's understructure that draws combatants from all over Golarion.

Not far from the arena is the Grand Lodge of Absalom, the worldwide headquarters for the Pathfinder Society adventurer's guild. Beyond a massive gate bearing the Glyph of the Open Road lie seven ancient fortresses, each with its own function related to the Society's worldwide affairs. Adventurers set out from the Grand Lodge on missions through Greater Kortos and far beyond, with all Pathfinder agents invited to return home to the Lodge every year for the order's Grand Convocation, a boisterous occasion for information-sharing and engaging in friendly competition.

ARCHAIC WAYFINDERS

Discovery of the ancient Azlanti *aeon stones*, and their subsequent reverse engineering to create *wayfinders*, counted among the first triumphs of the Pathfinder Society. Over the centuries, *wayfinders* have taken on a homogenous design, with the vast majority being virtually identical copies of one another, meticulously crafted to an exact formula by the Society's artificers. Things were not always so orthodox, however, and examples of archaic *wayfinders* can still be found at the bottom of forgotten pit traps and in the collections of wealthy Pathfinder agents across the city.

ARCHAIC WAYFINDER

ITEM 2

UNCOMMON EVOCATION MAGICAL

Price 30 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** –

Activate Cast a Spell

An *archaic wayfinder* functions as a compass and acts as a repository for one cantrip cast into it. To fill an *archaic wayfinder*, a spellcaster casts the chosen cantrip into the empty device, providing any necessary cost; the spell cannot be one that is normally cast as a free action or reaction. Activating an *archaic wayfinder* is the same as the casting for the relevant spell. Once it has been activated, it becomes empty again. An *archaic wayfinder* can hold an *aeon stone* and activate its resonant power. An *archaic wayfinder* counts against the limit of one wayfinder with a slotted resonant *aeon stone*.

IVY DISTRICT

Absalom's center of art and culture, the Ivy District boasts gorgeous manor houses, beautiful gardens, and equally alluring residents. Theaters, performance halls, and concert venues with worldwide reputations crowd the ivy-lined streets that give the district its name, as do dozens more with less savory standing. Performers and artists scrape by on the patronage of nobles, and bardic schools like the White Grotto train the next generation of performers. Perhaps due to its natural beauty, the Ivy District is particularly popular with elves and half-elves.

THE PETAL DISTRICT

The wealthiest district in all of Absalom looks down upon the city from its perch on Aroden's Hill. Brick-framed medians upon the district's broad avenues stand lush with colorful flora, giving the district its name. The richest noble families and the most powerful merchant lords and guildmasters keep manors in the Petal District, ever striving to outdo one another with the ostentation of their estates. The city's oldest academy of magical instruction, the College of Mysteries, is tucked among these wealthy mansions and caters largely to

ECONOMICS

International trade lies at the heart of Absalom's longevity and wealth, and remains fundamental to the realm's independence and political strength in the greater Inner Sea region. Lumber harvested in the Immenwood travels by the Deluge River to Diobel or by road to Otari, and from thence to markets across the Inner Sea. Diobelian pearls, harvested from the oyster beds of Diobel's shallow harbor, are considered among the finest available in the markets of the Inner Sea. Iron and other precious metals and stones mined on the island (especially by the dwarven mining enclave at Galizhur) feed Absalom's many craftworks, whose products are exported worldwide. Skymetals harvested from the Diobel Hills or discovered on the ocean floor and traded to the city by Low Azlanti are among the most sought-after treasures in the world.



STARSTONE CATHEDRAL

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THE SHADOW WAR

The web of control between the city's primarch, Grand Council, Low Council, and other powerful actors is a complex one that can be manipulated by tugging on the right strand. Absalom's factions and noble houses use their connections and sway to manipulate the workings of the city, from choosing who sits on the Low Council to the price of onions. This struggle for influence, known as the Shadow War, is something of an open secret, and those who know where to look can spot the political agenda behind seemingly pointless civil squabbles.



ARCANAMIRIUM ARCHDEAN DARCHANA

the youth of Absalom's nobility. The *irezoko*, the enigmatic full-face magical tattoos of the college's master students, are a badge of honor in the Petal District equal to the finest and most luxuriant of gowns designed by the city's master tailors.

PRECIPICE QUARTER

Twenty years ago, a terrible earthquake sheared the cliffside district of Beldrin's Bluff into the harbor below and collapsed many of the grand structures of what had been a carnival-like quarter of soaring pavilions, penny museums, cacophonous menageries, and stately manors situated around the three-towered demesne of the long-dead archmage Beldrin, a major figure of Absalom's early years. In the wake of the catastrophe, the Grand Council effectively abandoned the district, leaving it to become infested with monsters and criminals. Acting Primarch Wynsal Starborn, himself a retired captain of Absalom's First Guard, has rejected his predecessor's laissez-faire attitude toward the district, and for the past 3 years his office has sponsored expeditions aimed at reclaiming the quarter. The efforts have met with some success, but among the reclaimed greenhouses and galleries are cursed mausoleums, flooded schoolyards inhabited by undead children, and other horrors. The Precipice Quarter is on its way to redemption, but considerable dangerous work remains to see the job through.

THE PUDDLES

The slum district known as the Puddles has always been prone to flooding, but in the last decade things have grown increasingly desperate, with water now covering the majority of the district's streets to the height of a human's thighs or deeper. Those residents who refuse to flee (including no small number deliberately hiding out from Absalom's city watch) have taken to building makeshift bridges and ramps between the district's notoriously close-packed buildings, resulting in a vast and confounding network of skyways capable of delivering brave travelers with a strong sense of balance from one end of the district to another.

WESTGATE

This sleepy, largely safe residential district is home to mid-tier merchants, common shopkeepers, and up-and-coming citizens who can't yet afford more expensive accommodation in the upscale neighborhoods of the Petal or Ivy Districts. Businesses mix with townhouses and flats where the district abuts the Foreign Quarter, but Westgate gets more residential as one approaches the city wall, with smaller homes giving way to modest manors and stately villas.

THE WISE QUARTER

Absalom's reputation as a center of learning in Golarion dates back to its earliest days. Famed institutions like the Arcanamirium arcane school, Blakros Museum, and the great library of the Forae Logos contribute to Absalom's academic pedigree, drawing knowledge-hungry students from all over the world. The Wise Quarter holds these institutions and scores more, and its broad avenues throng with students and instructors alike. The district is also home to Absalom's civic government, including the ancient, monolithic meeting palace of the Grand Council and the honeycomb array of administrative buildings that serve its vast bureaucracy.

GREATER KORTOS

Absalom claims all of the Isle of Kortos as its domain, but several wild regions remain outside the city's direct control. From coast to coast, signs of the island's extreme antiquity are evident everywhere, from the overgrown fortresses of the Immenwood to the crumbling Aeon Towers of the Swardlands. Descriptions of several important Kortos locales follow.

CAIRNLANDS

The barren wasteland surrounding Absalom is littered with scores of siege castles—monuments to the failed invasions of 5 millennia whose near-forgotten chambers now are home to monsters, brigands, and the unquiet dead. The strongholds vary in size from the mile-tall Spire of Nex 10 miles north of the city to the tumbledown Pyramid of the Dog just outside the Puddles. Enticing rumors of undiscovered chambers and unclaimed treasures in siege castles just beyond the city walls beckon adventurers to explore their darkened depths.

DIOBEL

The so-called “Back Door to Absalom” squats upon a wide, wooden boardwalk at the end of a shallow harbor on the island’s southwest coast. Cargo-laden barges skim over rich oyster beds between the bustling trade town and the Trawl, a maze of steep stonework walls crusted with seaweed, barnacles, and small shellfish. All commercial traffic coming through the Trawl falls under the careful scrutiny of the Kortos Consortium, an association of guildmasters and merchant lords who control the island’s considerable mining, farming, trapping, fishing, and oyster-harvesting trades and administer Diobel’s many thriving markets. It’s an open secret that they also control a conduit for illicit goods smuggled into and out of Absalom by road without risking the scrutiny of the Harbor Guard. The Consortium’s corruption makes Diobel a hotbed of political intrigue against the high and mighty of Absalom, inspiring a chaotic atmosphere, and while the group keeps everything well regulated, there’s a sense that this arrangement could collapse at any moment.

DUNMIRE

North of the Kortos Mounts, the isle slopes toward the sea and the central lowlands sink into the Dunmire, a vast bog shrouded in thick fog that reaches a human’s knees. The miasma conceals all manner of filth and disease, and isolated enclaves of kobolds, lizardfolk, hags, and criminal outcasts huddle under its cover. The First Guard’s Eagle Garrison long ago ceded the Dunmire to wilderness, making it effectively outside the legal authority of Absalom. A squalid little village called Pier’s End sits upon a deep harbor on the coast, offering cheap ferries to Escadar for the rare cross-island traveler who manages to survive travel through the swamp.

THE IMMENWOOD

The vast, primordial woodland north of Absalom has provided lumber to the city and its vassals for almost as long as it has sheltered its enemies and outcasts. To the west, past the bustling town of Meravon—epicenter of the island’s logging trade—the magic of the Old Forest Aeon Tower once enriched the soil and bolstered regrowth. In the island’s earliest days, trees in the western Immenwood grew taller and faster than elsewhere on the island, and Kortos grew rich exporting wood to Qadira and the northern coast of Garund. The death of Aroden weakened the tower’s magic, however, and now the harvested trees replenish at the normal rate—perhaps even slower—and the lumber barons of the Kortos Consortium look to druids in hopes of restoring the forest to its previous glory. The central Immenwood is older and craggier than the outskirts, prone to tangled undergrowth, an intertwined canopy, and long shadows. The forest’s eastern reach

RELATIONS

Numerous factions vie for control over the Starstone Isle. Absalom itself claims the whole of Kortos and Erran as its political domain, but many of the islands’ wilder regions are effectively lawless wilderness. The Kortos Consortium of Diobel (technically a part of Absalom’s regional government) has generally good relations with the rugged Inlanders who dwell in the hills and deep forests of Kortos, as these hardy folk provide much of the labor behind the Consortium’s fur, farming, and lumber trades. Relations with the agents of Absalom proper—often in the form of altercations with the First Guard’s Eagle Garrison patrols—are a cause of some tension with the Inlanders, but the openly hostile threats posed by minotaurs, harpies, and centaurs are often a far more pressing concern.



CENTAUR

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AEON TOWERS

Aroden erected each of the four ancient mud-brick towers on the island's western plains, as well as an identical structure on the Isle of Erran, in the first decades of the island's settlement to house the *aeon orbs*, large crystal spheres that emit a nutritive radiation in a 15-mile radius. According to popular lore, Aroden liberated the orbs from a vast vault in the Darklands and brought them to Kortos to benefit humanity. For millennia they enhanced agriculture on Kortos, but Aroden's death over a century ago damaged the divine magic that had protected the towers and kept the *aeon orbs* safe, and now two of the towers no longer function as they were intended.

touches the Tyrant's Grasp, where blighted trees grow warped and twisted by the necromantic corruption left by Tar-Baphon's defeat, and the clearings are haunted by undead wretches and sinister cultists of the Whispering Way.

The Immenwood hides many ruins and lost settlements, along with several active fortresses. The wooded foothills of the Kortos Mounts hold mines, both active and inactive, almost all of which have inhabitants of one kind or another. Patrols of the First Guard's Eagle Garrison range the trails connecting the forest's settlements, which often fall prey to outlaws. The centaur tribes that dwell in the forest are more hospitable than their violent, xenophobic cousins of the Scrape, but they've suffered terribly at the hands of Absalom in recent years, and tensions remain high.

KORTOS MOUNTS


The soaring mountains of central Kortos loom large behind Absalom's skyline when viewed from the sea and are as identifiable to sailors and islanders as the Absalom Lighthouse, Eastgate's Blue Tower, and the Spire of Nex. Several large mountains, some capped with snow and ice, cut distinctive enough silhouettes against the sky as to take on cultural significance even to folk who never leave Absalom. Most notable are Mount Ganog, Arazlant Mox, and the Weeping Grandfather, each of which has its own legends, tavern songs, and folklore. Twisting crevices and sharp ridges make travel through the region a treacherous proposition, to say nothing of the vicious harpies who roost in secluded defiles and crude villages at the tree line's edge, or the drakes, wyverns, and dragons who lurk nearer the rocky peaks.

THE SCRAPE

When Voradni Voon's Brazen Arch thrummed to life as a magical portal at the center of the isle's eastern plateau, the warlord called his armies from a continent away, and a seemingly infinite horde of minotaurs, harpies, and centaurs burst onto the Isle of Kortos. The plateau thundered with the hooves of 10,000 centaurs, whole tribes surging in vast interlocking circles to unleash a terrible earthquake upon Absalom, just as they had brought upheaval to so many of the ancient cities of Casmaron. Aroden reversed their seismic magic back upon them, killing Voradni Voon and shattering the Brazen Arch into a dozen jagged fragments. Countless centaurs toppled into deep rifts as the landscape cracked and seethed in violent destruction. After the rending of the Brazen Arch, the devastated eastern plateau became known as the Scrape. Most of the surviving minotaurs fled into the Riven Hills, where they harry Absalom and its allies to this day from their settlement at Hazrak. Voon's feral harpies, the last to give up the fight, fled to the highlands of the Kortos Mounts, and they have grown no more hospitable over the centuries.

SWARDLANDS

Kortos owes its great bounty not just to the fertile fields of its western reaches, but also to the enormous Aeon Towers and their *aeon orbs* that have magically sustained its flora since antiquity. Unknown parties stole the *aeon orb* near Willowside a decade ago, leaving its tower a crumbling cenotaph incapable of holding back a strange environmental devastation known as the Welt, which grows from the western edge of the Dunmire by a mile each year. The Old Forest Tower near the lumber town of Meravon once ensured the health and regrowth of the western Immenwood, but its powers grow weaker and weaker each season. The other three Aeon Towers still function for now, but their caretakers look on uneasily and wonder how long they—and the famous agricultural prosperity of Kortos—can endure.



AEON TOWER

TYRANT'S GRASP

The site of the Whispering Tyrant's defeat is a blasted wasteland of necromantic corruption stretching nearly 15 miles across the plains, forest, and hills northeast of the Spire of Nex. The lich seemingly perished in a tremendous blast of magical energy that wrenched the undead lord's right hand from its bony wrist, and the skeletal hand remains there still, unwilling to loosen its grip upon the Isle of Kortos. Cultists of the Whispering Way flock to the tainted land, seeing it as the most likely beachhead for their lord's inevitable return to claim his hand and the *Starstone*. The First Guard has annihilated three attempted settlements by these dark devotees, but their numbers seem to be growing. Undead creatures—always a potential menace in the Cairnlands—are notably more numerous within this region.

Undead within the Tyrant's Grasp gain the ability to sense living creatures as an imprecise sense with a range of 30 feet. They also gain resistance to positive energy equal to their level.

THE ISLE OF ERRAN

From the earliest days, the Isle of Erran was a place set apart from the domain of mortals, kept sacrosanct as a personal refuge for Aroden and his most trusted devotees. It's said that Erran holds more secrets than all volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* combined, as the isle's northern forests contain hundreds of tombs and monoliths unrelated to Aroden or his religion. Absalom's navy frequently uncovers these ruins as they cut down sections of the forests to obtain lumber for ship construction, and they often hire adventurers to explore their strange discoveries.

ESCADAR

In ancient times, Escadar was the site of an important Arodenite monastery called St. Sarnax, the training academy and esoteric library of the Knights of the Aeon Star, an order of holy sword-mages who accompanied Aroden in the uncertain days before his ascension. Although the island's northern reaches remained reserved for Aroden's exclusive personal use for centuries after his last appearance in Absalom, St. Sarnax and its small port community remained open to Aroden's clergy, with many visiting to consult ancient Azlanti manuscripts not recorded in Absalom's Forae Logos library. Only three elderly Knights of the Aeon Star remain today to maintain St. Sarnax, but the white marble monastery still shines as brightly on the southern shores of Escadar as it did in Aroden's day.

Five centuries ago, Absalom fortified the harbor at St. Sarnax as headquarters for the city's mighty navy, naming the expanded settlement Escadar after a hero of the Pirate Siege. Scores of warships crowd Escadar's harbor, from which they set out on regular missions escorting merchant ships, hunting pirates, or patrolling the nearby seaways. When in port, sailors mix in Escadar's numerous barracks, saloons, gambling dens, and drug parlors. Escadar also features the House of the Cresting Wave, an embassy of the Low Azlanti, who dredge treasures from the sea to hock in the city's modest public markets.



ARODEN: LEGACY OF A DEAD GOD

While the church of Aroden no longer functions as a religious order, the church of Aroden as a political institution still lives on a century after its god's apparent death. With nearly 5,000 years of dominance in Absalom's civic and religious affairs, the presence of the Last Azlanti and his clergy is felt everywhere in Absalom, from the Founding Laws Aroden inscribed upon giant stone tablets to create the city's government to structures like Azlanti Keep that are said to have been constructed according to his specific design.



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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Absalom region.

CHILD OF THE PUDDLES

BACKGROUND

You grew up in the soggy, squalid quarter of Absalom known as the Puddles. You're at home in tightly packed urban environments.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Acrobatics skill and the Absalom Lore skill. You gain the Steady Balance skill feat.

DIABEL PEARL DIVER

BACKGROUND

You spent a portion of your youth diving and gathering precious pearls under the attentive eyes of Kortos Consortium merchants.



Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Dexterity, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Ocean Lore skill. You gain the Underwater Marauder skill feat.

FREED SLAVE OF ABSALOM

BACKGROUND

As a recently freed slave in Absalom, you belong to a new, close-knit social class at the heart of the city's most important trades.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Absalom Lore skill. You gain the Streetwise skill feat.

GRAND COUNCIL BUREAUCRAT

BACKGROUND

You spent years working as a clerk to a functionary in Absalom's government. Your service taught you a thing or two about rousing speeches and manipulating the city's bureaucracy.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Government Lore skill. You gain the Group Impression skill feat.

INLANDER

BACKGROUND

You grew up in an untamed region of the Isle of Kortos, and you know how to survive in the wild.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and a Lore skill related to the terrain type associated with your home region (such as Hills Lore or Mountains Lore). You gain the Survey Wildlife skill feat.

MENAGERIE DUNG SWEEPER

BACKGROUND

Whether you washed warrior beasts below the Irorium's arena floor or tended to the mutated animals of a Puddle sideshow, you are experienced with all manner of weird wildlife.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Nature skill and the Animal Lore skill. You gain the Train Animal skill feat.

PATHFINDER HOPEFUL

BACKGROUND

You've long wanted to join the adventurous Pathfinder Society. You have taken up the dangerous life of an adventurer in hopes of earning a spot among the Pathfinders.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Pathfinder Society Lore skill. You gain the Additional Lore skill feat.

TRADE CONSORTIUM UNDERLING

BACKGROUND

Your experience as a ledger-keeper for one of Absalom's trade guilds has made you a canny investor and shrewd entrepreneur.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Business Lore skill. You gain the Experienced Professional skill feat.

PATHFINDER AGENT

You're a field agent of the globe-trotting Pathfinder Society, sworn to report, explore, and cooperate. You explore the world, gathering artifacts and antiquities, and record your adventures for posterity.

PATHFINDER AGENT DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Pathfinder Society; **Access** You are from Absalom.

Your Pathfinder training has broadened your horizons and made you more flexible at various skills, since you never know when you might need an obscure skill to complete your mission. You become trained in one skill of your choice, or expert in a skill of your choice in which you were trained. You also become trained in Pathfinder Lore, or an expert if you were already trained. When using a skill untrained, your proficiency bonus is equal to your level instead of 0. You gain access to *wayfinders* (Core Rulebook page 617).

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Pathfinder agent archetype.

CAREFUL EXPLORER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pathfinder Agent Dedication

You've explored enough dusty tombs and hidden vaults to gain a sixth sense about traps, and you sometimes notice them even when you're not trying to. Even if you aren't Searching in exploration mode, you get a check to find traps that normally require you to Search for them. You still need to meet any other requirements to find the trap.

DEFT COOPERATION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pathfinder Agent Dedication

When you set things up to help your allies, you also gain some of the fruits of your labors. When you successfully Aid an attack roll or AC, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls or AC against that enemy until the end of your next turn, whichever you granted to your ally. When you successfully Aid a skill check, if you attempt the exact same skill check (not just using the same skill, but using it for the same purpose, for instance a check to Climb the same wall) on your next turn, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your skill check.

THOROUGH REPORTS

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Pathfinder Agent Dedication

Your reports are thorough and informative, and putting your thoughts to paper helps you retain the information. Keep track of each type of creature you successfully identify with Recall Knowledge. When attempting Recall Knowledge checks against creatures on your list in later encounters, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus, and you learn an additional fact about such creatures on a success.

WAYFINDER RESONANCE TINKERER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pathfinder Agent Dedication

You can use the unusual resonance of your *wayfinder* to grant it additional effects. Choose one cantrip from the arcane, divine, occult, or primal list. You can activate your *wayfinder* to cast that cantrip at will. Additionally, you can Activate your *wayfinder* with a ♦ (envision) activation to transform it into a nondescript pin or brooch to hide your affiliation with the Pathfinder Society. This transformation lasts for 1 hour.



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NATIONS



BREVOY [CN]
Hereditary Monarchy
Capital: New Stetven (32,850)



MENDEV [LG]
Monarchy
Capital: Nerosyan (64,700)



NUMERIA [CN]
Barbaric Monarchy
Capital: Starfall (32,400)



RAZMIRAN [LE]
Theocratic Dictatorship
Capital: Thronestep (17,340)



RIVER KINGDOMS [CN]
Multiple Monarchies
Capital: None



SARKORIS SCAR [CE]
Anarchy
Capital: None

PEOPLES

Dwarven
Kellid
Taldan

LANGUAGES

Abyssal
Common
Draconic
Hallit
Skald
Varisian

FACTIONS



Firebrands



Pathfinder
Society



Razmir

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Gorum



Cayden
Cailean



Iomedae



Desna



Lamashtu

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Armor/
Weapons



Cheese



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



Jewelry/
Gems



Livestock/
Hides



Mercenaries



Skymetal



Technology



Textiles



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TIMELINE

Circa

- 4363 AR Before the Age of Anguish, the Kellid people of Numeria witness the Rain of Stars.
- 4499 AR Choral the Conqueror unites Issia and Rostland as the newly founded kingdom of Brevoiy.
- 4606 AR The Worldwound opens in Sarkoris. Demons pour forth from the rip in reality and quickly consume the entire nation, leaving only ruin.
- 4622 AR The First Mendevian Crusade begins.
- 4638 AR The city of Drezen falls to the demon horde, signaling the first crusade's defeat. In response, the Second Mendevian Crusade is called and establishes the *wardstones* as a mystical defense that tenuously contains the Worldwound's blight.
- 4661 AR Razmir, the Living God, declares himself in the River Kingdoms and swiftly conquers several smaller holds, uniting them as the new realm of Razmiran.
- 4665 AR The Third Mendevian Crusade is called, but soon sinks into factional infighting and persecution of indigenous Kellid and Sarkorian animist faiths.
- 4692 AR The Fourth Mendevian Crusade is called in response to the rise of the balor Khorramzadeh. The Order of Heralds reins in the purges of the Third Crusade.
- 4699 AR The royal House Rogarvia vanishes from Brevoiy, and the city of Skywatch is mysteriously sealed. Later that year, House Surtova claims Brevoiy's crown.
- 4707 AR The Fourth Crusade ends in a stalemate between demons and crusaders, with the demons forced into retreat but the forces of Mendev too exhausted to fight further.
- 4716 AR Numeria's Technic League shatters following the unexplained death of its leader. Rumors begin

Scarcity defines the Broken Lands. The terrain is mostly nonarable, the cities small and scattered, the people hard and fiercely self-sufficient. Survival is a constant battle that leaves little time for less pressing concerns. Countries in this region lack the prestigious artistic, academic, and cultural institutions that the empires to the south enjoy, but they also lack the extreme inequality and social rigidity that can hobble advancement in those lands. Here, a person's fate is in their own hands, and destiny is for the bold to forge.

Both natural climate and historical disasters have shaped these nations. The rocky, wind-scoured hills of northern Brevoiy and the mosquito-infested swamps of the River Kingdoms are impossible to cultivate, while the irradiated wastelands of Numeria and the demon-haunted Sarkoris Scar are even less hospitable. Arable farmland in the region is limited to southern Brevoiy, parts of the Sellen River basin scattered across Razmiran and the River Kingdoms, and tiny pockets in Mendev and Numeria. As a realm's stability depends on keeping its people fed, the breadbaskets of Rostland take on outsize importance in Brevoiy, and Razmiran's fertile farmland is a major reason its masked god's rule goes unchallenged.

The region's history has unfurled against, and continues to be guided by, this backdrop of scarcity. Centuries ago, an immense starship fell from the night sky and shattered across Numeria in the Rain of Stars, seeding its land with untold wonders and dangers. In a more developed realm, those mysteries might have been dissected and cataloged long ago, but because Numeria was and is a sparsely populated land of superstitious folk, those star-fallen relics have remained largely unexplored to this day.

When the Worldwound erupted in the north and spewed demons onto Golarion, the Abyssal armies scythed through thinly settled Sarkoris without meaningful resistance. Fiends consumed that entire realm before the crusaders of neighboring Mendev, aided by soldiers from across the Inner Sea, were able to stem the tide. For decades, southern nations sent soldiers and supplies northward to bolster the crusade's defenses, but when the Worldwound closed and new threats arose closer to home, those nations pulled their support away. Now, though the gravest danger has been sealed off, countless demons and their corruptions remain scattered across the Sarkoris Scar and the battlegrounds of Mendev, and few stand ready to face them.

Wild, perilous, and largely uncharted, the Broken Lands are filled with dangers and mysteries both ancient and modern. Civilization is a fragile thing here, and in the vastness of the woods and lakes and windswept tundra, spirits and stranger things rule.

BREVOY

Two hundred and twenty years ago, Choral the Conqueror swept into the rival kingdoms of Issia and Rostland, welding the former foes into the single nation of Brevoiy with sword and dragon flame. Choral founded the royal House Rogarvia, and his descendants ruled the new nation for 200 years. Yet the old enmities between Issia and Rostland, which had been held in check only by force, never healed. When Choral reapportioned his new kingdom among the seven great families of Brevoiy, he changed their titles and leadership but largely kept the boundaries of their holdings intact. Thus the legal and cultural borders between Issia and Rostland survived, and when every member of House Rogarvia vanished in a single night without a trace, Brevoiy's noble families swiftly fell back into their feuds. Today, 20 years after the Vanishing, Brevoiy remains on the brink of civil war despite diplomats' heroic efforts to mend the country's fractures.

The closing of the Worldwound has increased trade along the Lake of Mists and Veils, and resettlement of formerly demon-plagued lands has driven up Mendev's demand for Brevoiy's hardy livestock and seed grain. Meanwhile, Tar-Baphon's ascent over Lake Encarthan has shifted much southern trade to the Sellen River, which originates in Brevoiy. Yet while the rich farmlands of Rostland produce most of the nation's goods, Issia's sailors control shipping and pocket most of the profits.



NUMERIA

Rostlanders, who have long believed their labor is exploited by the sly, clever-tongued Issians—who are, after all, outright pirates before they were conquered by Choral—grow increasingly frustrated by this perceived unfairness. Issia’s merchant princes argue that they supply the ships and negotiate the trade agreements that bring wealth to all, and if they can’t invest adequately in their shipping fleets, they risk losing trade to foreign rivals. Meanwhile, commoners’ discontent and complaints about their taxes being “stolen” by Issia echoes ever-louder in their lords’ halls.

A potential marriage alliance between reigning House Surtova and wealthy House Lebeda, which might have closed the fissure between Rostland and Issia, came to an abrupt halt when Natala Surtova, sister to the king, accused Lord Lander Lebeda of treason. The young lord vanished in response, leaving the would-be bride Elanna Lebeda to return home in solidarity against the inevitable aggression from the reigning house of Brevoiy. As Lander had been plagued with rumors of revolutionary sentiments since his youth, many nobles in Brevoiy consider this to be simply one more way the lord has embarrassed his house, but the details of his supposed treason are muddled and contradictory. House Orlovsky in particular is adamant that the accusations are foul play on the part of the Surtovas, and the strain between the two houses, already pushed to the breaking point, has boiled over past the point of reason.

Adding to these tensions, the end of the Mendevian Crusade left many soldiers idle. Some of the less reputable soldiers came to Brevoiy, joining the great houses as mercenaries or studying under Aldori swordlords. These ex-crusaders tend to be a volatile lot, scarred by demon-haunted pasts and unfazed by casual violence, and contribute to a darkening national mood.

Finally, the recent unsealing of the walled city of Skywatch has unnerved many. Built around a mysterious ancient observatory, the city ended all communications with the outside world on the same day that the Rogarvias disappeared. Months ago, without fanfare, the city gates opened and the strange magic that had cloaked Skywatch against divination vanished, although no one knows how or why. Stranger still, though their well-maintained homes and clean-swept streets indicate that

circulating of a new goddess rising from Silver Mount.

4718 AR A small band of heroes slays the demon lord Deskari and seals the Worldwound, bringing the Fifth Mendevian Crusade to a glorious victory. Many exhausted and traumatized veterans leave soon after.

4718 AR Efforts to reclaim the Sarkoris Scar begin in earnest, but it soon becomes apparent that the cities lost to the Worldwound are too corrupted to salvage. Storasta, Undarin, and Iz are razed after heavy fighting.

4718 AR Hopes for a lasting peace in Brevoiy are dashed when the head of House Lebeda is accused of treason, interrupting a potential marriage alliance between House Lebeda and reigning House Surtova.

4719 AR The Whispering Tyrant breaks free. Most of the remaining holy champions in Mendev ride south to confront the lich, leaving Nerosyan under the rule of Chancellor Irahai.

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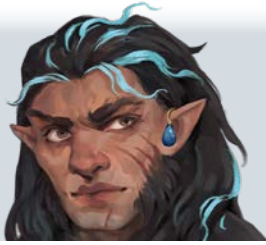
OLD CHELIAX

SAGA LANDS

SHINING KINGDOMS

NOTABLE FIGURES

The following figures are important to the Broken Lands.



KHISMAR CROOKCHAR

Khismar stayed in Starfall after most of his colleagues in the Technic League fled, intending to stamp out his League rivals and assert his control over Numeria.



CHANCELLOR IRAHAI

Appointed by Queen Galfrey to oversee Mendev, Chancellor Irahai is a tall, calm-voiced woman of Thuvian extraction whose parents were crusaders.



KEVOTH-KUL

Once a warlord ruled by ambition, then an addict ruled by his appetites, the Black Sovereign of Numeria is slowly shaking free of his advisors and addictions.



NATALA SURTOVA

The sister of King Noleski of Brevoy and de facto queen of the nation, Natala Surtova exerts arguably more influence over local politics than the actual ruler.

Skywatch's inhabitants continued their everyday lives until quite recently, no living person remains within the walls. They were not alone there, however—curious footprints suggest that something left the city when its gates opened.

ALDORI DUELING SWORD

The legendary Brevic swordsman Sirian Aldori achieved great renown for his unmatched skill at swordplay. The students he accepted—whom he required to swear an oath dedicating their lives to his secret techniques—became the Aldori swordlords. The specialized Aldori dueling sword stands above all other weapons in the eyes of the Aldori swordlords, and only those with a swordlord's elite training are able to wield one effectively.

ALDORI DUELING SWORD

ITEM 1

UNCOMMON FINESSE VERSATILE (P)

Price 20 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

An Aldori dueling sword is a slim, single-bladed dueling sword with a slight curve and a sharp, reinforced point. It deals 1d8 slashing damage. An aldori dueling sword is an advanced one-handed melee weapon in the sword weapon group.

THE LAKE OF MISTS AND VEILS

The enormous freshwater lake that borders Brevoy, Numeria, Mendev, and Iobaria takes its name from the dense fog that steams from its surface each winter morning, burning off slowly throughout the day. Lesser clouds drift across its waves year-round, and some say that veils of fog sometimes swirl even below the water. In winter, the lake spawns storms that hammer northern Brevoy with hail and snow.

Pirates, fishers, and traders ply the lake's waters, and soothsayers purport to read omens in its mists. Yet those who spend the most time on the Lake of Mists and Veils claim to know it least, for they alone have glimpsed the mysteries within its waves.

One such wonder is the Jundlan Wrecks, a frost-rimed tangle of broken ships and ancient, half-frozen corpses in Jellicoe Bay—the floating legacy of a massive naval battle between the long-dead pirate lords of Issia. Malevolent fey are said to haunt the storm-crushed wreckage, building altars and eldritch palaces from the dead pirates' treasure. On moonless nights, ghostly bells sound the midnight hour, and gangplanks of frost-bound human bone unfurl from the desolate ships, inviting anyone and no one to a destination unknown.

Another mystery lies north of Chesed, beyond the shore's sight, where a still patch of water lies undisturbed by wind or wave. Deep under the surface, the dim outline of some enormous hulk can just be glimpsed, its opaque black surface untouched by silt or water weeds. Twice in living memory, the mysterious structure has belched up great bubbles of sweet-smelling gas. Both incidents resulted in massive fish kills and caused violent hallucinations among ships' crews exposed to the gas. Some victims died, others developed strange new abilities, and a few simply had their consciousness destroyed, becoming senseless husks ever after.

MENDEV

For well over a century, the defining fact of life in the crusader kingdom of Mendev was the Worldwound: a reality-warping Abyssal rift west of the realm that threatened to consume all of Golarion. Heroes from across Avistan and beyond answered the call to meet the demonic horde. As the years rolled into decades, however, and the hope of victory grew ever fainter, the once-bright crusade began to tarnish. Infiltrated by fiendish agents sowing treachery and paranoia, the crusade's inquisitors turned their tools against indigenous Mendevians, whose animist religions seemed suspect to the crusaders. On the front lines, the steady

toll of battle forced commanders to accept recruits who were more often than not criminals and exiles driven by desperation rather than conviction.

Then, just when it seemed that all might be lost, a miracle occurred: a small band of brave souls discovered and carried out a ritual to seal the Worldwound, slaying the demon lord Deskari and ending the existential threat that had defined Mendev for decades. Seemingly overnight, the demonic host collapsed into disarray, Queen Galfrey's army swept forward, and the Fifth Mendevian Crusade declared victory.

Now Mendev faces the long, hard task of rebuilding a nation that has almost forgotten who it was before the war. Queen Galfrey stepped forward to become Iomedae's new herald, and most of her holy knights have departed, with many marching south to face the resurgent threat of Tar-Baphon—although a few have instead chosen to square themselves against evils such as the nascent demon lord Treerazer in Kyonin's Tanglebriar. In their absence, the fledgling civilian government is hard-pressed to meet the nation's needs. Chancellor Irahai, appointed by the queen before her abdication, is a wise and clever governor, but hobbled by the widespread belief that her authority holds less weight in comparison to her predecessor.

Political divisions that were suppressed under martial law—such as between native Mendevians, who have long been pushed to the margins in their own land, and the foreigners who held authority during the crusade—have risen in peacetime. The end of the crusade has also meant an end to the money and labor that outside faiths and nations sent north to stave off the demonic threat, leaving Mendev with only its own war-depleted resources to draw upon.

In addition to these difficulties, Mendev still contends with supernatural menaces. The sealing of the Worldwound did not eliminate the demons already on Golarion, and Mendev remains crucial as a staging ground for holy champions who have pledged to fight until the last fiend has been driven out. The frost-antlered shades of the Estrovian Forest and the cursed ruins of Icerift Castle, ignored during the war, remain threats as well.

Yet this cold and perilous land holds wonder, too. Mendev's immense forests, white-crowned mountains, and snow-swept steppes are starkly beautiful. Scattered among them are the bones and dreams of dead generations, some who tried to tame an unyielding land and some who sought escape from the horrors of a seemingly endless war. All of them, and all their treasures, have vanished under snow and trees—but not all are forgotten. Today, Kellids from the tribes of lost Sarkoris are returning to reclaim their devastated homeland. Some crusaders, hoping to atone for the cruelties inflicted by overzealous fanatics in the past, have sworn to help them. Knowing this, the surviving demons have taken to hiding their own soul-poisoning magics as relics of indigenous Sarkorian faith, as most outlanders cannot distinguish true relics from false ones.

NUMERIA

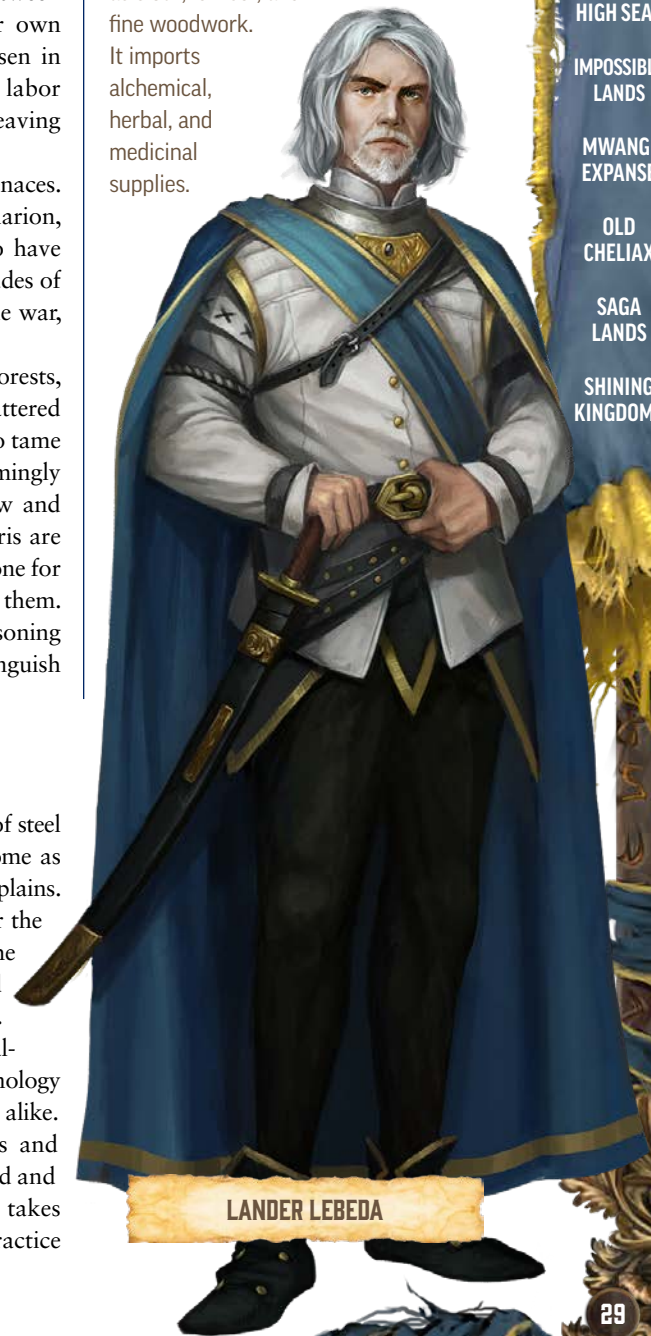
Toward the end of the Age of Darkness, a great fireball with a smoking heart of steel broke apart in the night skies above Numeria, shattering into fragments—some as small as fists, others large as cities—that buried themselves across the rocky plains. These strange relics from another world beyond the stars have shaped life for the grim, survivalist tribes of Numeria ever since. Invisible emanations mutate the native animal and plant life into warped forms; horrors slumbering in cold chambers meant to voyage between the stars sometimes awaken and escape. Vast swaths of Numeria are cratered, irradiated wastelands populated by metal-clawed monsters with eyes of burning light. But skymetal and fragments of technology are powerful resources, and the lure of such wealth draws the brave and foolish alike.

The native people of Numeria are hard-bitten Kellids, mostly hunters and herders with a dark, superstitious worldview shaped by their unforgiving land and its star-flung hazards. The fiercest warlord in each generation traditionally takes the title of the Black Sovereign and claims rulership of Numeria, but in practice

ECONOMICS

Brevoy is one of the major exporters of food in the region. Rostland produces timber, grain, fruit, vegetables, and livestock, while Issia produces dried and salted fish, pickled clams, and freshwater pearls. Imports include finished goods, cloth, spices, and books. Mendev must import nearly everything necessary for survival. Numeria exports skymetal, smuggled technology fragments, and the hides and teeth of the strange animals that roam its wastes, as well as live, captured specimens. Its main imports are food, alcohol, and jewelry. Razmiran is another major exporter of food, as well as cloth, lumber, and fine woodwork.

It imports alchemical, herbal, and medicinal supplies.



LANDER LEBEDA

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CASANDALEE

The Iron Goddess began her existence as an android, falling to Golarion during the Rain of Stars. After living among the organic lifeforms of this world for millennia, she became a digital intelligence, then ascended to divinity in the heart of Silver Mount. As a goddess, Casandalee seeks both to advance the development of artificial intelligences and establish harmony between artificial and organic life-forms. Her faith is newly founded and little known outside Numeria.

most tribes have their own leaders and pay little heed to a far-off sovereign, believing only peasants and soft city folk bow their heads to such claims.

This is particularly true for the current Black Sovereign, a once-mighty warrior named Kevoth-Kul, who conquered the city of Starfall in his youth. Some believed Kevoth-Kul would lead Numeria to glory on a red tide of conquest. Instead, he succumbed to the influence of the Technic League, a cabal of secretive arcanists and researchers obsessed with unlocking the secrets of Numerian technology. The Technic League plied Kevoth-Kul with the mind-altering fluids that seeped from the walls of Silver Mount, the vast and unimaginably complex edifice of alien technology half-buried in the earth outside Starfall. Soon the Black Sovereign was hopelessly addicted to these fluids, and lapsed into erratic, moody indolence.

Recently, however, the Captain of the Technic League died under closely concealed circumstances. Brave souls whisper tales of a strange new goddess arising from the core of Silver Mount following the captain's demise, but the truth of these rumors is unknown. What is certain is that the Technic League fell into squabbling, murderous disarray within weeks. The survivors largely fled Starfall, and the Black Sovereign, freed from their control, has begun to break fitfully free from his addiction. Many fear that if he regains his senses, Kevoth-Kul will resume his campaign of conquest across Numeria. Since most Numerians have grown accustomed to semi-independence and no longer trust their tyrannical, unstable ruler, this is not a welcome prospect.

The alternative, however, may be worse. While the Black Sovereign remained lost in his decades-long haze of intoxication, other warlords began claiming their own territories in Numeria. The collapse of the Technic League has greatly increased these warlords' power, as many former League members sought positions as advisors, and those new allies brought along their arsenals of stolen technology. Now, the warlords and their Technic League advisors are locked in an all-out arms race, each one vying to hoard the most powerful technology. While this has ensured that Numerian technology remains jealously guarded within the nation and does not reach neighboring lands, it also raises the risk that Numeria's civil war, if it comes, will prove devastating.

RAZMIRAN

The oppressive theocracy of Razmiran, ruled by the masked priests of a masked god, has long been viewed with wariness by its neighbors. A young nation, Razmiran was carved out of the neighboring River Kingdoms only a little over 50 years ago. Yet unlike most of the short-lived countries that rise and fall in that tumultuous region, Razmiran seems grimly stable—for it, unlike the kingdoms claimed by mere mortal lords, is ruled by a living god.

Few have seen the living god, but Razmir's presence in his kingdom is inescapable. His masked priests maintain tight control over society, acting as enforcers more than spiritual guides. Their distinctive temples, which are always centered around a massive set of stone steps leading up to a gold or silver mask, stand in every village and market square. These steps represent the 31 steps Razmir is said to have undertaken to pass the Test of the *Starstone* and attain divinity, and they are a recurring motif in both theocratic rhetoric and the physical layout of Razmiran's public spaces.

SILVER MOUNT

At present, Razmir's people take some solace in the constant reminders that they are personally protected by a deity. Soon after Tar-Baphon's resurgence and the destruction of Lastwall, Razmiran signaled that it would not oppose the Whispering Tyrant so long as the lich did not disturb the living god or his domain. This bargain appears to have been satisfactory to both parties, and thus Razmiran, alone among the nations bordering Lake Encarthan, appears poised to remain neutral in the coming conflict between Tar-Baphon and the other regional powers.

Yet there are hints that this peace has been purchased at a ghastlier price than the priests acknowledge. Rumors persist that Razmiran is "donating" its dead to the Whispering Tyrant's armies in exchange for safety from the undead horde. These claims remain unconfirmed, in part because taboos concerning the uncleanness of the dead are so strong in Razmiran that bodies are seldom viewed by family before being consigned to communal mausoleums, and in part because many of the dead are said to come from the massive prison mines of the Forgotten Track, where the condemned have disappeared quietly for years. Those who repeat these rumors often wonder, however, what might happen when Razmiran—never an overly populous country—runs out of corpses.

Perhaps even more troubling are the cautious whispers from those near the clergy that Razmir himself has begun to act erratically, becoming oddly withdrawn from his priests. With the Whispering Tyrant a terrifying new threat in the region, this lapse in Razmir's attentions—and perhaps his protection—frightens his faithful. As of yet, however, this fear remains relatively unknown outside the most secretive circles in the capital city of Thronestep and the remote, sacred fortress of First Step.

So far, everyday life in Razmiran has not drastically changed. The poor remain grindingly downtrodden, taxed nearly to starvation, while Razmir's clergy feast and indulge in every vice. In the wild Exalted Wood and the bustling crossroads town of Pilgrimage, outlaws and apostates dream of breaking the masked god's rule. That realizing these dreams may prove far more dangerous thanks to Tar-Baphon's rise does not dissuade them, for those crushed by tyranny are rarely able to see farther than the boot on their necks.

THE RIVER KINGDOMS

Scattered among the forests and marshes of the Sellen River basin are the River Kingdoms: a loose confederation of tiny, independent states, the largest of them holding only a few thousand souls. Hundreds of such kingdoms have risen and fallen over the centuries, for treachery and chaos are rife in this region, and few River Kingdoms outlive their founders. Within just the past few years, for instance, the kingdom of Pitax fell after an overambitious attempt to extend its borders, while a new kingdom arose out of the former Stolen Lands bordering Brevoy.

The lawless reputation of the River Kingdoms draws outcasts, refugees, and anyone else so desperate to escape their pasts that carving out a new life in a rough frontier town seems like an attractive proposition. Such settlers rarely have much money, and as the skills developed in their homelands are often ill suited to hardscrabble lives in the river basin, they generally find it difficult to rebuild their fortunes. The region is further depressed by the River Kingdoms' instability, which deters trade, investment, and even travel. Thus, most of the River Kingdoms are poor, isolated, and backward—but stubbornly, proudly free.

Some of the current River Kingdoms include the following.

RAZMIR

Born mortal, the masked wizard Razmir claims to have ascended to godhood by passing the Test of the *Starstone* in distant Absalom. He founded his faith in the River Kingdoms, rapidly conquering the Arch-Duchy of Melcat and smaller kingdoms through intimidation and mass destruction. Now his grip on Razmiran is complete, and his agents continually seek to expand his theocracy by undermining neighboring lands.

The clergy holds all power in Razmiran. Promotion is won less by acts of faith than by seizing territory. Most often, this is achieved by establishing a temple in an impoverished, desperate community outside the nation, and pushing grateful new converts to clamor for annexation.



RAZMIRAN PRIEST

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HUZURIS

The tribes of old Sarkoris were famed for their mystical witch-wardens, their painted warriors, and the idols they called huzuris. Each huzuri began with the bleached skull of an animal significant to that tribe, either because it represented their totem spirit or because that individual beast shaped the tribe's history. A fall-fattened bear who appeared before hunters on the brink of starvation and a loyal war dog who saved a clan chief in battle might equally become honored huzuris after death. Once consecrated by the tribe's oldest witch, the huzuri became integral to the tribe's ancestor-based magic, and was often believed to be the repository in which the spirit of the tribe itself lived. Each successive witch and chief, upon attaining that title, pressed a fingertip soaked in their own blood to the bare skull. That crimson fingerprint stored its maker's memories, and so the collective history of the tribe was recorded in spirit-magic, blood, and bone. If a tribe's huzuri was ever lost or destroyed, the ancient Sarkorians believed that the tribe's soul was lost as well.

DAGGERMARK

The largest and most stable of the River Kingdoms, Daggermark is renowned for its sister guilds of assassins and poisoners. It also hosts the annual Outlaw Council, where the leaders of the various kingdoms gather to plan the means by which they protect their freedom from the larger forces arrayed against them. This is the closest that the River Kingdoms come to having a unified government, and every year's session is contentious.

LEYDIS

The fallen city of Leydis is a moss-cloaked ruin of marble buildings and crumbling, water-stained mosaics. Founded by a Taldan prospector in a region once known as Loric Fells, it collapsed shortly after its first buildings rose. The grandeur of its remains and the rich mines that surround it have proved irresistible, however, and Leydis is forever being claimed by adventurers or monsters. None have held the city for more than a year, and often the next creature to venture into the ruins finds nothing but stripped skeletons dangling from the walls. The medusa Chryphaena and her blind zombies currently inhabit Leydis; it remains to be seen whether the medusa will fare better than the ruins' previous claimants.

SEVENARCHES

Founded among the remains of sacred elven ruins, Sevenarches is currently in the hands of Oakstewards, secretive druids who have ruled the land since Kyonin's elves departed Golarion to escape Earthfall. While the elves have a vested interest in reclaiming this holy site, the Oakstewards continue to refuse entry due to the Obnubilate plague, a contagious and lethal disease that claims any elf who approaches the ruined arches.

TYMON

Famed for its prestigious gladiators and sensational arena battles, the city-state of Tymon makes its living selling spectacle and pride. Influential citizens from other River Kingdoms often visit Tymon in order to cheer on their favored warriors. These charismatic gladiators can inspire such devotion that political feuds, murders, and even petty wars have occurred due to disagreements between their fans.

SARKORIS SCAR

The region formerly called the Worldwound is now known as the Sarkoris Scar, after the jagged, ugly gash of blackened and broken rock that runs across the land where the Abyssal rift once yawned. Now that the rip between worlds has been sealed and the demon lord Deskari slain, the scattered descendants of Sarkoris dare to dream of reclaiming their ancestral land, though the task that looms before them is forbidding.

Despite Deskari's death and the scattering of his host, the northlands remain fraught with threats. Although the sealing of the Worldwound cut off the demons' never-ending reinforcements, it did not kill those fiends already present or purify the blight pervading the landscape. Most of the Mendevian Crusade's might has been redirected to face Tar-Baphon



SELLEN RIVER

far to the south, and the holy crusaders who remain are no longer as numerous or as vigilant as they once were. The demon-haunted ruins of Storasta, Undarin, and Iz—three Sarkorian cities that were overrun shortly after the Worldwound opened—have each been reclaimed, but the prospect of rebuilding on such defiled sites was so daunting that the victors razed and abandoned them instead. For now, the soot-stained mines outside Iz and the murky Sarkora River, flowing over the rubble of Undarin, have been left to demons and the dead.

Nevertheless, a small but courageous coalition of crusaders, adherents of the Green Faith, children of lost Sarkoris, and the old Sarkorian gods is determined to restore what it can. Their only permanent outpost is the small town of Gundrun, which they have built up into a walled and warded fort stockpiled with supplies. Otherwise, these self-proclaimed Reclaimers prefer a nomadic lifestyle. In part, this is because the witch-wardens and warriors of old Sarkoris viewed the wanderer's way as cleaner and nobler than the hierarchical life of towns, but the Reclaimers also favor nomadism because the Sarkoris Scar remains too dangerous to settle. Until more of the region has been purified, any attempt at large-scale encampment outside Gundrun seems profoundly unwise.

Rather than rebuild cities, the Reclaimers focus on restoring wildlands. The mystical city of Dyinglight and its ring of aurora idols, and the repositories of ancient druidic traditions hidden deep in the Shudderwood, are two of their primary targets. However, both of these sites remain in corrupted hands: Dyinglight is surrounded by clans of fiendish, cannibalistic giants, while the Shudderwood's native fey have been corrupted into tormented and perverted forms. Even the wild animals who roam those lands show the lingering touch of the Abyss in their glowing eyes, unnatural stench, and rampant bloodlust. Still, the Reclaimers are making slow, painful progress. There is no safety in the Sarkoris Scar—not yet. But for the first time in a long while, there is hope.

THE SELLEN RIVER

The heavily trafficked Sellen River is the longest and most expansive of Avistan's rivers. With the rise of Tar-Baphon hindering trade across Lake Encarthan, the Sellen River has become even more crucial to the cultural and economic lives of the nations it connects. Originating in the Lake of Mists and Veils, the river runs south through Numeria and the eastern River Kingdoms before serving as a natural border for many of Avistan's central nations, then spilling into the Inner Sea. Its primary tributaries—the East and West Sellen Rivers—are vital trade routes linking Mendev, the Sarkoris Scar, and Brevoiy to the wealthier and more populous nations in central and southern Avistan.

The northern reaches of the Sellen River are subject to harsh winters that choke the waters with ice and lash travelers with frigid, blinding winds. As the river and its tributaries run south, the current slows and the waterway broadens, no longer confined to leaping rapids between walls of glacier-carved rock. Grasslands and rich forests unfurl on the riverbanks, and outposts become more common.

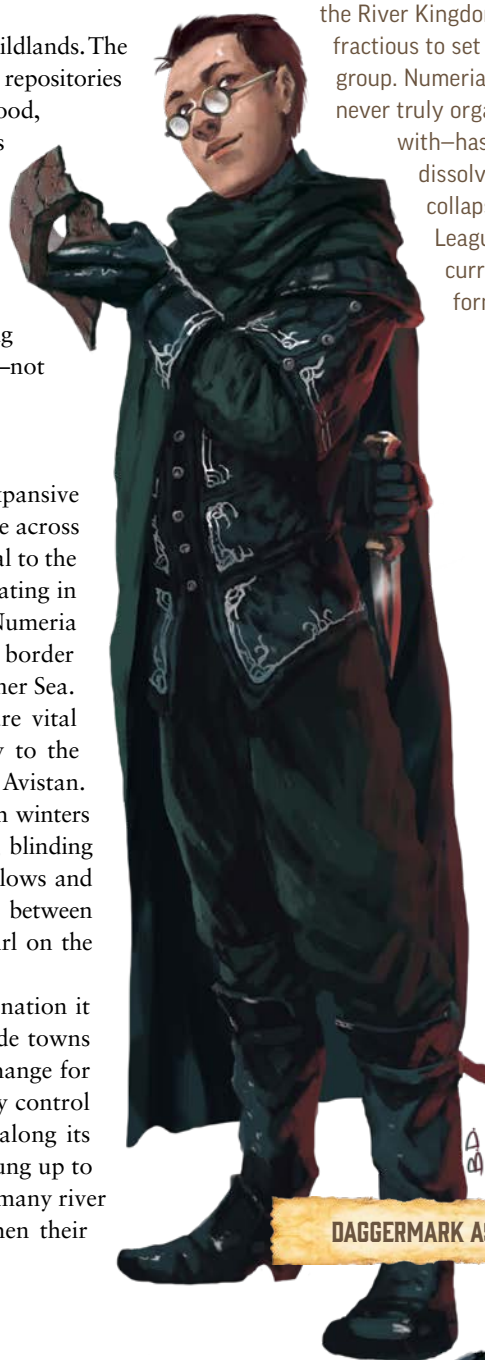
Because trade along the Sellen River is so crucial to every nation it touches, most realms maintain regulated harbors and riverside towns where travelers can enjoy a degree of safety, generally in exchange for taxes and tolls. The river is too vast for anyone to completely control it, however, and smugglers, pirates, and cutthroats flourish along its less populated reaches. An entire secondary economy has sprung up to shield travelers from these threats, but it's an open secret that many river pilots and mercenary escorts switch sides to play pirate when their legitimate business slows.

RELATIONS

Foreign relations in the Broken Lands are limited. Brevoiy and Mendev maintain diplomatic ties with each other and have a nominal presence in the other countries. Razmiran maintains small embassy-temples in a few River Kingdoms, but its other neighbors range from unwelcoming to openly hostile toward it, as the theocracy's agents are known for undermining outside societies.

The River Kingdoms send out envoys decided at each year's Outlaw Council, but these representatives seldom have clear direction or duties, since

the River Kingdoms are too fractious to set policy as a group. Numeria's government—never truly organized to begin with—has almost entirely dissolved following the collapse of the Technic League, and does not currently engage in formal diplomacy.



DAGGERMARK ASSASSIN

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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Broken Lands region.

ASPIRING RIVER MONARCH

BACKGROUND

New realms rise constantly in the River Kingdoms, and you intend to lead one of them. Making your reign last, however, will require both strength and grace.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Wisdom or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Politics Lore skill. You gain the Courtly Graces skill feat.

ISSIAN PARTISAN

BACKGROUND

You grew up among the northern houses of Brevoiy in old Issia. Steeped in the cultural legacy of pirates and smugglers, you rely on your cleverness and charm as you make your way throughout the world.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Deception skill and the Underworld Lore skill. You gain the Charming Liar skill feat.

RAZMIRAN FAITHFUL

BACKGROUND

You serve a living god who rules upon the face of Golarion, and this gives your actions a divine mandate not to be trifled with.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Razmir Lore skill. You gain the Group Coercion skill feat.

ROSTLAND PARTISAN

BACKGROUND

You grew up among the southern houses of Brevoiy in old Rostland. You're accustomed to arguing from a position of underappreciated worth.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Politics Lore skill. You gain the Group Impression skill feat.

SARKORIAN RECLAIMER

BACKGROUND

Whether you trace your heritage to lost Sarkoris or are a crusader trying to atone for past fanatics' wrongs, you seek to liberate the Sarkorian homeland from the demons who have defiled it.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free boost.

You're trained in the Medicine skill and the Abyssal Lore skill. You gain the Battle Medicine skill feat.

SARKORIAN SURVIVOR

BACKGROUND

The devastation and carnage of the Worldwound were nearly complete, but you somehow managed to survive it.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Constitution, and one is a free boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Sarkorian History Lore skill. You gain the Forager skill feat.

WONDER TASTER

BACKGROUND

Having once sampled Numerian fluids, you've tasted knowledge beyond comprehension. You are driven to recapture that astounding experience.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Alchemical Lore skill. You gain the Alchemical Crafting skill feat.



ALDORI DUELIST

You have sworn the Aldori swordpact and study the art of Aldori dueling, a famed school of bladecraft which has been passed down for over a millennium from the teachings of Baron Sirian Aldori. One day, you hope to demonstrate your skill at swordplay in order to become acknowledged as a true swordlord.

ALDORI DUELIST DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Aldori dueling swords; **Access** You are from the Broken Lands region.

Your Aldori duelist training teaches you martial techniques and increases your dedication to the Aldori dueling sword. You become trained in your choice of Acrobatics or Athletics and in Dueling Lore; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead. Whenever your proficiency rank in any weapon increases to expert or beyond, you also gain that new proficiency rank with Aldori dueling swords. You gain access to Aldori dueling swords (page 28).

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Aldori duelist archetype.

ALDORI PARRY ◆

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Aldori Duelist Dedication

Requirements You are wielding only an Aldori dueling sword and have your other hand or hands free.

You can parry attacks against you with your Aldori dueling sword. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC until the start of your next turn as long as you continue to meet the requirement.

DUELIST'S EDGE ◆

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Aldori Duelist Dedication

Trigger You roll initiative, and you can observe at least one opponent.

You hone your reaction time through duels and learn to draw your weapon seamlessly as you begin a fight. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the triggering initiative roll, and you can immediately Interact to draw your Aldori dueling sword.

ALDORI RIPOSTE ↻

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Aldori Parry

Requirements You are benefiting from Aldori Parry.

Trigger An opponent within your reach critically fails a Strike against you.

You riposte with your Aldori dueling sword when your enemy leaves an opening. Make a melee Strike or use a Disarm action against the triggering opponent using your Aldori dueling sword.

UNNERVING PROWESS ◆

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Aldori Duelist Dedication

Trigger You critically succeed at a Strike or Disarm with your Aldori dueling sword

Your incredible skill with your blade unnerves your foes. You attempt to Demoralize the target of your Strike or Disarm. This Demoralize attempt does not have the auditory trait, nor do you take a penalty to the check if the target doesn't understand your language.

SAVING SLASH ↻

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Aldori Duelist Dedication

Trigger An opponent critically hits you with a melee attack.

You quickly whirl your blade, trying to deflect enough momentum to avoid the worst of the attack. Attempt a DC 16 flat check. If you succeed, the attack becomes a normal hit, instead of a critical hit.



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NATIONS



BELKZEN [CE]
Disparate War Bands
Capital: Urgir (28,700)



GRAVELANDS [NE]
Undead Tyranny
Capital: None



MOLTHUNE [LN]
Military Oligarchy
Capital: Canorate (27,450)



NIRMATHAS [CG]
Meritocracy
Capital: Tamran (9,730)



OPRAK [LE]
Military Dictatorship
Capital: Hunthul (25,600)



USTALAV [NE]
Loose Confederacy
Capital: Caliphas (15,640)

PEOPLES

Dwarven
Goblin
Half-orc
Kellid
Taldan
Varisian

LANGUAGES

Common
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Hallit
Necril
Orcish
Varisian

FACTIONS



Esoteric Order
of the Palatine
Eye



Magaambya



Whispering
Way

RELIGIONS



Desna



Pharasma



Erastil



Rovagug



Iomedae



Urgathoa

RESOURCES



Armor/
Weapons



Books/Lore



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



Jewelry/
Gems



Livestock/
Hides



Lumber



Mercenaries



Ores



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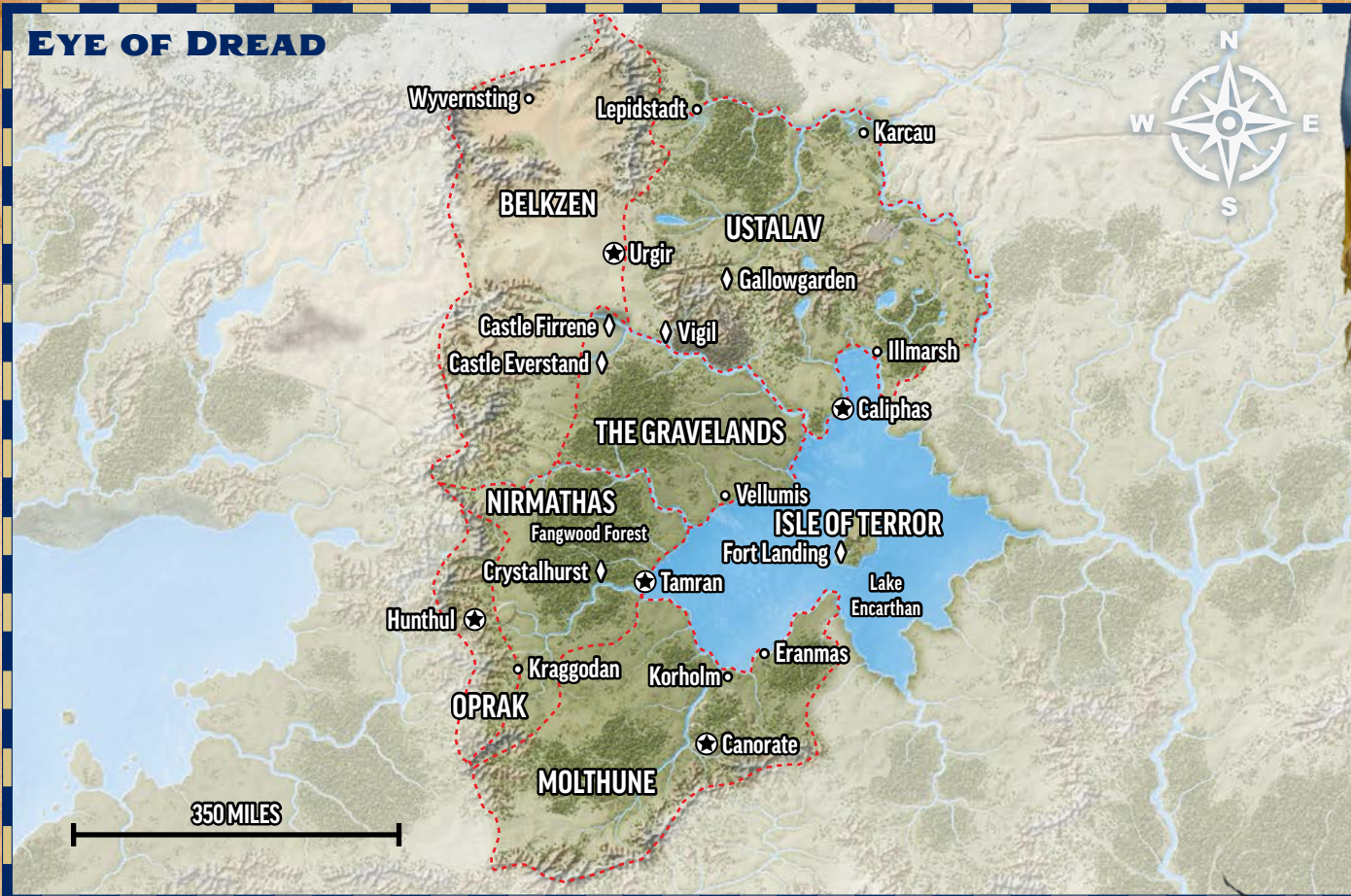
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TIMELINE

- 3708 AR The orc warlord Belkzen conquers the Sky Citadel of Koldukar and renames it Urgir.
- 3701 AR The fey queen Gendowyn forms an alliance with local Kellid tribes around the Fangwood.
- 896 AR Aroden mortally wounds the wizard-king Tar-Baphon on the Isle of Terror.
- 2631 AR Varisian wanderers north of Lake Encarthan unite as the nation of Ustalav.
- 3203 AR Tar-Baphon returns as the lich known as the Whispering Tyrant, unites the orc tribes of Belkzen under his rule, and terrorizes central Avistan for more than 600 years.
- 3754 AR Taldor launches the Shining Crusade against the Whispering Tyrant.
- 3827 AR The Whispering Tyrant is imprisoned in Gallowspire. Ustalav is returned to its people.
- 3828 AR The Shining Crusade ends; its crusaders form the nation of Lastwall.
- 4062 AR The corrupted dryad Arlantia overthrows Gendowyn and unleashes the Darkblight in the Fangwood.
- 4237 AR The orcs of Belkzen assault the nation of Lastwall and retake the city of Urgir.
- 4517 AR Lastwall's border defenses fail against the hordes of Belkzen.
- 4632 AR The province of Molthune declares independence from Chelax.
- 4655 AR Northern Molthune declares independence. Its leader, Irgal Nirmath, is assassinated, and the new nation is named Nirmathas in his honor.
- 4674 AR The Palatinates in northwest Ustalav overthrow their aristocratic leadership in favor of parliamentary rule.
- 4692 AR The orc warlord Grask Uldeth seizes control of Urgir and establishes a token system that allows non-orcs to travel Belkzen in relative safety.
- 4710 AR The right of indentured laborers and immigrants to

Blood and conflict have been facts of life in north-central Avistan for centuries, and with the recent collapse of the valiant crusader nation of Lastwall, the area is even more dangerous. Though many perils haunt these war-torn lands, among the deadliest is the lich Tar-Baphon, known as the Whispering Tyrant, who has recently reemerged to threaten the region once more. The wizard-king Tar-Baphon first rose to prominence around 850 AR—his mortal life is shrouded in myth and legend, but he mastered necromancy and drew the attention of the god Aroden himself. In 896, the two clashed on the Isle of Terror, where Tar-Baphon tried, but failed, to lure Aroden into a trap called the Well of Sorrows. Aroden killed Tar-Baphon, but the powerful wizard rose again, 2 millennia later, as a lich. Under the title of the Whispering Tyrant, Tar-Baphon seized power in Ustalav and united the orc tribes of Belkzen under his banner. The Whispering Tyrant held central Avistan firmly in his skeletal fist for centuries, raising slain troops to fight as undead warriors.

In 3754, Taldor launched the Shining Crusade to vanquish the lich-king. Its Knights of Ozem established the port town of Vellumis as a foothold and, with the dwarves of Kraggodan, fought back the Whispering Tyrant's armies. The crusaders beseeched Aroden to vanquish his ancient foe, but Aroden sent his herald, Arazni the Red Crusader, in his stead. The Knights of Ozem rallied behind her, but Arazni fell against the wizard-king and was slain.

Outraged, the Knights of Ozem redoubled their efforts, routing the orc hordes and pushing the Whispering Tyrant back to his city of Adorak. There, the valiant General Arnisant faced the Whispering Tyrant in single combat. The overconfident lich casually *wished* for the general's heart to fly to his hand, but Arnisant was protected by a shield crafted by Aroden himself. The shield absorbed Tar-Baphon's magic, shattering into a dozen pieces. One of the pieces embedded itself in the Whispering Tyrant's hand, burning his undead flesh with its life-giving energy. The weakened lich retreated into his fortress, called Gallowspire, where the crusaders, too exhausted to pursue, sealed him within using powerful magical wards.

The crusaders named the lands surrounding their former base of operations Lastwall, establishing themselves there as watchers of the Whispering Tyrant's prison and defenders against Belkzen. The nation of Ustalav was free at last, although it never recovered the vigor that Tar-Baphon had stolen from it. Yet the Whispering Tyrant plotted within his prison. He learned he could use the shard still lodged in his hand as a devastating weapon, remotely detonating the other shards of the shattered shield. His agents—a group of necromancers and death cultists called the Whispering Way—stole the shards and placed them in key sites, including Lastwall's capital of Vigil and in the shadowed halls of Gallowspire. The Gallowspire explosion cracked the crusaders' great seal and freed the Whispering Tyrant. After setting loose hordes of undead across Lastwall—now known as the Gravelands—the lich moved against Absalom, determined to seize the power of the *Starstone*. Powerful heroes sacrificed themselves to detonate the shard in Tar-Baphon's own hand, staining the area now known as the Tyrant's Grasp with his necromantic power but forcing the Whispering Tyrant back to his phylactery on the Isle of Terror. The Whispering Tyrant now amasses his undead armies and prepares to ravage Avistan anew.

BELKZEN

Cartographers may designate the lands between the Tusk Mountains, the Kodar Mountains, and the Mindspin Mountains "Belkzen," but there is no such formal nation and few of its mainly orc residents would deem it a place name. To them, Belkzen is the name a legendary hero, an orc warlord who united the tribes in the area and conquered the dwarven Sky Citadel of Koldukar more than 8,000 years ago. Belkzen renamed the city Urgir, and it remains the largest city in the region by far. Although Belkzen's alliance collapsed after his death, fracturing the orcs into dozens of feuding tribes, Urgir remains a symbol of power to the them, and despite constant turnovers in leadership the city has continued to grow. More recently, a

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clever and far-sighted warlord named Grask Uldeth, chieftain of the Empty Hand tribe, saw the economic benefits other nations enjoyed and sought to bring them to Urgir by means other than by simply stealing them. Uldeth created a system of tokens allowing non-orcs to travel through Belkzen freely in exchange for tribute payments, encouraged merchants to relocate to Urgir with light taxes and complete indifference to unscrupulous wares, and ensured their protection in the city with a rudimentary police force called the Closed Fist. Uldeth was slain by a mysterious assassin in 4716 and his steward, Ardax the White-Hair, now serves as Overlord of Urgir. Ardax leads the Closed Fist but not the Empty Hand, which has given him more time to coordinate improvements to the city. Chief among these has been the discovery of several caches of dwarven weapons underneath the city, along with a huge herd of rust monsters that now patrol with the Closed Fist like trained dogs.

When the Whispering Tyrant broke free from Gallowspire, he sent several envoys to regain the allegiances of the orc hordes, just as he had 15 centuries ago. The tribes of Belkzen remembered what had happened to their ancestors under Tar-Baphon, however, and this time the orcs refused to fight and die for the lich-king. The orcs slaughtered the undead envoys as an answer and mounted the envoys' heads on the walls of Urgir. The Whispering Tyrant was enraged by this defiance, sending an army of undead to cow the orcs in response. In the Battle of Nine Broken Skulls outside of Urgir, Ardax led a desperate coalition of orc tribes to victory over the undead army. The Whispering Tyrant had sought to break the orcs' morale, but he succeeded only in teaching them how much stronger they could be together.

The orcs know it's only a matter of time before the Whispering Tyrant sends a larger force or, worse, marches to Urgir personally. While even the most stubborn of the tribes have conceded they must solidify into a united front to repel this incipient threat, they struggle to overcome a long history of strife. Belkzen's land is harsh and unyielding, and it receives little rain except during the spring floods that turn the region's largest thoroughfare—the Flood Road—from a wide, dry valley into a river. The orc tribes now struggle to work together to share the resources

obtain citizenship via civil and military service is established in Molthune, bolstering the nation's defenses.

4716 AR The orc warlord Grask Uldeth is assassinated. His steward, Ardax of the White-Hair, takes control of Urgir.

4717 AR The Ironfang Invasion. Hobgoblin warlord General Azaersi is routed by the Nirmathi militia and retreats to establish the nation of Oprak in southwest Nirmathas.

4717 AR Gendowyn reclaims control of the Accessial Court in the Fangwood when Arlantia is slain by Nirmathi militia leaders.

4719 AR The Whispering Tyrant obliterates Vigil, escapes Gallowspire, and overruns Lastwall; he then relocates to the Isle of Terror, reclaiming his old holdings there. The orcs of Belkzen rebuff the Whispering Tyrant's emissaries and unite to repel the lich's vengeful forces.

NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



OVERLORD ARDAX THE WHITE-HAIR

The Overlord of Urgir, Ardax controls access to Urgir and oversees negotiations between Belkzen and their neighbors.



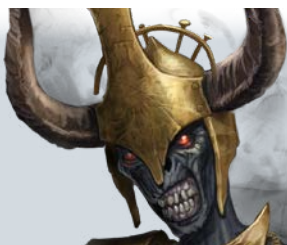
GENERAL AZAERSI

Founder of the Ironfang Legion and now ruler of Oprak, General Azaersi works to establish a hobgoblin homeland and secure the resources of the Onyx Vault.



IMPERIAL GOVERNOR MARKWIN TELDAS

The Imperial Governor of Molthune focuses on expanding the citizenry of his nation in order to strengthen it.



THE WHISPERING TYRANT

A resurgent villain who has challenged gods, slaughtered saints, and amassed armies, Tar-Baphon is the greatest current threat to Avistan.

of their hard land, and fiercely debate whether to reach out to long-despised neighbors for aid against the Whispering Tyrant's wrath. Orcs who aren't warriors have used this trying time to gain influence and prestige, both due to their skills at managing resources and their relative neutrality in orc tribal grudges. For the first time in millennia, Belkzen's orcs value caretakers, artisans, and negotiators—not just its warriors.

FANGWOOD FOREST

The Fangwood is an ancient forest, populated by fey in the ages before Earthfall. When dwarves and Kellid wanderers discovered the Fangwood, they found it rich in resources. The fey, disturbed by these unfriendly intruders, rallied behind Gendowyn, an ancient, powerful, and capricious fey noble. Gendowyn used guile and trickery to repel the intruders, and before long, the dwarves had withdrawn and the Kellid settlers declared the forest taboo. Gendowyn then reached out to her chastened neighbors, forming strong alliances that lasted for thousands of years.

Yet treachery lurks even among the fey, and one of Gendowyn's handmaidens, Arlantia, had secretly devoted herself to Cyth-V'sug, the demon lord of fungus and parasites. In 4062, over 200 years after the end of the Shining Crusade, Arlantia overthrew and imprisoned Gendowyn before releasing a terrible plague throughout the northern Fangwood: a supernatural infection called the Darkblight. This plague spread quickly among the fey, warping their features and twisting their souls. The Darkblight's expansion was slowed by Nirmathi scouts in the Fangwood, who fought to protect their forest homes from the infection, and finally ended in 4717, when heroes from Nirmathas slew Arlantia and freed Gendowyn from her imprisonment.

Today, Gendowyn rules from her Accessiel Palace in the heart of the Fangwood, but her rule is far from secure. Pockets of the Darkblight remain, and the dense northern section of the Fangwood is home to orcs, dragons, and other threats that murder fey on sight. Keenly aware of her need for allies, Gendowyn has established relations with the Nirmathi and the druids of Crystalhurst, particularly the scouts and freedom fighters called the Chernasardo Rangers. Still, relations between fractious humans and fickle fey are strained even at the best of times, and both sides welcome intermediaries skilled with negotiation or primal magic.

THE GRAVELANDS

Founded in the wake of the Shining Crusade, the land formerly known as Lastwall was a nation of knights who swore to watch over the Whispering Tyrant's prison, the tower of Gallowspire. The crusaders established the mighty walled capital of Vigil and the gleaming white port city of Vellumis. Although the crusaders still found purpose in fighting to contain the orcs of Belkzen, many knights believed their organization's glory days were behind them. Their vigilance and zeal gradually dwindled.

Meanwhile, the Whispering Tyrant plotted his escape and eventually developed the destructive weapon known as the *Radiant Fire*. In the devastating summer of 4719, Tar-Baphon obliterated the village of Roslar's Coffin and the crusader capital of Vigil. At the same time, Whispering Way cells throughout Lastwall synchronized murders, arson, and undead uprisings that shattered the nation. In one season, Lastwall was broken. Lastwall's ruler, Watcher-Lord Ulthun II, was forced to retreat to Absalom. Lastwall's most influential priest, Aylunna Varvatos, leads recently arrived Magaambyan philanthropists and the stone-faced crusaders who organize daily evacuations aboard ships departing Vellumis.

The remnants of Lastwall are now known as the Gravelands. Hordes of undead roam the countryside, their movements coordinated by Tar-Baphon's loyal officers. Goblin tribes and those few orcs who chose to ally themselves with the Whispering Tyrant now travel openly within the nation's former borders. Most of Lastwall's

population has already fled, and only the truly desperate remain huddled in crumbling strongholds or on failing farms. To travel openly across the Gravelands is to court death, but the surviving Knights of Ozem—now called the Knights of Lastwall—seek to stem the tide of evil, even in the face of incredible odds. Legendary crusader fortresses such as Castle Everstand and Castle Firrine stand empty, abandoned when their defenders could no longer count on supplies or support. These castles still stand tall on rolling hills, each as empty and grim as a tomb.

LAKE ENCARTHAN AND THE ISLE OF TERROR

Lake Encarthan is one of the most heavily traveled bodies of water on Golarion, with regular shipping along its coasts. Four national capitals sit on Lake Encarthan's shores—Caliphas of Ustalav, Kerse of Druma, Tamran of Nirmathas, and Thronestep of Razmiran—and several other key cities besides, such as the Molthuni naval city of Eranmas and Kyonin's port of Greengold. Although the lake harbors pirates and monsters, the opportunity for profit makes navigating its waters worth the risks.

Today, Lake Encarthan is more dangerous than ever, due to the Whispering Tyrant's activity on and around the Isle of Terror. This large island at the lake's center was never a place visited by the sensible. Strange storms whipped the lake for miles around it, and the island's rocky shores provided few safe places to anchor. Now that the Whispering Tyrant has returned, the negative energy storms around the island roil constantly, and the island contains an even greater undead presence. Unlike in the Gravelands, where mobs of undead roam under the guidance of undead officers or Whispering Way necromancers, the undead on the Isle of Terror are almost all powerful individuals who serve in Tar-Baphon's courts and aid him in his plot to scour the lands of the living. Flying and swimming undead range further than ever before, sometimes as far as the coastal settlements.

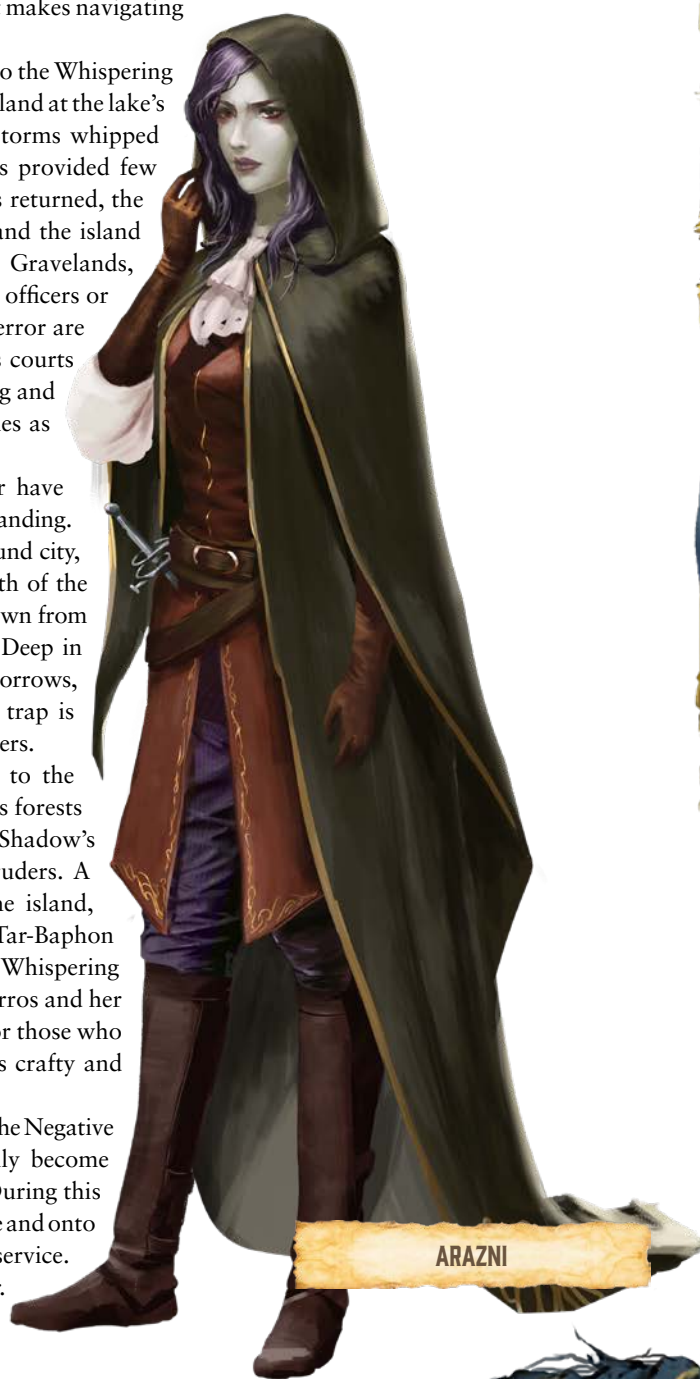
Powerful adventurers willing to brave the Isle of Terror have only one relatively reasonable harbor: the bay around Fort Landing. Once a fortress marking the road to Tar-Baphon's underground city, Fort Landing stands on the white sand beaches at the mouth of the Whispering River. The river's dark, poisonous waters flow down from the Three Furies, the mountain range at the island's heart. Deep in the Three Furies yawn the Wizard-King's Pit and its Well of Sorrows, a trap that Tar-Baphon set for Aroden millennia ago. The trap is rumored to still be active and poised to snare careless explorers.

Not all inhabitants of the Isle of Terror are beholden to the Whispering Tyrant. The terror wolves that prowl the island's forests are a threat to any travelers, and the living trees in the Shadow's Heart forest bear a passionate animosity toward all intruders. A powerful undead dragon named Karamorros hides on the island, fuming and plotting. Karamorros had planned to murder Tar-Baphon due to an old vendetta, but her hasty attack on the returned Whispering Tyrant recently led to a humiliating rout. Although Karamorros and her minions, the Whisperscale lizardfolk, might serve as allies for those who wish to confront the Whispering Tyrant, she is every bit as crafty and wicked as her enemy.

The Isle of Terror fades in and out of cosmic alignment with the Negative Energy Plane, and entire sections of the island periodically become overwhelmed by the void of that empty, life-hating realm. During this alignment, creatures can step out of the Negative Energy Plane and onto the island, where the Whispering Tyrant presses them into service. The lands touched by this joining can take decades to recover.

ARAZNI

Aroden's former herald was slain by the Whispering Tyrant, forced into lichdom by the necromancer Geb, and escaped centuries of serving as Geb's queen by her own cunning and tenacity. She is a patron of the abused and broken, commanding her followers to survive at all costs and to never forgive those who have hurt or abandoned them. She holds a following among those surviving knights of Lastwall who feel resentment over how badly their leaders failed them, although most goodly knights eschew her harsh views and vindictive nature.



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FEY BARGAINS

Some fey offer supernatural boons in exchange for strange currency, such as the ability to see the moon or the first syllable of the buyer's name. Breaking a fey bargain usually brings a dire curse, and negotiating to end one often bears an even heavier cost. Fey normally grant the buyer the ability to use a focus spell as an innate spell a certain number of times—usually three times—ever. A bargain for beauty might grant the *captivating adoration* focus spell, while a wish for protection might win the *skin of thorns* focus spell. The focus spells are of the primal tradition, even if they would usually be from a class that casts them via a different tradition, and the buyer is trained in attack rolls and spell DCs with this focus spell, even if they normally aren't trained in primal spells.

More powerful fey offer more powerful focus spells.

MOLTHUNE

The imperialistic and territorial nation of Molthune was merely a province of Cheliox until it declared its independence—and its willingness to fight to keep its sovereignty—in 4632 AR. To solidify control within its borders, the Molthuni established a military oligarchy of nine general lords and created a burdensome series of taxes to fund a standing army. While the elite in the southern cities of Canorate and Korholm benefited from these measures, the northern territories found the taxes onerous and, in 4655 AR, rebelled to form the fiercely independent nation of Nirmathas. Since then, Molthune has warred with Nirmathas to reclaim its lost territory, with the conflict alternating between bloody combat and uneasy cease-fire.

This dynamic has changed only recently with the creation of the new hobgoblin nation of Oprak and the reemergence of the Whispering Tyrant, which have forced Molthune to cool many of its military operations on the Nirmathi border. The crushing defeat of northern Molthune's forces by the hobgoblin General Azaersi, though officially derided as the fault of the commander in charge and not a reflection of Molthune as a whole, caused a great deal of soul-searching and finger-pointing among the higher echelons of Molthune's government. The rise of the Whispering Tyrant has widened these divisions further, as some generals recognize that the current threat requires alliances to survive, while other generals believe that crushing Nirmathas, Oprak, and Tar-Baphon single-handedly is the only way to regain face after being humiliated. Pragmatic-minded Molthuni diplomats and merchants have been making tenuous connections with their counterparts in Nirmathas, although bellicose spies and saboteurs frequently infiltrate these delegations. Only time will tell if Molthune will ally with other nations against the Whispering Tyrant, or doom the entire region out of pride and shortsightedness.

Residents of Molthune have, traditionally, been divided into imperial citizens and indentured laborers. Although indentured laborers cannot vote and have their travel and trade limited to specific regions within the nation, they can—as of 4710—ascend to citizenship with 5 years of military service or some other, regulated service to the state. Immigrants are also eligible, and Lastwall refugees have flocked to Molthune as a result. Proof of earned citizenship comes in the form of a large iron coin with a number and the red flag of Molthune upon it; those who have “earned the red coin” are often unpopular with the aristocratic elite but have swelled the ranks of the Molthuni military forces.

Molthune also makes use of mercenary companies, both human and “monstrous,” though this practice has come under heavy criticism after General Azaersi made use of Molthune's resources to raise the Ironfang Legion and start the Ironfang Invasion.

Despite its militaristic leadership, Molthune pursues diplomatic relations with those neighbors it cannot easily subjugate, including the economically powerful Druma and the Cheliox-backed nation of Isger. Only the foolish mistake this diplomacy for peace, however, as Molthune is quick to pounce on opportunities to fuel its expansionist agenda.



KARAMORROS

NIRMATHAS

The people of Nirmathas have always been fiercely independent, willing to fight and die to protect the freedoms they've claimed. Once part of Molthune, the forest folk saw the fruits of their labors claimed by the elites in Canorate and decided they'd had enough of domination. They first enacted work stoppages and sabotage, but ultimately took up outright rebellion to claim their independence. The crafty woodfolk fought the armies of Molthune to a standstill and established themselves as an independent nation under the charismatic leader Irgal Nirmath in 4655 AR. When Nirmath was assassinated on the same day the new nation was founded, the rebels named their country Nirmathas in his honor.

Nirmathas has suffered many blows over the last decade, from Molthune's draining military offenses to the devastating Ironfang Invasion perpetrated by General Azaersi—though both nations suffered from the conquests of the Ironfang Legion, Nirmathas bore the brunt of the hobgoblins' cruelties. Now, the destruction of Lastwall and incursion of the Whispering Tyrant's undead forces have put Nirmathas in a keenly precarious position. The nation is managing to survive due to both the strong, experienced militia that was forged during the Ironfang Invasion and the influx of well-trained refugee knights from Lastwall, as well as the fact that the war between Nirmathas and Molthune has cooled due to external threats. There is even talk of diplomacy with Molthune and Oprak, though resentment from previous wars and justified fears about military reprisals cause opposition to proposals of alliances with those nations.

Nirmathas's government is loose at best, as individual Nirmathi settlements chafe at being subject to any laws but their own. Prominent Nirmathi meet every 4 years to elect a forest marshal to lead the nation's military and guide its foreign relations.

The Nirmathi harvest resources from the Fangwood Forest and the Mindspin Mountains, but they know to take no more than the land can spare. This has resulted in good relations and an unwritten alliance between Nirmathas and the citizens of the forest. Nowhere is this more evident than in the town of Crystalhurst, an ancient settlement in the Fangwood. The druids of Crystalhurst consider themselves residents of the Fangwood rather than Nirmathas, but they are quick to aid the Nirmathi when the nation is in need.

KRAGGODAN

The Sky Citadel of Kraggodan, a towering stronghold that sits inside Nirmathas's borders but operates as an independent city-state, has existed for nearly 10 millennia. Remarkably reclusive, the dwarves of Kraggodan have broken with their isolationist tendencies only once in recorded history: to march against the Whispering Tyrant alongside the Shining Crusade. The residents of Nirmathas wonder if they can rely on the dwarves again, now that the Whispering Tyrant has returned. More dwarves than usual have been spotted exiting the isolated city, but the significance of this is not yet known.

ECONOMICS

The mountains of central Avistan are rich in ores, and both Belkzen and Oprak rely heavily on the export of metals and gems. Although the Fangwood Forest continues to provide a bounty to those who tend it, the fey there do not permit reckless harvesting. The disappearance of the bread basket of central Lastwall and the crush of refugees make food supplies the region's most desired import. Molthune has capitalized on its strong workforce and favorable trade contracts to dominate shipping and transportation in the region. Lake Encarthan remains one of the most heavily-traveled waterways in Avistan, although the presence of the Whispering Tyrant on the Isle of Terror forces merchant ships and pirates alike to remain close to shore.



AN ENDURING RIVALRY

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THE SHINING CRUSADE

RELATIONS

The most significant force in the Eye of Dread region is currently the Whispering Tyrant. His armies of undead press outward from the Gravelands and the Eye of Dread, forcing neighboring regions to stand together against his might. The flow of refugees from the shattered nation of Lastwall overwhelms many surrounding nations, and has created a particularly xenophobic backlash in the Ustalavic port city of Caliphas.

The Whispering Tyrant has pushed nations into alliances thought impossible only a decade ago. Nirmathas and Molthune have cooled their animosity in the wake of Oprak's birth and the Whispering Tyrant's threat. Belkzen now formally debates pacts with neighboring nations to withstand the undead hordes. Even the fey of the Fangwood, free after centuries of corrupted rule, consider allies to bestow their capricious favor on.

OPRAK

One of Avistan's newest nations, Oprak's nationhood was hard-won by the Ironfang Legion, a hobgoblin army that scourged northern Molthune and southern Nirmathas throughout 4717 AR. Its leader, General Azaersi, first rose to prominence as the commander of one of Molthune's non-human mercenary companies. She patiently attracted hobgoblins and other monstrous mercenaries to her side, ultimately swelling her troop into an army. When she had taken all the recruits Molthune could offer, she broke with Molthune and led her army into Nirmathas. With the aid of a powerful artifact called the *Onyx Key*, Azaersi and her troops made their base in a strange castle deep within the Plane of Earth called the Vault of the Onyx Citadel. From there, she could create dimensional pathways to any location she chose, allowing the Ironfang Legion to move supplies and troops with ease.

Azaersi's legion rapidly conquered much of southwestern Nirmathas, and she would have extended her domain further if a group of heroes had not raised a militia to halt her advance. The militia commanders eventually confronted Azaersi in the Onyx Citadel and convinced her that her relentless warmongering would bring nothing but destruction to her people. Exhausted by the toll the war had taken on her army, her friendships, and herself, Azaersi elected to withdraw her troops into the mountains and use the Onyx Citadel to establish Oprak as a homeland for hobgoblins and other creatures seen as monsters.

Azaersi carved her lands on Golarion from a sparsely inhabited section of the Mindspin Mountains between Nirmathas and Nidal. The general and her advisors—the Enclave Council—were careful when drawing their borders to exclude the dwarven free city of Kraggodan, but Azaersi all but dared her neighbors to contest her claim. Representatives from the Umbral Court of Nidal were the first to meet with Azaersi and acknowledge the hobgoblin general's sovereignty, agreeing to a 3-year nonaggression pact. Shortly thereafter, Forest Marshal Dardinna Yallis of Nirmathas approached Azaersi under heavy guard to discuss diplomatic relations, and agreed to peace for 4 years. Yallis hopes that because the hobgoblins are scheduled to end their peace with Nidal first, they will look west rather than east for military conquests.

General Azaersi maintains the military arm of her nation—still called the Ironfang Legion—but has solidly shifted her nation's focus to developing a robust economy. Due to the extraplanar nature of the Onyx Citadel, Oprak is currently the safest nation in the region from the threat of the Whispering Tyrant, and Azaersi is currently avoiding military conflict in order to fully develop her new homeland's resources and tactical advantages. Hobgoblins and other creatures willing to serve as explorers, miners, smiths, and alchemists have been flocking to the fledgling nation.

Although Oprak is little more than three hundred miles across and consists primarily of forbidding mountains, the hobgoblins have substantially more resources than they have revealed to the rest of the world. The Onyx Citadel rests in a large, verdant cavern that the hobgoblins call the Onyx Vault, which is even larger than the territory Azaersi claims on Golarion. Created long ago by a powerful species of terraformers called xiomorns, the Onyx Vault has a variety of terrain, its own day and night cycle, and even clouds and rain. The hobgoblins are industriously taming this strange land, negotiating with powerful elemental natives, and mining the profusion of gems and ores in the wondrous place.

Golarion's connections to the Onyx Citadel—paths known as the Stone Roads—are guarded by legions of watchful hobgoblins. Five such entrances exist throughout the mountains of Oprak, the largest being the obsidian tower in the new capital Hunthul's heart. Azaersi's diplomats have placed another in the militaristic hobgoblin nation of Kaoling in Tian Xia, and have opened diplomatic relations with that nation.



VAULT OF THE ONYX CITADEL

USTALAV

An ancient, mist-shrouded land, Ustalav is steeped in thousands of years of civil wars, shadowy horrors, selfish rulers, and deadly conspiracies. Ustalav has many enemies, but only its most visible foes—dangerous undead and Numerian aggressors—are external. Internally, the nation suffers from infighting among its decaying aristocracy, serial killers who keep to the shadows, and monsters clever enough to masquerade as humans. The land is divided into three different regions, each with a markedly different history. Although looming mountains, misty forests, and dark lakes can be found everywhere in Ustalav, the character of the local population makes each region seem very different from the others.

The heartland of Ustalav, Soivoda, contains the bulk of the nation's population and its three biggest cities. Ustalav's capital, Caliphas, is a fog-shrouded port on Lake Encarthan whose residents tend to be more cosmopolitan than the isolated people found elsewhere in Soivoda. Caliphas has always had a problem with overcrowding, but Lastwall refugees pouring into the city have created a full-scale crisis. Local groups calling themselves the "Havenguard Greeters" roam the streets with clubs and blades, purportedly turning squatters out of alleys and parks, but actually indulging their bloodlust and calling it civic duty. The refugees have few options elsewhere in Soivoda, though, as the countryside harbors wolves, bears, and other beasts, and the insular Ustalavs outside of Caliphas often greet strangers with torches and pitchforks.

The three northwestern counties in Ustalav overthrew their hereditary rulers in 4674 AR and instituted a parliamentary rule of elected commoners. This region is now known as the Palatinates and is an area of innovative ideals and cutting-edge science. Doctors, alchemists, and academics—particularly at the prestigious University of Lepidstadt—are making startling discoveries in anatomy, medicine, and other sciences. Although some condemn these scientists as dangerous or even depraved, their advances are undeniable. More recently, advanced technologies have made their way from Numeria through black markets and into the laboratories of Lepidstadt, allowing monumental breakthroughs in the fields of clockwork automation, electricity, and steam power, among others.

Many wouldn't call the haunted land in the southwest known as Virlych a part of Ustalav at all; certainly, sensible Ustalavs shun the former domain of the Whispering Tyrant and the area where his prison of Gallowspire loomed over the countryside for centuries. The land of Virlych is gloomy and uninhabited save for predatory monsters, roaming undead, and a few hardscrabble settlers. The unnatural storms that plague the area are just one manifestation of nature gone wrong, warped by the Whispering Tyrant's necromantic magic. A place of deadly, verdant profusion called the Gallowgarden surrounds the blasted crater where Gallowspire once stood—a dense, mutated forest as deadly as a blasted wasteland. Although the Whispering Tyrant is now absent, uncounted terrors linger on.

ESOTERIC ORDER OF THE PALATINE EYE

A secret order of scholars and historians based in Ustalav, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye watches the world for signs of dangerous lore and inhuman monsters. It comprises masters of occult lore, and its members-only libraries include secrets from ancient Osirion and even older civilizations. The order's greatest enemy is the nefarious death cult known as the Whispering Way, whose adherents serve as loyal agents of their greatest member, Tar-Baphon. With Tar-Baphon's resurgence, the Esoteric Order has stepped more to the forefront than is usual for a secret order to thwart the lich-king's schemes. As members are accustomed to communicating with each other through coded messages, meaning-laden symbols, and cryptic clues, this new candor doesn't sit well with the Esoteric Order's older members.

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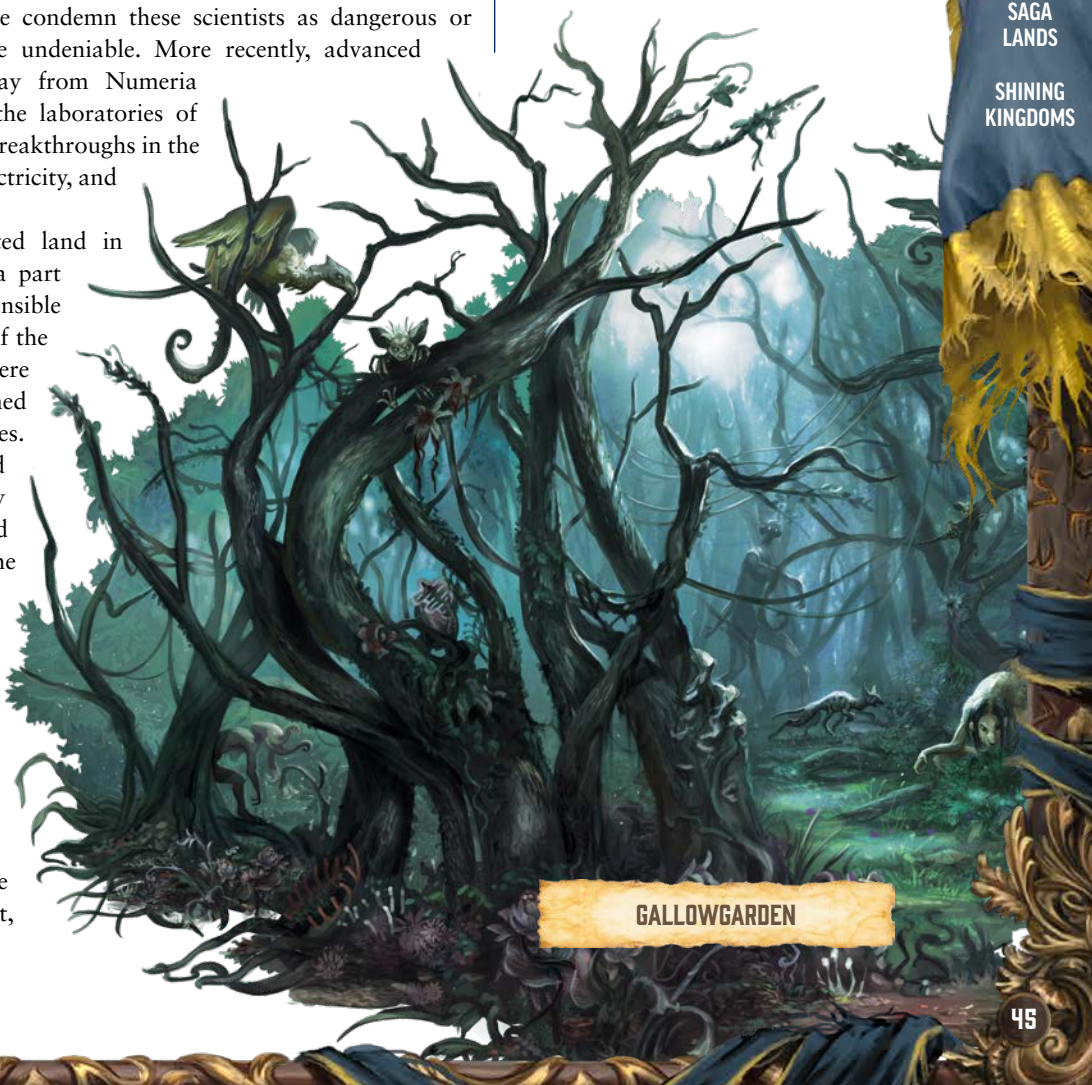
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SHINING KINGDOMS



GALLOWGARDEN

BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Eye of Dread region.

BELKZEN SLAYER

BACKGROUND

You are a fearsome warrior from the Hold of Belkzen, and your clan counts on you for support, counsel, and defense. With the rising threat of the Whispering Tyrant threatening the safety of your home, you must not let your people down.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Orc Lore skill. You gain the Intimidating Glare skill feat.

CURSED FAMILY

BACKGROUND

Rumors abound that your family is cursed. While that would explain several unfortunate events in your family history, you may or may not believe it. Regardless, odd coincidences plague your lineage, and perhaps even appear in your own life, and you have become used to spotting strangeness around you.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Occultism skill and the Curse Lore skill. You gain the Oddity Identification skill feat.

LASTWALL SURVIVOR

BACKGROUND

You managed to escape the devastation that the Whispering Tyrant brought to your nation, but you lost everything to the lich-king's minions, including your home and many friends and family.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Medicine skill and the Undead Lore skill. You gain the Battle Medicine skill feat.

MOLTHUNI MERCENARY BACKGROUND

Whether you sought citizenship or simply needed a steady paycheck, you spent some of your time as a paid mercenary in the armed forces of Molthune, where you fought against Molthune's enemies such as Nirmathas or the Ironfang Legion. Alternatively, you might have worked at sea, protecting Molthune's military and trading ships against pirates on Lake Encarthan.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Mercenary Lore skill. You gain the Experienced Professional skill feat.

NIRMATHI GUERRILLA

BACKGROUND

Woodcraft comes naturally to you, and you have learned how to use the forest to your tactical advantage against superior forces in skirmishes against the Molthuni army or the Ironfang Legion.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Forest Lore skill. You gain the Terrain Stalker (underbrush) skill feat.

ONYX TRADER

BACKGROUND

Oprak doesn't share the secrets of the Onyx Vault with many, but you are one of the lucky few to be permitted into the heart of the nation. You have traveled the extradimensional paths of the Stone Roads and traded goods across a wide variety of lands. You've learned to step lively in foreign markets of all types.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Mercantile Lore skill. You gain the Multilingual skill feat.

USTALAVIC ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

You were educated at a famed Ustalavic academy, such as the University of Lepidstadt or the Sincomakti School of Sciences, and received quality instruction in advanced concepts of mathematics, science, and engineering.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Academia Lore skill. You gain the Skill Training skill feat.

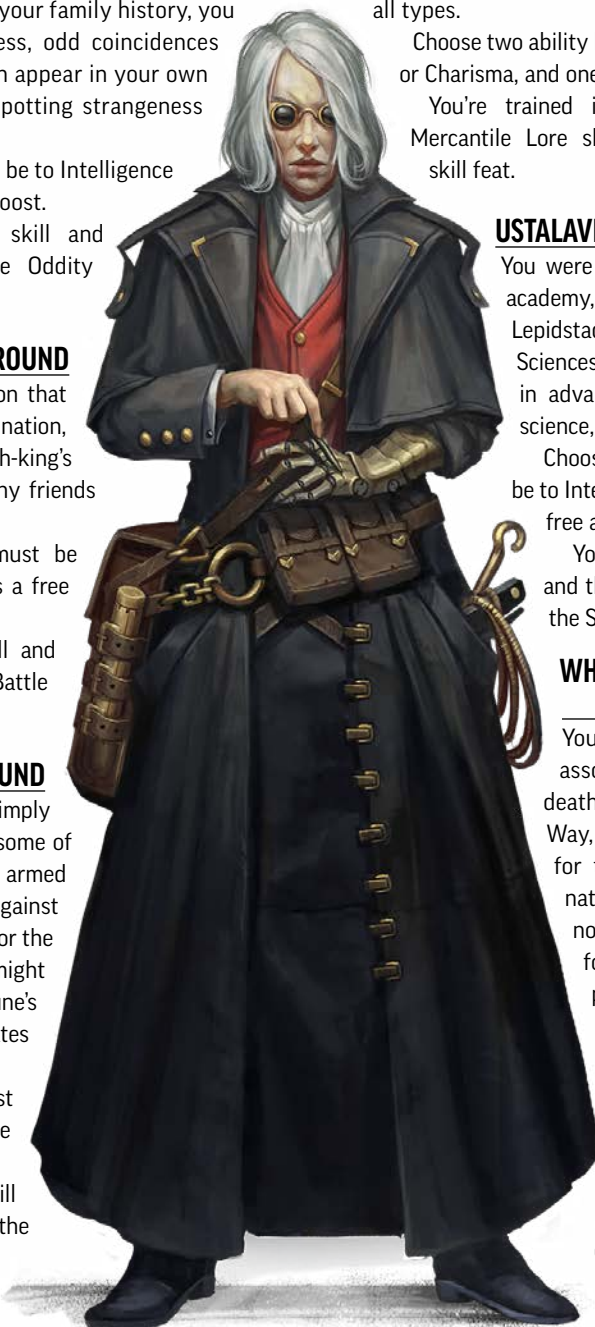
WHISPERING WAY SCION

BACKGROUND

Your family has long been associated with the enigmatic death cult known as the Whispering Way, which was recently responsible for the terrible devastation in the nation of Lastwall. Whether or not you have followed in their footsteps, you know many of the philosophy's secrets.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Religion skill and the Undead Lore skill. You gain the Student of the Canon skill feat.



LASTWALL SENTRY

While the nation of Lastwall is gone, leaving only the horror of the Gravelands behind, you refuse to give up and renounce your oaths. You've renewed your vows, swearing to combat the influence of the Whispering Tyrant wherever it might strike across Golarion.

LASTWALL SENTRY DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Knights of Lastwall, Shield Block;
Access You are from the Eye of Dread region.

You've sworn yourself as a sentry for the Knights of Lastwall, the first line of defense against incursions by the Whispering Tyrant throughout Golarion. You become trained in Athletics and in Undead Lore; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead. Finally, you gain the Reactive Shield fighter feat.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Lastwall sentry archetype.

EYE OF OZEM

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lastwall Sentry Dedication, expert in Perception
You've learned how to spot danger at a distance, allowing you to serve as a sentry with ease. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to initiative rolls when using Perception, and when you're Scouting, you grant your allies a +2 circumstance bonus instead of +1.

NECROMANTIC RESISTANCE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lastwall Sentry Dedication
As part of your training, you've injured yourself against necromancy through repeated exposure. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saves against necromancy effects and gain resistance to negative damage equal to half your level.

GRAVE SENSE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lastwall Sentry Dedication
Your time spent hunting the undead allows you to sense them. You sense undead as a vague sense (*Core Rulebook* 465) similar to a human's sense of smell, an uncomfortable sensation akin to smelling something cloying and rotting. When in proximity to the undead, you eventually sense their presence, though you might not do so instantly, and you can't pinpoint their location. An undead using a disguise or otherwise trying to hide its presence must attempt a Deception check against your Perception DC to hide its presence from you. If the creature succeeds at its Deception check, it is then temporarily immune to your Grave Sense for 1 day.

NECROMANTIC TENACITY

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Necromantic Resistance
Your training against necromantic effects allows you to escape the worst of their touch. If you roll a success on a saving throw against a necromancy effect, you get a critical success instead; if you roll a critical failure on such a save, you get a failure instead.

LASTWALL WARDEN

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lastwall Sentry Dedication

You use your shield to protect your allies, not just yourself, especially against the undead. When you have a shield raised, you can use your Shield Block reaction when an attack is made against an ally adjacent to you, in addition to its usual trigger. If you do, the shield prevents that ally from taking damage instead of you, following the normal rules for a Shield Block.

If an undead makes an attack against an ally within 10 feet, you can Step to become adjacent to your ally and then use Shield Block as part of the same reaction.



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GOLDEN ROAD

NATIONS



KATAPESH [N]
Anarchic Plutocracy
Capital: Katapesh (212,300)



OSIRION [LN]
Celestial Monarchy
Capital: Sothis (111,989)



QADIRA [N]
Satrapy
Capital: Katheer (132,450)



RAHADDOM [LN]
Council of Elders
Capital: Azir (72,370)



THUVIA
Independent City-States
Capital: Merab (56,870)

PEOPLES

Garundi
Keleshite
Mwangi
Taldan
Tien
Vudrani

Dwarf
Gnome
Halfling

LANGUAGES

Common
Kelish
Mwangi
Osiriani
Vudrani
Tien

FACTIONS



Esoteric
Order of the
Palatine Eye



Night
Heralds



Pathfinder
Society

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Phasma



Gozreh



Rovagug



Nethys



Sarenrae

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Books/Lore



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



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Ores



Ships



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TIMELINE

- 4120 AR Founding of the Jistka Imperium.
- 3502 AR Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors reintroduce wizardry to the Inner Sea for the first time since Earthfall.
- 3490 AR The Jistka Imperium taps into lost magic to bind genies and enhance the empire's power.
- 3470 AR Founding of Ancient Osirion.
- 3250 AR Founding of the Tekritanin League.
- 2764 AR Osirion and the Tekritanin League ally to overthrow the weakened Jistka Imperium.
- 1498 AR The Four Pharaohs of Ascension join forces to rule Osirion, initiating the empire's Second Age.
- 1452 AR The armies of the Four Pharaohs conquer the Tekritanin League.
- 1431 AR Bound by magic, the Four Pharaohs of Ascension die together. Osirion slips into decline.
- 841 AR Osirion fails to replace Thuvia's assassinated governor, ceding the province to local control.
- 43 AR Soldiers of Kelesh claim Qadira for the Padishah Emperor.
- 1140 AR Artokus Kirran formulates the *sun orchid elixir*.
- 1142 AR Thuvia's city-states band together as a nation.
- 1532 AR Qadiran operatives topple Osirion's pharaoh, establishing the first in a long line of Keleshite satraps.
- 2217 AR Sarenrae's church flourishes in Osirion, but militant members are banished and settle Katapesh.
- 2253 AR Sarenrae worshippers replace Osirion's Qadiran satrap, establishing an independent dynasty of Keleshite sultans.
- 2498 AR The Oath Wars begin in northern Garund.
- 2555 AR Azir enacts the Laws of Mortality, outlawing all religion.

The vast deserts of Garund's northern coast may look inhospitable, but it was here along their rugged shorelines and fertile rivers that human civilization first rebounded from the devastation of Earthfall.

For a thousand years, humanity huddled in small bands and villages, eking out a bare existence under an ash-clouded sky, rarely organizing beyond localized trade networks. Then came the Jistka Imperium, clever artificers who rose from the deserts of what is now Rahadoun. The Imperium conquered the neighboring peoples and forced the desert dwellers in north-central Garund to form a defensive federation called the Tekritanin League, matched also by the rise of powerful Ancient Osirion in the east. In the ensuing conflict between these three nations, Osirion eventually ended up victorious through a combination of astute politics, magic, and brute military force, its god-kings conquering both of the neighboring empires. But Ancient Osirion eventually met its end as well, finally collapsing under the weight of its own hubris. Keleshite agents from Qadira, a vassal of the vast Padishah Empire of Kelesh just across the Obari Ocean, took advantage of this decline. These agents destabilized the region until Qadira could sweep in and “rescue” Osirion from disaster, turning it into a Keleshite colony. This foreign rule in Osirion lasted for more than 3 millennia before Khemet I, dubbed the Forthbringer, drove the Keleshite government from its shores and returned Osirion to sovereign rule by a Garundi pharaoh.

While this chaos played out in the east, things were going equally poorly in the west. Spread by Keleshite immigration, the worship of Sarenrae hit the city of Azir and other major settlements like an avalanche, meeting violent resistance from local followers of Nethys and Norgorber. The resulting Oath Wars devastated the region for more than 60 years before Azir's militia ended the conflict by burning all temples and establishing a fiercely secular nation, which they dubbed Rahadoun.

Meanwhile, south of Osirion, Sarenite refugees and bandits carved settlements out of arid and sparsely populated plains, guarded from marauding bands of gnolls by the legendary janni heroes called the Templars of the Five Winds. It was only with the arrival of the alien Pactmasters and their laissez-faire, plutocratic governance that this new nation of Katapesh came into its own as a hub of worldwide trade.

Today the nations collectively dubbed the Golden Road are a study in contrast. In their bustling, cosmopolitan cities, markets overflow with curiosities from across the world, while scholars advance the frontiers of magic and science in buildings older than many northern nations. Yet at the same time, settlements remain largely restricted to coasts and rivers, leaving huge stretches of land untouched, ceded to deadly monsters and those bold adventurers willing to brave them. In these sun-drenched dunes ruled by scorpions, genies, fiends, and sphinxes, heroes find their fortunes—or are swallowed forever.

THE BARRIER WALL

The mountains of the Barrier Wall run laterally across northern Garund, separating the deserts of the northern coast from the lush jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. Difficult to reach and almost impassable, the Barrier Wall contains only a few scattered settlements. In Rahadoun, soldiers in the mud-brick fortress of Haldun maintain the Rainwall, a network of sentries and magical wards designed to keep the depraved predators of the Sodden Lands from creeping north. In Osirion, the mountain monastery of Tar Kuata houses monks and scholars of Irori as well as an order of elite dwarven martial artists called the Ouat. A sect of druids called the Stonewardens patrols the central range near Thuvia, guarding hidden sanctuary valleys and remote portals to the First World, while the legendary alchemist Artokus Kirran built his citadel among the peaks, using their slopes as his first line of defense.

The vast majority of the range remains largely uninhabited, home only to some of the most remote adventuring locations on the continent. Most notable among these is the ruins of Kho, the first Shory flying city. Though it was smashed to earth by the Tarrasque, a spawn of the evil god Rovagug, it still sputters with



SUN ORCHID OASIS

strange energies. Among its rubble, marids and monstrous humanoids battle over priceless sites including the Fields of Glass, the Domes of the Polymatum, and the Pit of Endless Night. Lesser-known sites in the range include the Cathedral of Claws, the Tagas Labyrinth, and the lair of the undead dragon Arantaros. Among the northern Mwangi peoples, adventuring scholars search for the Earthspear, a spiraling repository carved into the heart of a mountain. The Earthspear is said to hold writings from Old-Mage Jatembe himself, protected in case of a second apocalypse. A thousand other such wonders might lie among the peaks, their legends long forgotten.

KATAPESH

Katapesh is a nation dedicated to trade and little else. Its bazaars are known across Golarion not just for their size, but for their incredible (and sometimes immoral) variety of wares. No item is too rare or taboo to be found somewhere in the tents, shops, and wagons of the nation's merchants: magical reagents, forbidden spells, holy relics, and deadly poisons. In Katapesh, those with the gold make the rules, and the only question is whether one can afford their desires.

Strangely, Katapesh was founded by a group of Sarenite refugees. Fleeing south from pogroms in Osirion, these devout settlers founded two cities that would eventually become Solku and Katapesh. Yet life was hard on Katapesh's plains, and constant assault by gnolls, bandits, and destructive sandstorms led subsequent generations away from the faith, seeking salvation in something more concrete.

They found it in pesh: a rare cactus growing in the nation's interior, the sap of which could be distilled into a powerful euphoric drug. Trade boomed as residents of the Inner Sea region clamored for the new drug, and with the influx of money came warring gangs and pesh dens full of helpless addicts. As the economic boom and influx of foreign trade allowed local merchants to expand into other wares, the fundamental anarchy of a drug-fueled economy continued under a loose

- 2560 AR The Oath Wars end as the Laws of Mortality spread throughout the new nation of Rahadoum.
- 4079 AR Qadira invades Taldor.
- 4300 AR The Templars of the Five Winds imprison the efreeti warlord Jhavul, ending the Genie Wars.
- 4603 AR Taldor and Qadira reach an uneasy truce.
- 4609 AR Osirians overthrow their Keleshite rulers and install a Garundi pharaoh, Prince Khemet I.
- 4701 AR Gnolls besiege Solku in Katapesh before being beaten back by paladins of Iomedae.
- 4709 AR Pale Mountain partially erupts, leaving a massive crater on the side of the mountain and exposing the remains of Xotani the Firebleeder, one of the Spawn of Rovagug.
- 4714 AR Pharaoh Hakotep I returns from the dead to reclaim his throne and is narrowly defeated. His flying pyramids crash down across Osirion.

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NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



PACTBROKER HASHIM IBN SAYYID

While the Pactmasters rule Katapesh absolutely, their desires are implemented by the Pactbroker, making him the effective ruler of Katapesh.



RUBY PRINCE KHEMET III

Osirion's current pharaoh focuses on securing elemental and extraplanar pacts that strengthen the nation while leaving mundane rule to the Council of Sun and Sky.



MALDUONI, KEEPER OF THE FIRST LAW

Wildly popular and elected to an unprecedented fourth term, Malduoni has united Rahadom's factions against the threat of their changing landscape.



SATRAP XERBYSTES II

The ruler of Qadira is notoriously brooding and constantly rankling at the Padishah Emperor's refusal to authorize an invasion of Taldor.

consortium of corrupt merchants and outright criminals.

The Pactmasters changed that. Seven feet tall, robed and masked to hide their forms, the Pactmasters arrived from parts unknown and took control of the city of Katapesh—and by extension the nation—in a bloodless coup that no records can explain. Though they didn't end the city's freewheeling approach to trade, they stabilized and formalized it. Under their guidance, usually filtered through humanoid mouthpieces like Pactbroker Hashim ibn Sayyid, the nation has become perhaps the largest black market in the world, its independence maintained by economic ties and a constabulary of metal constructs known as aluums.

The city of Katapesh is so large in comparison to other settlements that many visitors don't bother distinguishing between capital and nation. In its vast markets—both the legitimate bazaars and the seedier Nightstalls—merchants and buyers of a hundred different kinds mingle with the human majority. Gnomish slavers, nomadic gnomes, and dwarves from mines in the Brazen Peaks rub shoulders with visitors from far-off lands such as rakshasas from Vudra or even immortal traders from the Great Beyond. Although Katapesh has a bustling slave trade, slavers who deal in the business consider keeping track of one's property a personal responsibility, so those who manage to escape slavery often find it easy to set up new lives among the city's throngs of traders, fugitives, and expatriates.

Outside the city, the landscape quickly gives way to scattered herders, hardscrabble villages, and pesh plantations. All of these are regularly beset by natural predators like lions, bulettes, and hyenas, as well as more cunning foes like harpies, gnolls, pugwampis, and genie warlords. Given the Pactmasters' laissez-faire policies, defending these holdings is up to the residents, and mercenaries do a brisk business guarding these scattered settlements from a landscape that seems intent on devouring them.

PESH

The euphoric drug known as pesh comes from the milk of a cactus of the same name, originally native only to Katapesh and important enough to the local economy that their nation is named for it. The drug has several different forms, but the most valuable is the refined version—and hence the version most commonly smuggled abroad—a tarry, chunky black paste made by cooking the cactus's milk along with its resin and other additives. When eaten or smoked, the drug gives users a sense of well-being, sometimes combined with hallucinations, though these can also turn to paranoia, aggression, and exhaustion. It's also dangerously addictive, as its dealers know all too well.

PESH (REFINED)

ITEM 1

ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE DRUG INGESTED INHALED POISON

Price 2 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact

Saving Throw Fortitude DC 12; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 6 hours; **Stage 1** stupefied 1 and a +2 item bonus to saves versus fear effects (1 minute); **Stage 2** 1 temporary Hit Point per level (first time you reach this stage only), +2 item bonus to saves versus fear effects, clumsy 1, and stupefied 1 (1 minute); **Stage 3** clumsy 2 and stupefied 2 (1 hour)

OKENO

Originally a pirate enclave, the Yellow City has become the undisputed center of the slave trade in the Inner Sea. Run by a coalition of slavers under the oversight of the ruthless Governor Morio Midasi, Okeno is the only settlement of note on Stonespine Island—a place of cosmopolitan luxury that makes no effort to conceal the misery funding it. Slaves of every description are held in the city's notorious Fleshfairs, brought in from the Skindock through the underground Sweatways.

Though primarily human, the citizenry is also diverse, with a sizable contingent of gnolls and ratfolk. While Andoran's abolitionist Eagle Knights have tried for years to shut down the port, they've been stymied by the slavers' yellow-sailed fleet and the political power of those elites from other nations who come to frolic in the city's pleasure pits. Even if someone managed to ransack the port, rumor holds that the truly powerful slavers rule from secret treasure-vault compounds high in the island's trackless Stonespine Mountains.

OSIRION

One of the oldest continuous human civilizations in the Inner Sea region, Osirion is steeped in the legacy of its past. Though the era of Ancient Osirion is long gone, and the magical god-kings who once commanded armies of bound outsiders have been laid to rest in treasure-filled tombs across the nation, its legends continue to inspire and influence its modern incarnation. Not even millennia of Keleshite occupation could quash the traditions and stories of the Garundi. Since throwing off their colonial shackles in 4609 AR, Osirion has overflowed with patriotic pride and a renewed connection to the lost pharaohs through the guidance of the powerful Khemet dynasty.

Osirion's settlements have always relied on the annual flooding of its rivers, bringing life and nutrients to otherwise pitiless desert sands. Located at the mouth of the River Sphinx, the nation's capital, Sothis, is the center of trade in the region. Its sprawling districts spread out from the Black Dome—the shell of dread Ulunat, a beetle-like Spawn of Rovagug slain by the nation's first pharaoh. Upriver the Pharasmin necropolis city of Wati joins Teph, City of the Reed People, and An, City of Triangles, at the swampy merging of the Crook and Asp Rivers. All are protected by the militia at Ipeq, a bastion constructed by enslaved djinn and efreet and equipped with a fleet of magical scorpion boats. A few oasis cities such as Eto and Shiman-Sekh manage to survive along trade routes in the desert. Even here the touch of ancient magic can be felt in the lotus-shaped pools of the Golden Oasis and the black glass labyrinth recently discovered beneath Shiman-Sekh, sealed by multiple pharaohs and said to contain something called the "Seraph of Destruction."

Despite the nation's bustling industries and magical and military might, Osirians are constantly reminded that they live in the shadow of their former glory, and Osirion's landscape is thick with the ruins of the past. Here, the Slave Trenches of Hakotep, recently revealed to be a vast elemental engine. There, the ruins of Tumen, Osirion's former capital, buried by sandstorms after the death of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension. For every known site of legend, a dozen more lie undiscovered. Upon taking the throne, the Ruby Prince, Khemet III, briefly invited foreign scholars and archaeologists to explore these sites, advancing his goal of raising Osirion's profile while learning more of the secrets behind the ancients' miracles. But after both the disastrous return of the Sky Pharaoh a few years ago and uncovering the secret machinations of the Night Heralds hidden among the area's sites, the prince has attempted to restrict access once more, succeeding only in driving the thriving tomb-robbing business underground. The elites of other nations now have developed a desire for Osirian relics. For those bold enough to face trap-filled corridors, undead guardians, and ravenous monsters, the threat of government punishment does little to keep them from launching expeditions in search of priceless artifacts. And if in the process they end up releasing horrors that prey upon the surrounding cities—well, that just means more work for anyone with a sword or a spellbook.

FLYING PYRAMIDS

In 4714, the long-dead Sky Pharaoh Hakotep I rose from his tomb and attempted to reclaim his empire using a fleet of flying pyramids. When a band of heroes managed to defeat the

ECONOMICS

Despite the presence of productive mines and other natural resources, most of the Golden Road's economic power comes from trade. In Qadira and Katapesh, this is largely due to geographical and political factors, the result of being endpoints of major intercontinental trade routes. All of the nations are major importers of wood and finished goods, and many also export grain, beer, flax, papyrus, and salt. Osirion's primary exports are magical knowledge and rare antiquities, while Rahadoum exports clever machines and incomparable engineers, but must import major quantities of food. Thuvia, while self-sufficient, still leans on the lucrative sun orchid elixir for its status as a major player on the world stage.

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PACTMASTER

LEGAL RAHADOURI FAITHS

The Laws of Mortality prohibit obedience to a god—not faith or divine magic itself—and Rahadouri are fond of studying and debating different philosophies and doctrines. Among Rahadour's many legal faiths, the Green Faith is prominent, with druids in high demand to help heal citizens and farmland ravaged by drought and disease. Occultism and astrology are also acceptable. Diabolism and genie-binding are permitted so long as the mortal is the master. Even agnosticism can be tolerated, as long as it contains no direct worship, as can reincarnation faiths like Sangpotshi.

pharaoh, these pyramids came crashing down, causing great destruction when they landed near settlements. Yet the rough landing wasn't enough to destroy the pyramids' inhabitants, and today Osirion is dotted with these monster-filled fortresses. Overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the problem, the Ruby Prince's forces have managed to seal or partially clear out the pyramids closest to major cities and have banned anyone from entering them. Still, the guards are often easily bribed by grave robbers or by mercenaries hired by locals who fear the time bombs on their doorsteps. Some of the most famous include the Pyramid of Broken Earth, near Ipeq; the Pyramid of Crashing Waves, lying half submerged off the coast of Totra; the Pyramid of Righteous Fire, near An; and the Pyramid of Sounding Gales which crashed into Sothis itself, obliterating a portion of the Marblecourt district and forcing the Ruby Prince to permanently quarantine the area.

QADIRA

The easternmost nation of the Inner Sea region, Qadira is both a foothold and a gateway—the beginning or ending of the lucrative overland trade routes that cross vast Casmaron, and the farthest arm of a powerful empire that looms large, ever ready to swallow the independent nations of the Inner Sea.

Long ago, the high deserts of Qadira were home to nomadic herders who mingled with local genies and elementals, giving rise to a large population of geniekin. Even today it's not uncommon for geniekin to be born to parents who may have otherwise had no idea of their elemental ancestry. Qadira's early inhabitants created little in the way of permanent settlements. When the armies of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh rolled west into the region, seeking a trade port along the Inner Sea, these scattered bands had little choice but to assimilate into their conquerors' society.

By far the invaders' greatest influence on the region was the introduction of their Keleshite empire's patron goddess, Sarenrae. With her dervishes wielding healing light and righteous steel, the Dawnflower spread across the Inner Sea like a grass fire, finding legions of converts while sparking wars in northern Garund. This dichotomy between healing and harm was felt even within Qadira itself, where Sarenrae's faith is the state religion, as the goddess's emphasis on forgiveness clashed with Kelesh's expansionist tendencies. Most recently, the church's push to abolish slavery—a crusade that seems poised on the brink of victory—has made its priests unwelcome in slaving ports like Sedeq, where bottled djinn, shaitans trapped in amber, humanoid prisoners, and caged monsters all line the slave block.

As the point of Kelesh's spear, Qadira earns little love from its neighbors. Nobody inside or outside its borders has forgotten the way the empire swooped in to annex Osirion for millennia, or its centuries of brutal warfare with Taldor to the north. Of late, the rise of Grand Princess Eutropia as a strong ruler in Taldor has forced Satrap Xerbystes II to quiet his saber rattling. While the prideful satrap might wish otherwise, final command of the nation's armies belongs not to him but to his vizier Hebizid Vraj. Hebizid was appointed by the Padishah Emperor himself and able to overrule the satrap, should Xerbystes make decisions against the empire's interest. The satrap focuses instead on economic victories and defending the hundred stone watchtowers along the contested border. He satisfies his martial desires with the Peerless, a hand-selected group of heroes who undertake impossible missions into the nation's wild places for their monarch's glory and entertainment.

Ordinary Qadirans are just as proud as their leaders, and with good reason: each day they see their shores flooded with visitors who gape at the marvels of the Keleshite empire, from its animated siege engines and flying carpets to bands of genie mercenaries and great elemental-powered sandships that sail the dunes on phantom winds. Caravans arrive daily in Katheer, showcasing creatures and knowledge unseen in the west, and the Venicaan College of Medicaments and Chirurgery blends magic and medical



PURE LEGION ENFORCER

science to train the greatest healers for thousands of miles. Most Qadirans are legendarily persuasive, confident, and concerned with luxury and status, yet also honorable and generous. Hospitality is both sacred and formalized, with breaches of etiquette risking deadly feuds. Even criminals observe these codes of conduct.

Outside of the great caravan cities, Qadiran settlements are small and must defend themselves against feral giants, draconic beasts, angry elementals, and the other creatures of the desert. Sometimes residents are able to live in harmony with these strange creatures, such as in the scholarly enclave of Gurat, where a cyclops prophet called the Mouthpiece speaks invaluable truths to the satrap and is guarded by a thousand deaf soldiers. Legends also speak of independent settlements of geniekin high in the Zho Mountains, still resisting the empire's control. Though the settlements are hidden by powerful illusion spells, adventurers occasionally stumble across them, or they may reveal themselves to the worthy in moments of need. The more common outcome for adventurers, however, is finding only ruins, like those of Al-Bashir, whose resident harpies devour unwary caravans, or of lost Shadun, where shadows with burning eyes walk the ashen streets. Most practical caravan leaders headed through Qadira's deserts hire plenty of guards, making the nation a popular destination for both foreign mercenaries and elite local sellswords.

RAHADOUUM

The nation of Rahadoum was founded on a single principle: let no mortal be beholden to a god. Proposed by philosopher Kalim Onaku as a way to end the Oath Wars, this principle quickly expanded into a governing manifesto dubbed the Laws of Mortality. In the eyes of the Rahadoumi, religion is a form of indentured servitude—the sale of one's immortal soul. Worse, faith encourages violence and division between mortals while blinding believers to reason. Though often labeled as atheists, Rahadoumi do not doubt the existence of the gods—rather, they reject the idea of worship, seeing the gods as powerful and capricious aristocrats who use mortals as toys. In the Rahadoumi mind, it's better to live in freedom, with all the hardship it entails, than to spend eternity as a thrall.

All forms of deity worship are outlawed in Rahadoum. Possession of holy texts or symbols can result in heavy fines or exile, while preaching within its borders is punished by imprisonment or worse. With the exception of clerics and others who channel the gods' power, however, religious visitors are still welcome to trade in the ports or study in the nation's esteemed universities, so long as they do not proselytize or conduct religious rituals while there. Immigration to Rahadoum is also encouraged, with the dockside propagandists welcoming with song all those willing to “reject and rejoice.” Faiths that resemble religion but do not venerate divine beings are viewed with suspicion but tolerated—notably the Green Faith, since druids hired by the government present one of the best bulwarks against the nation's rapidly accelerating desertification. Enforcement of the laws governing religion falls to the Pure Legion, a sophisticated military organization based out of an unconquerable fortress called Shepherd's Rock high in the Napsune Mountains.

A council of representatives from every major settlement and nomadic group rules

SUN ORCHID ELIXIR

This Thuvian elixir offers extended life and a second youth.

SUN ORCHID ELIXIR

ITEM 20

RARE	ALCHEMICAL	CONSUMABLE
ELIXIR	NECROMANCY	

Price varies by auction

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activation  (Interact)

When you drink this elixir, you physically become as you were in whatever phase of your youth you desire. Your new body begins in peak health, regardless of what your actual condition was at that age. Any physical or mental imperfections—including scars, lost limbs, and curses, diseases, poisons of 20th level or lower—are removed, and you regain your full Hit Points. You immediately begin to age normally again, with your natural lifespan extended as if you had never aged past your new apparent age. You retain all your memories.

Unlike Crafting most items, brewing the sun orchid elixir takes 1 month's time. While an individual vial of sun orchid elixir isn't unique, the formula is unique, and it's known only to Artokus Kirran of Thuvia.



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VENICAAAN COLLEGE OF
MEDICAMENTS AND CHIRURGERY

RELATIONS

The nations along Garund's northern shores are connected economically by the Path of Salt, a vital coastal trade route stretching across the continent.

Nevertheless, ancient tensions run high: Rahadoun and Thuvia dislike each other due to conflict between the atheists and Sarenites, while oft-conquered Thuvia trusts neither its neighbors nor anyone else, knowing how many foreign governments would happily invade to take the sun orchid elixir for themselves. Osirion, for its part, is pragmatically friendly toward both of them, saving its distrust for Qadira and the Keleshites who oppressed it until recently. In the south, Katapesh makes a point of maintaining trade relations with everyone—though the recent international turn against slavery is causing problems—and Qadira doesn't care what anyone thinks as long as trade flows and Taldor doesn't challenge its borders.

Rahadoun, voting every 5 years to appoint one of the members as head of state, called the Keeper of the First Law. Ordinary Rahadoumi tend to be independent and educated, debating the latest political issues and philosophical treatises with the ardor of Chelaxians following penny operas.

The Rahadoumi economy relies on ingenuity, with a huge merchant and artisan class exporting high-quality crafts and mechanical innovations. The absence of the gods' influence allows arcane magic to flourish, and mercenary groups train elite warriors tough enough to forgo their peers' reliance on divine healing.

Rahadoun's capital of Azir seems almost like two different cities. To outsiders, it's a bustling river port and the center for trade in the region, with brightly colored markets and huge, hypermodern buildings whose architects use the latest feats of engineering to seemingly break geometry with their fanciful shapes. Yet just behind this facade is a sprawl of slums and trash-walled tenements, where refugees from desertification across the nation struggle to survive and join the city's middle class.

Fifty miles offshore, the island of Nuat feeds the capital's masses with the best farmland in the nation. It also harbors much of Rahadoun's navy. Unfortunately, while the island's sailors excel at protecting the seas near Azir from the Shackles' Free Captains, no amount of military presence has been able to drive out the Thin Men—ghostly spirits that haunt Nuat's cane fields and terrify its residents.

Rahadoun's government is concerned primarily with the future and innovation. It cares little for the relics of the past, leaving the study of such things to wizards from Manaket's esteemed Occularium. In the deep deserts and remote reaches of the Napsune Mountains, legendary Jistkan ruins including Lost Yemal, the Tomb of Emperors, and the Hanging City of Teskra stand ripe for adventurers able to brave their ancient traps and resident monsters, as does the magically lush Eternal Oasis. Yet reaching such destinations means contending with fierce lamia bands, the sand traps of giant antlions, and legendary threats like Khanjar-Khanayr the Stone Maw, the fiendish dragon who lurks in his mountain lair of Ghataking, waiting for a sign that it's time to rise up and lay waste to the region.

RAHADOUMI HEALING

With limited access to divine healing magic, Rahadoumi often become adept at using ordinary medicine for when dangerous situations arise.

GODLESS HEALING

FEAT 2

GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites Battle Medicine, can't have a patron deity

You recover an additional 5 Hit Points from a successful attempt to Treat your Wounds or use Battle Medicine on you. After you or an ally use Battle Medicine on you, you become temporarily immune to that Battle Medicine for only 1 hour, instead of 1 day.

THUVIA

When most people think of Thuvia, they think of the sun orchid elixir: the legendary potion capable of reversing the effects of aging. Discovered thousands of years ago by Artokus Kirran, the draught is derived from the famed flower that grows only in the harshest reaches of Thuvia's desert, though its exact formula is known only to the immortal alchemist himself. A child of the chaos that followed the collapse of Ancient Osirion, Artokus met with local leaders

MERAB

and concocted a plan to use the vast wealth generated by the elixir to help his fellow downtrodden nomads. Artokus would remain a hermit, secreted in a hidden and heavily defended citadel in the Barrier Wall. Each year, he would send forth a blind, mute servant bearing six vials of the elixir. These would then be auctioned off—never to fellow Thuvians, lest they incur Pharamasma's wrath—in a one-bid auction, with all proceeds (including the losing bids) going to the government. The right to sell this elixir would rotate annually between the region's five city-states, binding them together into the reborn nation of Thuvia.

The elixir is the root of Thuvia's international power, and so Thuvian society has developed around it. Each of the five major cities is built to accommodate a huge influx of visitors twice a decade as merchants and entertainers flood in to accommodate the foreign bidders and their retinues. It has also forced the cities to strengthen their defenses, whether with magical or military might, lest outside nations seek to annex them or take the elixir by force. Foreign gold has built vast palaces and irrigation projects, universities and theaters. Yet even with all of this, most Thuvians are never directly involved in the elixir trade, instead herding flocks in the traditional nomadic style, mining ore and salt, trading with merchant caravans, or wrestling the desert into fertile bloom.

Thuvia's two largest cities are both coastal, situated along the trade route known as the Path of Salt. Merab is often seen as the capital due to it being twice the size of the next largest city, though it has no more power than its fellows. Famed for its alchemy, the city's Flowing Market bursts with potions ranging from the mundane to the impossible. Alchemical street lamps light the night, as do the eternal flames atop the minarets of the Temple of the Redeeming Sun, the largest Sarenite temple in the country. To the east, the city of Aspenthar is more dour, with its scheming Prince Zinlow requiring all citizens to join the military reserves in what many expect to be an eventual attempt to conquer the other cities, or perhaps kidnap Artokus himself.

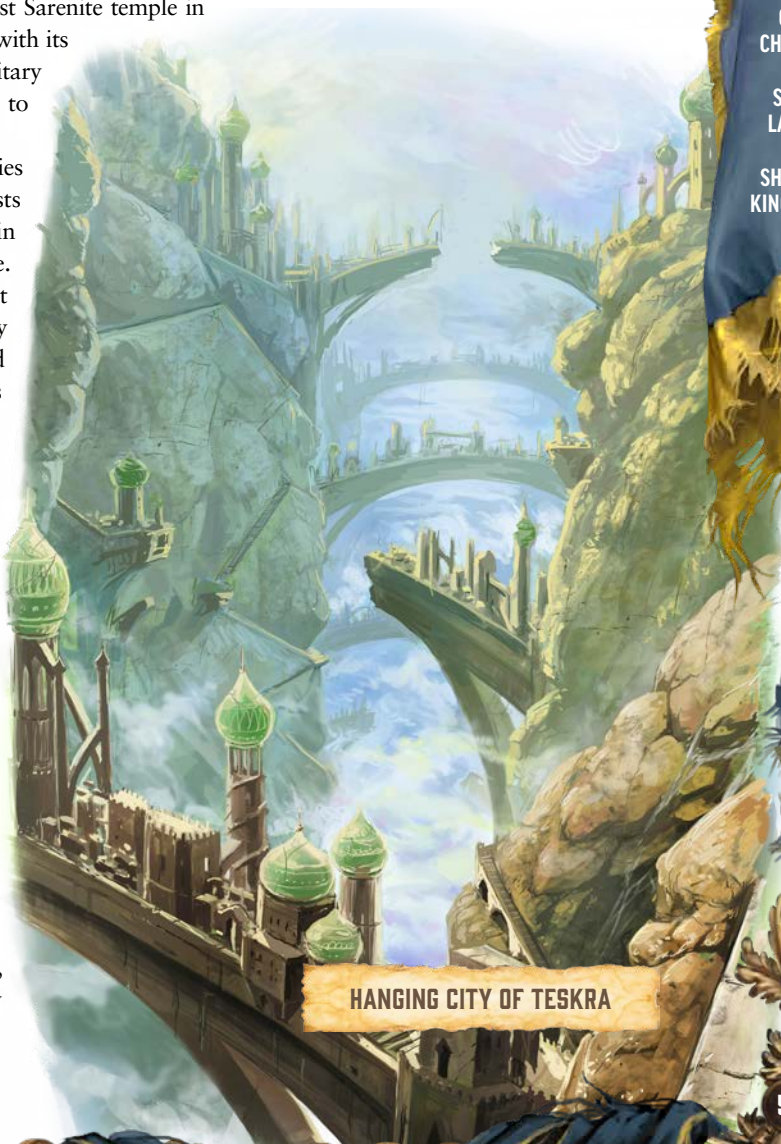
On the Junira River that marks the border with Osirion lies Lamasara. The city is a port of pleasures, dedicated to artists and hedonists of all sorts and popular with tourists even in its off years thanks to the savvy policies of Queen Zamere. The isolated city of Duwwor, by contrast, has little interest in outsiders, and its citizens are devoted to living in harmony with the land. Boasting an immense temple to Gozreh and closely allied with a circle of desert druids, Duwwor is home to the best guides in the nation, taking scholars and adventurers deep into the dunes in search of the ruins of the Tekritanin League. Just as famous are the windmills that adorn Duwwor's buildings and fields, harnessing the desert winds to power ingenious constructs and industry.

Smallest of the great cities is Pashow, dedicated to Nethys and organized around arcanists studying or teaching at the Scrollspire, the magical university built atop the entrance to an ancient Tekritanin library-well. Pashow's isolation makes it vulnerable to raids by the Water Lords, nomadic warriors who inhabit the nation's trackless interior, and the Scrollspire regularly shelters townsfolk within its walls.

Of the numerous monsters that hunt Thuvia's wastes, the most feared are the fiendish divs. Long ago, the div demigod Ahriman dwelled in Thuvia's heart, called there by the Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues and housed in the vast magical palace known as the House of Oblivion. While Ahriman was eventually driven back to Abaddon, his murderous divs lurk throughout the desert, served by nihilistic cultists called the Usij.

KELESH

While many residents of the Inner Sea region view Qadira as an independent nation, it is in fact only one of many semi-independent satrapies that make up the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, spanning much of vast Casmaron. Crafted over millennia by elemental might, the wish magic of bound genies, and the occult calculations of esoteric mathematicians, the empire rules unchallenged over several major trade routes, though its control dwindles northward among the nomadic horse tribes of the Windswept Wastes. Though the imperial line has never been broken, the current monarch, Kalish XXII, is already in his nineties, and many fear civil war between his numerous heirs when he finally dies.



HANGING CITY OF TESKRA

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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Golden Road region.

BLACK MARKET SMUGGLER

BACKGROUND

You know how to work the less-than-legal side of the region's markets and know how to slip contraband past the authorities.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Wisdom or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Stealth skill and the Underworld Lore skill. You gain the Experienced Smuggler skill feat.

DESERT TRACKER

BACKGROUND

You're at home blazing trails in the burning sands, and you made a living guiding or following creatures in the desert. You might

be a native nomad, an experienced desert guide, a naturalist, a bandit driven into the dunes by the law—or all of the above.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Desert Lore skill. You gain the Experienced Tracker skill feat.

MERABITE PRODIGY

BACKGROUND

Even in a city renowned for its alchemy, you were able to rise above the competition.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Alchemical Lore skill. You gain the Specialty Crafting skill feat with alchemy.

OSIRIONOLOGIST

BACKGROUND

Whether you're a fascinated outsider or a local proud of your nation's storied past, you're a devoted student of Osirion's history. You might be a traveling professor, a member of a society like the Pathfinders or the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, or even a simple tomb robber cashing in on the glories of the past.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Occultism skill and the Ancient Osirion Lore skill. You gain the Oddity Identification skill feat.

PURVEYOR OF THE BIZARRE

BACKGROUND

Whether in Katapesh or one of the bustling markets along the Path of Salt, you've spent enough time buying and selling ancient or unusual items to give you an instinctive ability to quickly sort valuable trinkets from worthless baubles.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and the Mercantile Lore skill. You gain the Quick Identification skill feat.

SECULAR MEDIC

BACKGROUND

You're from Rahadoun, where the Laws of Mortality taught you to reject the gods, yet you've seen firsthand how dangerous it can be to go without healing magic. As a result, you've thrown yourself into the study of medicine, so you can save lives without saving souls.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Wisdom or Dexterity, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Medicine skill and the Anatomy Lore skill. You gain the Battle Medicine skill feat.

THUVIAN UNIFIER

BACKGROUND

You believe the city-states of Thuvia should be united into one nation under the rule of your home city (most commonly Aspenthar), and you're willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Politics Lore skill. You gain the Quick Coercion skill feat.



LIVING MONOLITH

You have delved into ancient sphinx magic to imbue your body and soul with the patience and strength of stone, as you work to create a special magical *ka stone* to finalize your oaths.

LIVING MONOLITH DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Ancient Osiriani and Sphinx languages, trained in Crafting; **Access** You are from the Golden Road region.

You've begun to inscribe a magical stone called a *ka stone* that you will some day tie to your soul. You gain knowledge of Ancient Osirion and a connection to your nascent *ka stone*. If you fail a recovery check while dying, your dying condition does not increase; if you critically fail, your dying condition increases by only 1. You become trained in Ancient Osirion Lore, or expert if you were already trained.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the living monolith archetype.

KA STONE RITUAL

FEAT 4

RARE ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Living Monolith Dedication, a sphinx or living monolith with this feat performs a ritual with you

You inscribe your true name on your *ka stone*, as well as oaths to gods and pharaohs, and embed it in your forehead in a special ritual with a sphinx or with a living monolith who already has this feat. The *ka stone* is an invested magic item that you automatically invest each day. It can't be removed without your permission, nor can it be dispelled, and you can never lose investiture in the *ka stone*. Its Bulk is negligible.

The *ka stone* grants you a +1 item bonus to saves against death effects and negative effects, which increases to +2 at 8th level, +3 at 14th level, and +4 at 20th level.

Activate ♦♦ (envision), or a different activation if otherwise specified; **Frequency** a number of times each day equal to the number of class feats you have from the Living Monolith archetype; **Effect** You cast *enlarge* on yourself or use one of the other activated abilities granted by a later Living Monolith feat.

STONE BLOOD

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ka Stone Ritual

You can selectively stop your bleeding with ease. Reduce the DC of flat checks to stop persistent bleed damage you have from 15 to 10, and you can use a single action that has the concentrate trait to gain an early flat check without physically binding the wounds. You recover naturally from the drained condition twice as quickly as normal.

FORTIFIED FLESH

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ka Stone Ritual

Your flesh takes on the hardness of stone. You gain resistance to physical damage (except adamantine) equal to your number of class feats from the Living Monolith archetype.

ATTUNEMENT TO STONE

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ka Stone Ritual

You become attuned to the stone around you. When in contact with a stone surface, you gain tremorsense (imprecise) 5 feet along that surface, and you can activate your *ka stone* to cast *meld into stone*.

JUDGMENT OF THE MONOLITH

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ka Stone Ritual

You can use the oaths bound in your *ka stone* to compel the truth from the living and the dead. You can activate your *ka stone* to target a single living creature, causing that creature to experience the effects of being in a *zone of truth*. You can also activate it with a 10-minute activation (envision) to cast *talking corpse*.

STONE COMMUNION

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ka Stone Ritual

You gain a unique communion with the earth and stones. You learn the Terran language and you can Activate your *ka stone* with a 10-minute activation (envision) to cast *stone tell*.



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HIGH SEAS

NATIONS



HERMEA [LN]
Meritocracy
Capital: Promise (6,300)



THE SHACKLES [CN]
Council of Pirate Lords
Capital: Port Peril (43,270)



MEDIOGALTI ISLAND [LE]
Secret Society
Capital: Ilizmagorti (20,500)



MORDANT SPIRE [N]
Council of Elders
Capital: Mordant Spire (2,120)

PEOPLES

All

LANGUAGES

Azlanti
Common
Elven
Hallit
Infernal
Mwangi

Skald

FACTIONS



Firebrands



Free
Captains



Red Mantis

RELIGIONS



Achaek



Cayden
Cailean



Besmara



Gozreh



Calistria



Norgorber

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Mercenaries



Seafood



Ships



Spices/Salt



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CHELIAX

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KINGDOMS

HIGH SEAS

IRONBOUND ARCHIPELAGO

• Mordant Spire

STEAMING SEA

Promise

HERMEA

• Irim

ARCADIAN
OCEAN

• Gholinom

INNER SEA

★ Absalom

• Ilizmagorti

MEDIOGALT I ISLAND

Eye of
Abendego

THE SHACKLES

Quent

• Hell Harbor

★ Port Peril

• Bloodcove

FEVER SEA

500 MILES



TIMELINE

- 5293 AR Earthfall. Azlant is destroyed.
The ruins of Azlant remain in the central Arcadian Ocean.
- 2559 AR Fleeing the Oath Wars, the Red Mantis leaves Rahadom and settles Mediogalti Island.
- 4111 AR Explorers from Cheliox first reach the Shackles.
- 4137 AR Cheliox gains control of both sides of the Arch of Aroden.
- 4138 AR Chelish settlers found the port colony of Sargava.
- 4552 AR Mengkare founds Hermea.
- 4606 AR The Eye of Abendego forms, wracking Garund's western coast and drowning the nations of Lirgen and Yamasa.
- 4643 AR Paid by Baron Grallus, various Free Captains fend off the Chelish fleet, establishing Sargava's independence.
- 4674 AR The pirates of the Shackles officially unite under the Hurricane King.
- 4712 AR The Shackles fend off the Chelish Navy's most recent invasion attempt. Tessa Fairwind becomes the new Hurricane Queen, taking the title from former Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist.
- 4713 AR In the north, the lost Isle of Xin rises from the waters off Varisia's coast; the resulting tsunami causes damage as far away as Hermea.
- 4715 AR Indigenous Mwangi overthrow Sargava's colonial government and end the nation's arrangement with the Free Captains. Free Captains begin raiding the formerly allied ports.
- 4716 AR Emboldened by their defeat of the Chelish Navy in 4712 and by Cheliox's civil war with Ravounel, pirates from the Shackles plunder the port of Corentyn.
- 4717 AR Andoren settlers establish the colony of Talmador's Bounty on the island of Ancorato in the ruins of Azlant.

The seas surrounding Avistan and Garund are rough and lawless places. Controlled by no nation, the Arcadian Ocean teems with pirates and raiders, from the Free Captains of the Shackles to the dragon-headed longships of the Linnorm Kings. Since gaining control of both sides of the Arch of Aroden—the massive ruined bridge across the Hespereth Strait between Avistan and Garund—Cheliox's navy has limited these brigands' access to the Inner Sea, yet that by no means makes the seas safe. Okeno's yellow-sailed slave galleys engage in a perpetual and bloody game of cat-and-mouse with Andoran's abolitionist Gray Corsairs, and plenty of other homegrown threats hunt the depths. Yet despite the danger, the waterways of the Inner Sea region are crucial to trade. Merchant fleets of all sorts travel its sea lanes, carrying goods and travelers between neighboring nations or setting off for the far side of the globe.

Most nations with a coastline have some sort of navy, but a few stand out as particularly noteworthy. Constantly at each other's throats, Andoran and Cheliox have the two largest fleets, their warships forever harassing each other but keeping just short of actions that would tip them into outright war. Once an equally formidable power, Taldor's navy is only recently being built up again after dwindling for several decades, though it still runs a legendary shipyard that can build a warship in a single week. Absalom maintains a significant fleet, aided by gillmen and the unique hippocampus-mounted cavalry called Wave Riders. As the most valuable port in the Inner Sea, Absalom has been forced to call on its navy many times to maintain its independence, yet it follows the lead of most other nations and restricts itself to strictly defensive operations. Fleets on the Arcadian Ocean tend to be much smaller, with the Free Captains dominating the southern waters and Cheliox guarding the northern ones, though nations like Rahadom and even individual cities like Magnimar and Korvosa need to maintain significant defenses against ocean-going raiders and the plethora of monstrous threats lurking beneath the waves.

Since the demise of Azlant during Earthfall, crossing the Arcadian Ocean has been considered madness by many Inner Sea residents, with Arcadia itself a half-believed legend. Tales of bold adventurers raiding the shattered isles of Azlant for the fantastic treasures lingering in its half-drowned ruins have been staples of storytellers since Aroden first led survivors to the mainland. In recent years, news of state-sponsored overseas colonies have begun capturing popular imagination. Still, for most sailors in the region, the Arcadian Ocean might as well represent the western edge of the world. The vast majority of traders never leave sight of land—and those who do are often persuaded of their folly by merfolk, sea devils, brine dragons, and other predators of the deep ocean.

AZLANTI RUINS

Inner Sea legends often place any sufficiently marvelous location in the ruins of Azlant, and the truth is that even after millennia of degradation, the actual sites uncovered by explorers are every bit as magical as their legends. Much of the Inner Sea region's initial knowledge of the lost empire came from famed Pathfinder Durvin Gest. Delving into an Azlanti sea stack temple called the House of Aeons, he discovered not just a vast trove of magical *aeon stones* but a giant metal book called the *Infalabulum* that described many of the empire's wonders and their locations, guiding both Gest's future explorations and those of the Pathfinder Society.

The most marvelous of Azlant's ruins is its former capital, the City of Golden Gates. Said to be literally the perfect city, granted by Abadar as an example to the Material Plane, the hillside metropolis was destroyed by a direct strike during Earthfall; its Imperial Palace and Throne of Glass shattered, and much of the city sank beneath the waves. Today, the underwater portions of its ruins are guarded by jealous algholthus—the intelligent ichthyoid monsters who rule the deeps—while dragons and formerly bound demons stalk the dry portions.

One of the few cities to survive Earthfall—after a fashion—is Acrolan, the first of the Seven Secret Cities crafted as havens for the psychic Ascended Adepts.



IRIM

Though Acrolan's towers and palaces of colored glass were smashed, the secret truth is that the ruined land was only ever a monument to the real city, which lies behind it on the Ethereal Plane. Warped into hateful wraiths by the trauma of their civilization's end, the Ascended Adepts who once populated Acrolan still wait within the broken temples for those who can pass the tests to ascend to the true city and battle its masters for their vast wealth.

The temple-city of Bilith-Vel is ruled by the undead monstrosity Rezallian, a lunar dragon who was horrifically warped by the death of his liege Acavna, the Azlanti goddess of the moon and battle. Acavna's death during Earthfall left Rezallian to oversee the dregs of the city's population: Azlanti degenerated into morlocks or risen as draugr, and giant, tentacled flatworms from the far side of the moon. Bilith-Vel's towers and statues to the dead goddess are sunk halfway under the waves but are still connected by soaring bridges.

Yet not all of Azlant's most notable sites are haunted by survivors. Aroden's Rock was one of Azlant's tallest mountains prior to Earthfall, when it was reshaped into a mere island; there, Aroden and his followers built ships to sail east and start a new civilization. Today, the island teems with the murderous fey who opposed Aroden then, ruled by Ugurskogg, a terrifying entity from the planet's earliest days. And unmarked on any map, the fabled Towers of Heaven that were once Azlant's secret route to reaching the stars still stand dry in their salt-flat desert, guarded by a mu spore who hopes to harness their power to return home to a distant world.

EYE OF ABENDEGO

Aroden's death in 4606 AR wracked Golarion physically and culturally, yet perhaps no evidence of his passing is so great as the massive, terrifying storm that sprang up in the Abendego Gulf. Now a stationary, seemingly permanent hurricane, the Eye of Abendego lashed Garund's western coast, drowning the nations of Lirgen and Yamasa and creating the flooded wastes known today as the Sodden Lands.

BLACK PEARL AEON STONE

The treasure troves of Azlant are full of magical *aeon stones* like this one. For full rules on using *aeon stones*, see page 604 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.

BLACK PEARL AEON STONE


ITEM 12

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Usage worn; Bulk –

Price 2,000

This black pearl sparkles with light.

Activate  **envision**; **Trigger** you are targeted by a mental effect. **Effect** You receive a +4 status bonus to your saving throw against the triggering effect. Whether or not your save is successful, the *aeon stone* attempts a counteract check at +30 to immediately reflect a copy of the effect back at the originator, targeting it using the creature's own relevant statistics but controlling the effect as if you had cast it.

Every time you activate this *aeon stone*, attempt a DC 5 flat check. On a failure, the stone shatters and loses its magical properties forever.

The resonant power allows you to cast *sending* once per day.

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SAGA LANDS

SHINING KINGDOMS

NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



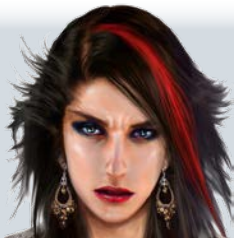
AMARANTHINE COUNCIL

The leaders of the Mordant Spire are mysterious and secretive even with their own people, issuing cryptic orders that their followers must puzzle out.



HURRICANE QUEEN TESSA FAIRWIND

Wildly popular with ordinary pirates, the new Hurricane Queen nevertheless makes some of the other Free Captains nervous with her recklessness.



BLOOD MISTRESS JAKALYN

The head of the Red Mantis and the high priest of Achaekek on Golarion, Jakalyn uses both wit and force to control the organization's ruling council.



MENGKARE

An extremely old gold dragon, Mengkare freely offers both his hoard and his wisdom to the citizens of Hermea who submit to his rule.

While the timing of its appearance clearly ties it to the death of humanity's patron god, scholars still know little about the magic that powers it or what keeps it tethered in place. Scrying spells reveal a calm central eye clogged thick with flotsam ranging from the minuscule to entire floating structures, yet expeditions attempting to investigate in person invariably find themselves beset by air elementals, undead, and sea monsters.

Still, the danger and mystery of the storm haven't prevented neighboring cultures from finding ways to make use of it. For the pirates of the Shackles, the hurricane's winds serve as a natural defense against the navies of the north. It also serves as a barrier restricting sea lanes and forcing vulnerable traders looking for sea access to the Mwangi Expanse to come right past the pirates' isles. Most Free Captains learn to use the endless storm to their advantage, darting out of its squalls to take their prey unaware before disappearing back into the storm, stymieing any pursuit. The pirate lords even host an annual race through the hurricane's edges—the Free Captain's Regatta—with the winner awarded an island and a seat on the Pirate Council. Similarly, the Red Mantis of Mediogalti Island use the storm's wrath as a convenient buffer against invasion by other nations. Amid the storm's wrack and beneath its waves, bloodthirsty adaros, sea devils, and krakens hunt for hapless victims and wayward treasure. And on the mainland, the boggard tribes of the Sodden Lands worship the storm as a manifestation of Rovagug.

HERMEA

A dragon-ruled civilization in the Steaming Sea, Hermea is the topic of legends and rumors among children and adults alike across the Inner Sea region. For centuries, the gold dragon Mengkare watched humanity bicker and constantly refuse to rise above their baser nature to realize their full potential. Yet while other metallic dragons largely dismissed humanity, Mengkare remained impressed by human resilience and resourcefulness, becoming convinced that—with a little guidance—they might one day become the civilization that would bring peace and prosperity to the planet for good. At last seeing a cause noble enough to dedicate his life to, he immediately relocated to an empty island in the southern Steaming Sea and used the wealth of his vast hoard to found Hermea, a nation dedicated to his vision of perfecting humanity.

Dubbed the Glorious Endeavor, Mengkare's campaign is shrouded in mystery. Under his command, covert scouts travel the world seeking out humans who are paragons of both intelligence and physical prowess, often tracking them for years before issuing the handful of invitations Mengkare authorizes each year. Those who accept are transported to Hermea and presented with the Contract of Citizenship, in which the chosen agree to cede their free will and be bound by Mengkare's enlightened judgment forever. All former nationalities and allegiances must be renounced, including even organized religion. In exchange, recipients are promised permanent access to Hermea's extensive resources and a life of perpetual comfort while they pursue their passions in a closed society of brilliant and beautiful peers.

According to residents, life in Hermea is dedicated to fulfilling one's potential, whether that be through magic or art, combat or science. While the island hosts some startlingly efficient agricultural projects, its economy is powered primarily by the sale of its crafts and expertise to outside nations. The harbor of the nation's only city, Promise, bustles with traders and scholars. All business is conducted on the docks, as few outsiders are allowed within the city's high sandstone walls. The state takes most of the funds earned in this manner, but Hermea's citizens have no worries for money—each may requisition whatever they require, for a poet who dedicates himself to the perfect sonnet is just as valued by Hermean society as a wizard who crafts magical artifacts or a warrior who hires herself out to slay monsters in far-off kingdoms. Hermea's population is almost entirely human, though Mengkare sometimes brings in exceptional members of other ancestries to teach at the island's many universities, especially if they might add beneficial traits to the gene pool.

Of course, while many residents of the Inner Sea region long for such a life of

prestige and luxury, not everyone sees Mengkare's experiment as noble. For many, the idea of a human breeding experiment is abhorrent no matter the goal, and asking someone to sign away their personal autonomy is akin to indenturing them. Yet proponents are quick to point to the arranged marriages common in many cultures and assert that the Hermean government is simply formalizing the practice. These advocates further claim that although Mengkare wields absolute power, he honors the intelligence and independence of his subjects and takes their preferences and happiness into account. While the presence of two draconic viziers who help oversee his mission earns some rumblings of resentment, Mengkare still defers to the 13 elected officials of the Council of Enlightenment for most governmental decisions.

The greatest strain in Hermean society centers around the issue of family: while Hermea-born children are given every advantage, those who don't show sufficient potential for Mengkare's standards of greatness when they undergo the Assessment at age 16 are banished to the mainland, never to return. Known grounds for banishment include merely average intelligence, lack of life goals, mental illness of any kind, physical impairments, and disruptive behavior; in other instances, the reason is a mystery to both the unfortunate exiles and their families.

MEDIOGALTI ISLAND

The largest landmass off the western coast of Garund, Mediogalti Island seems at first glance a wild place, made even more perilous by its residents. In its misty jungles, monkey goblins and kobolds hunt—or hide from—ferocious dinosaurs and ruthless lizardfolk, while pirates of all stripes carouse in the deepwater port of Ilizmagorti. Yet beneath the surface chaos, the island is in fact a tightly controlled nation run by one of the most feared organizations on Golarion: the Red Mantis assassins.

Following a vision from their murderous god Achaek, the Red Mantis fled the Oath Wars in Rahadoum and settled the island in 2559 AR. They quickly began construction on a new headquarters, the Crimson Citadel, deep in the verdant mountains of the island's interior. After it was finally completed nearly 4 decades later, the cult turned its attention to converting the existing pirate town of Ilizmagorti on the island's northern shore into a haven for criminals and fugitives, the better to host those looking to contact the assassins with job offers. Though the Red Mantis has little interest in directly governing the affairs of locals, it officially owns all establishments on the island, with proprietors paying for the privilege of operating them. The city's constantly shifting population of thieves and scoundrels remains astonishingly polite due to the well-known fact that most members of the Red Mantis live covertly among the city's residents, so any bartender or shopkeeper could be a highly skilled assassin in disguise.

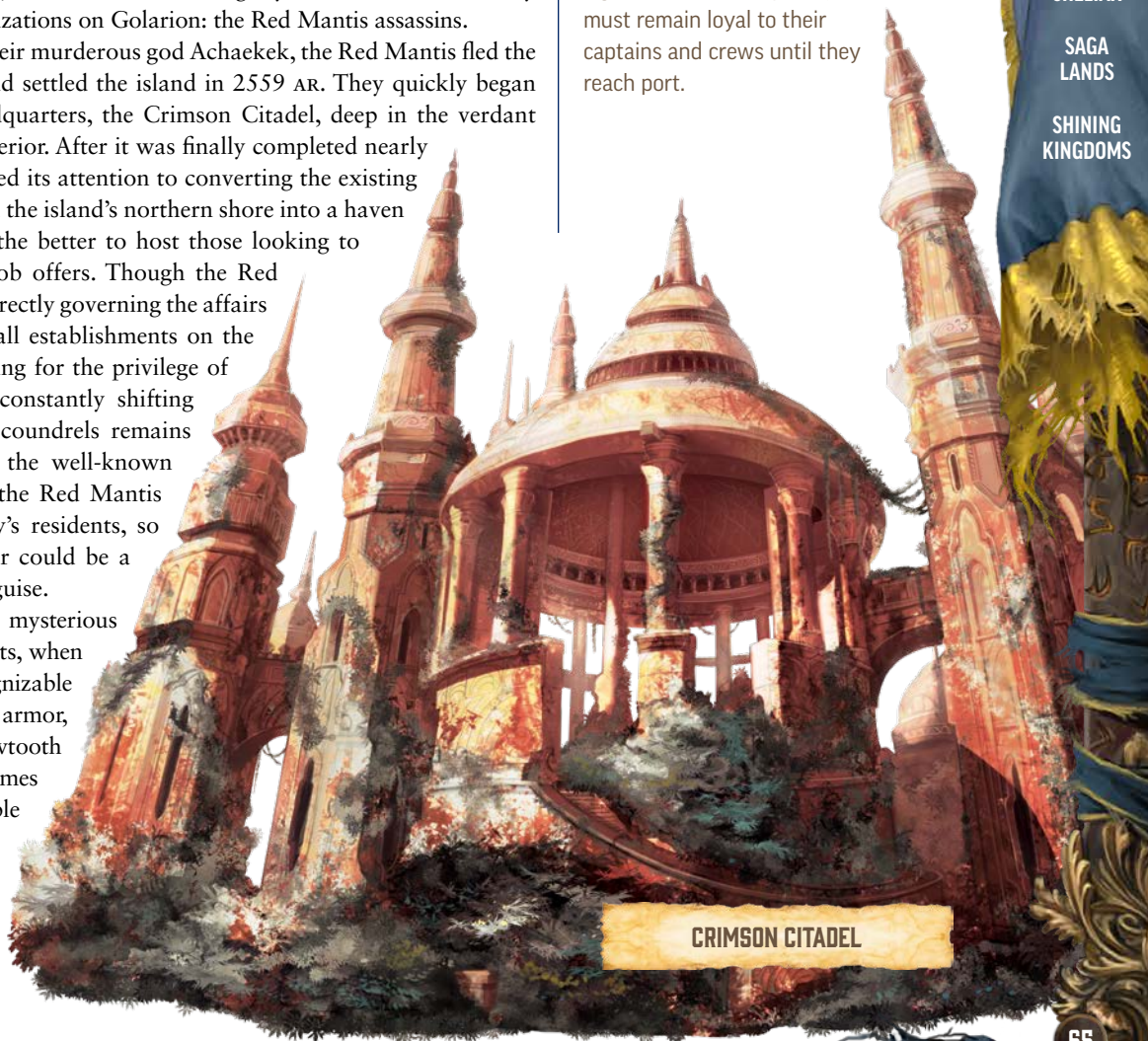
The Red Mantis itself is a mysterious organization, though its agents, when active, are instantly recognizable by their black-and-red armor, mantis-like helmets, and sawtooth sabers. The assassins' fame comes not just from their incredible reliability, but from the fact that they ensure their clients stay dead, preventing any chance of resurrection. Their fees vary widely, and

ACHAEKEK

He Who Walks in Blood takes the form of a giant mantis and is the patron god of assassins, especially the Red Mantis. Created by other gods as an implement of retribution against mortals who might challenge divine authority, Achaek kills with professional detachment and encourages his followers to do the same. He refuses to kill other gods, however, and thus forbids his followers from killing mortal monarchs, seeing them as divinely appointed to their roles.

BESMARA

The freewheeling Pirate Queen is the goddess of buccaneers, privateers, sea monsters, and all those who ply the waves to take their fortune by force. She encourages her worshippers to defy laws and customs that hold them back from what they desire, yet she demands that they follow the pirate's code—once signed on with a ship, they must remain loyal to their captains and crews until they reach port.



CRIMSON CITADEL

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RELATIONS

Relations among the nations of the high seas are tense, to put it mildly. The Free Captains are never more than a wrong word away from knifing each other, and they are even less generous toward outsiders. As for the Red Mantis, only the truly desperate seek dealings with them.

And though they are not xenophobic like the Mordant Spire elves, Hermeans still keep to themselves on their island.

Plenty of people from the mainland admire them and seek them out for their impressive abilities, but many more consider them hopelessly arrogant, if not downright immoral for their pride in their carefully orchestrated bloodlines and eugenics practices.

while nonnegotiable, are largely symbolic—for the Red Mantis, assassination is a form of worship. All targets are valid apart from rightfully placed rulers of nations; these are exempted by divine law. Rank-and-file agents are self-organized into cells to fulfill various contracts, but all pay deference to the Blood Mistress, who acts as the undisputed voice of Achaek, and to her Vernai (or “High Killers”), a cabal of mostly female assassin lords.

Only Red Mantis members know the exact location of the Crimson Citadel—would-be clients who seek the cult’s attention instead typically advertise their desires in Ilizmagorti. Yet rumors of the stronghold’s wonders and horrors are still whispered in bars and throne rooms across Golarion. The lower levels, called the Ruby Halls to evoke walls stained with blood, are the cult’s training center, stocked with deadly beasts and traps. The central levels, called the Honeyed Gardens, make up a pleasure palace where the assassins celebrate successful jobs with every vice imaginable, relaxing in the spray of a waterfall of fresh blood. The fortress’s towers, called the Lavish Heart, house the cult’s leadership, while a hidden sanctum called the Iron Heart holds the Sarzari Library, said to be an impressive collection of ancient knowledge accessible only by the Blood Mistress herself.

MORDANT SPIRE

Since time beyond memory, Golarion’s elves have been at war with the scheming alghollthus. Thus, when the Azlanti first rose to power as servants of the alghollthus’ so-called veiled masters, the elves considered the Azlanti enemies as well, and built a magical observatory off their shores to spy on them. These observers were among the first to learn of the alghollthus’ plan to bring about Earthfall, and they warned elvenkind to retreat to Sovyrian. When elves returned from Sovyrian millennia later, they found that their former outpost had been crushed by the falling body of Acavna, the Azlanti goddess of the moon and battle, who died trying to defend her people. In its place, a strange tower had grown—one that whispered to them with a goddess’s voice.

In that voice and in the disturbing visions it granted, they found a calling. Now considering themselves the heirs of Azlant, the former observers settled in the tower and cut themselves off from the rest of the world, laying claim to the shattered continent. They guard it both to protect this claim and as defense against humanity ever rediscovering the power—and hubris—of the lost nation and somehow triggering a second Earthfall.

After generations of isolation, the elves of the Mordant Spire are few in number and have become secretive and xenophobic, strange even to their former brethren. Often refusing to speak anything but Azlanti, they wear elaborate wooden masks whenever dealing with outsiders, and they often change the subject or stop speaking mid-sentence, cocking their heads as if listening to an inaudible voice. Completely self-sufficient, they live on rocky beaches and floating platforms anchored to the sea floor, tending kelp beds and fish farms. Outsiders are likely to interact with the elves only if they break the Mordant Spire’s rules against exploring Azlant’s ruins, in which case they find themselves quickly beset by elven warriors who patrol the region in rune-carved vessels that skim the waves faster than any ordinary ship. Captured trespassers have any Azlanti treasures confiscated and their minds wiped with magic.

MORDANT SPIRE

The Mordant Spire elves are highly regimented. The Amaranthine Council rules unconditionally and never leaves the tower; its members are marked by the purple vapor that leaks from their empty eye sockets. Beneath them, the Listeners keep to the Vigilant Halls near the tower's peak, communing with the spirit of the tower and observing Azlant's ruins through magical seawater lenses. When they detect a threat, they dispatch the Mordant Censors, the warriors and spellcasters who make up the bulk of the patrols. Many other specialized roles also exist, including the rare diplomats who warn other nations to stay away and the saboteurs who ensure any serious incursion never gets off the ground. Still, in recent years, some of the elves have begun to grudgingly work with colonists in Azlant to face larger algholthu threats, and it may be only a matter of time until the Spire's strict traditions change.

THE SHACKLES

When explorers from Cheliox first reached the Shackles in 4111 AR, they found the island chain rife with ruins from the ancient cyclops empire of Ghol-Gan. The remaining walls of these colossal buildings were so densely illustrated with murals of blood-soaked rites and unholy sacrifices that no Chelaxian dared consider these haunted shores suitable for colonization. Yet that same fearsome reputation made it an immediate destination for northern pirates. They flocked to the supposedly cursed islands in droves, settling there in relative safety while launching lucrative raids against merchant ships in the Abendego Gulf.

With the appearance of the Eye of Abendego, however, trade along the western coast of Garund greatly decreased, and the pirates were forced to band together to survive. United under the first Hurricane King, the newly named Free Captains of the Shackles became a single fleet, their actions guided by the Pirate Council—pirate lords powerful enough to each control one of the archipelago's major ports. In addition to its usual raiding, the new fleet sold its services to Sargava, promising to secure the colony's independence from Cheliox in exchange for tribute. Though the overthrow of Sargava's colonial government eventually ended the agreement, it lasted long enough for the pirate government to fully establish itself, and the buccaneer federation has to date managed to weather several invasions by fleets from Cheliox and Rahadoun. Today, under the rule of Hurricane Queen Tessa Fairwind, the pirates of the Shackles are bolder than ever before, raiding all along the western coasts of Avistan and Garund.

The Shackles themselves are as chaotic as one might expect, with each port having its own laws and customs enforced absolutely by its pirate lord. By far the largest is Port Peril, situated on the mainland and guarded by the cannons of Fort Hazard on the cliffs overlooking Jeopardy Bay. In its narrow streets, fugitives cut deals with addicts and unscrupulous merchants, happily ignored by the pirates who run the town. Adventurers sometimes stop in the port before heading into the Terwa Uplands in search of legendary sites like the Temple of the Ravenous Moon—or down into the sea caves beneath the city, where fortunes in pirate gold are said to be stashed away.

Yet the nation's de facto capital is only one port of many. For most outsiders, the port of Quent is the most welcoming, with the Calistrian-run House of Stolen Kisses brokering companionship and information. Hell Harbor's imp-filled sky and Chelish affectations offer a taste of the north, run by disgraced Chelish ex-admiral Arronax Endymion. For those who enjoy living on the edge, Widowmaker Island offers all manner of gambling

ECONOMICS

While the Inner Sea bustles with trade, many of the island nations of the Arcadian Ocean are often more interested in taking what they need. Only the bravest merchants do business in the pirate ports of the Shackles, and given the locals' tendency to pay with a blade, many such merchant ships are as loaded down with mercenaries as the pirate vessels themselves. Mediogalti is only slightly more orderly, yet both still see plenty of business, as pirates are notoriously free in spending their ill-gotten loot. Hermea is forced to import most raw materials but turns a significant profit through the export of ingenious inventions, magical innovations, and mercenary experts. Meanwhile, the Mordant Spire elves pride themselves on remaining totally self-sufficient.



TENGU JINX EATER

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ADVENTURING UNDER THE SEA

This item is useful beneath the waves.

JELLYFISH LAMP

ITEM O

Price 2 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

These bioluminescent jellyfish are as bright as candles, come in a variety of colors, and can act as living lanterns. They dry up and die if removed from the water for more than 1 hour, but as long as they're allowed access to seawater, they can usually survive for up to 1 year by feeding on micronutrients. Rarely, a well-treated jellyfish lamp might live longer and potentially develop stronger light or additional abilities.

and blood sports—including mock naval battles in a monster-infested lake. Less welcoming to outsiders are captains like the Master of Gales, the druid who rules the driftwood shanties of Drenchport, or Avimar Sorrinash, whose werewolf crew hunts his own port city of Ollo when the moon is full.

Brigands of all kinds can make a home in the Shackles, but half-elves, half-orcs, and humans of all ethnicities are most common, along with the bird-headed tengus whom local sailors consider a sign of good luck. Outside the few settled ports, however, inhabitants quickly grow more monstrous, with sea devils and locathahs claiming the waters, lizardfolk Terwa Lords raiding from the north, and water nagas hunting the mainland along the Slithering Coast. Yet despite the danger, scoundrels and fortune-seekers of all nations continue to flock to the Shackles, seeking opportunity, hideouts, or possibly relics of the powerful sorceries that brought down the cyclopes' empire.

UNDERSEA REALMS

The waterways of the Inner Sea region are more heavily populated below than they are above. Entire cultures lurk beneath the waves, often unknown to their coastal neighbors until they emerge from the water to trade—or to drag prisoners back to the briny deep. Merfolk are quick to punish those who trespass across their invisible borders, while sadistic goblinoid grindylows and clever sea hags love to

wreak havoc on coastal settlements. Other aquatic cultures are more cooperative; for example, it's not uncommon for curious locathahs—fish-like humanoids—to trade with ships or act as guides through dangerous waters. Tentacled cecaelias often act as nomadic mercenaries or traders, traveling from port to port leading pack rays loaded with salvage from the depths. And there's plenty of such salvage to be found—thanks to the devastation of Earthfall, the floor of the Inner Sea is littered with the drowned ruins of elven and serpentfolk cities as well as countless shipwrecks. South toward Jalmeray, the waters quickly grow more dangerous, with creatures like the eel-like iku-tursos capturing whole ship crews for the undersea slave trade.

The sea where the Arcadian Ocean meets Avistan and Garund is often thought of as two separate bodies. In the north, the Steaming Sea—so named for the fog that rises off its frigid waters—makes for a perilous home. While coastal Varisians and the Ulfen of the Ironbound Archipelago rely on the sea for survival, all know that its freezing waves can kill as quickly as the krakens, skum, and ravenous sea devils that plague ships venturing too far from their sheltering islands. In the south, the Fever Sea is warmer, but just as dangerous. For every friendly undersea group, like kraken-hunting squadrons of tritons, there are creatures like the storm-worshipping adaros who sacrifice prisoners to the Eye of Abendego. Still, the tropical waters are often worth risking, and magical salvage divers operating out of Vidrian and the Kaava Lands do a brisk business in artifacts and treasure pulled from sunken fleets or from the swampy apocalypse of the Sodden Lands.

The following are a few notable undersea settlements in the region.



VEILED MASTER

GHOLINOM, THE PASSAGE OUTWARD

Since the beginning of history, the eerie alghollthus have worked in secret beneath the waves, weaving plots that other creatures often find impenetrable—at least until it's too late to stop them. Only one thing is clear to all: that any undertaking large enough to gather a city of naturally independent alghollthus together must have disastrous consequences for others. So it is in Gholinom, deep in an ocean trench west of Rahadom. As much a factory as a city, its mountainous, twisting towers have stood atop volcanic vents for millennia, gathering magical and geothermic power that crackles in magenta rings around them as black smoke billows from their tips. Conduits of stone and skymetal weave through the palaces and laboratories of the many-eyed masterminds and their terrified slave-scholars, all leading to a vast circular gate at the city's heart. Dubbed the Passage Outward, this gateway consists of four concentric rings, each rotating in an opposing direction from those around it and made of a different skymetal—abysium, djezet, orichalcum, and inubrix. This gateway has never opened, yet those slaves most trusted (or burdened) with knowledge of the gate suggest that it's intended to open onto a realm beyond space and time that their masters refer to as the Final Sea. The entire project was secret until just recently, when Professor Karnvale Havillip, a halfling venture-captain thought lost in a shipwreck years ago, returned to the Grand Lodge in Absalom bearing a harrowing tale of escape and a warning that, after ages of preparation, the Passage Outward may be about to open.

IRIM

Built into the edge of the continental shelf off the coast of Ravounel, this city of aquatic elves has hidden itself from surface-dwellers for centuries, communicating only with the elves of the Mordant Spire. Half-hidden by vertical kelp forests, their elegant cliff dwellings connect to a much older system of caves that have been inhabited by elven mystics since before most elves returned from Sovyrian. The majority of Irim's residents live pastoral lives tending isopod herds or harvesting food and neurotoxins from anemone farms. The city is ruled by the Riftia, a collection of scholars who live deep within the flooded tunnels, breathing in chemicals seeping from active vents and reading portents in the movements of half-sentient tube worms. Recently, the elves of the Riftia shocked their constituents by making secret contact with the mainland—specifically the leaders of the new nation of Ravounel, offering to aid the nation in covertly protecting its ports from pirate attacks. In exchange, the elves insist that Ravounel aid them in locating a mysterious artifact called the *Lornoc Catalyst*, and that they must not, under any circumstances, allow any surface-dwelling elves to learn of the endeavor.

KIENEK-LI

Positioned near the Isle of Kortos, the submerged city of Kienek-Li is the best-known gillman settlement in the region. The oldest portion of the city, called the Boneglade, rises up from a living reef, its buildings the bleached and branching skeletons of massive corals. The rest of the city, called the Float, consists of sprawling wooden structures anchored to the sea floor by heavy chains; their honeycomb of passages is accessible from every direction in this environment where up and down barely matters.

Traditionally, Kienek-Li did most of its surface trading with the town of Escadar. Of late, however, Kienek-Li's newly elected ruler, Sealord Amodjun, confused citizens of both Absalom and Kienek-Li by declaring that the gillman city needs diplomatic and economic ties to other nations. Toward that end, the government has begun hiring non-Absalomian mercenaries to guard its diplomats' magical water-filled carriages on their journeys.

ADVENTURING UNDER THE SEA

This item is useful beneath the waves.

SWIM FINS

ITEM 0

Price 5 gp

Usage worn shoes; Bulk L

These flippers attach to your feet like tight shoes—donning or removing them requires three Interact actions. While worn, you gain a +5-foot item bonus to the distance you move when rolling Athletics to Swim, not when using a swim Speed, and you take a -10-foot item penalty to your Speed.

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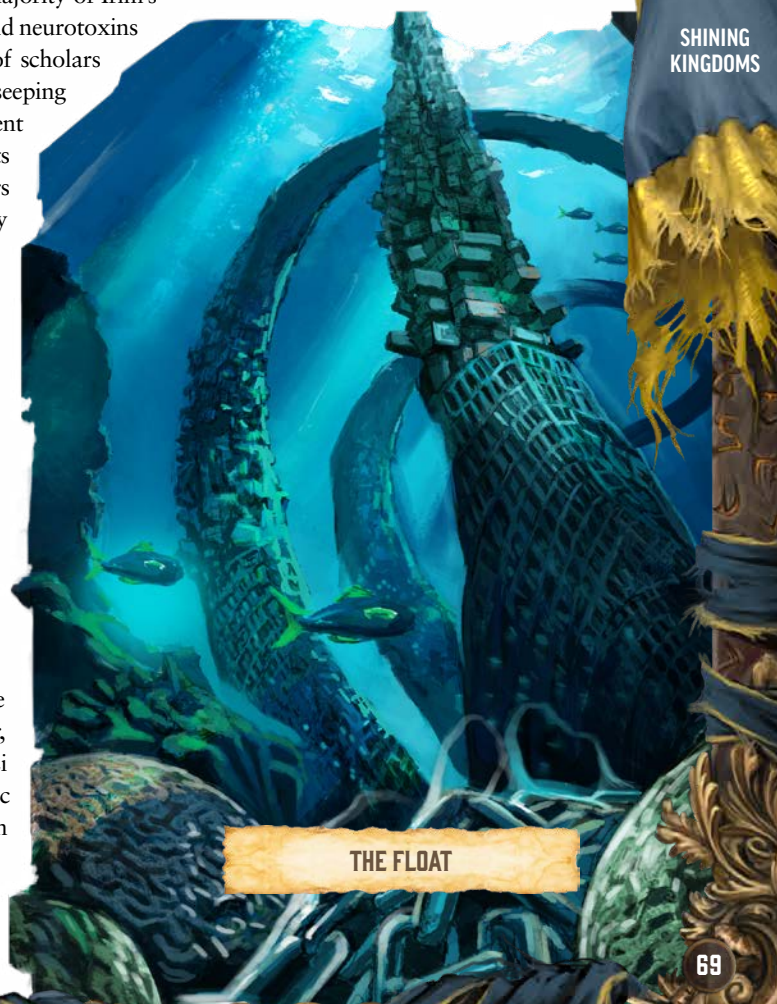
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THE FLOAT

BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the High Seas region.

ASPIRING FREE CAPTAIN

BACKGROUND

You seek to join the Free Captains of the Shackles and have learned everything you need to know about sailing and bossing people around. Now you just need a crew and a ship.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Wisdom or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Sailing Lore skill. You gain the Group Coercion skill feat.

HERMEAN EXPATRIATE

BACKGROUND

You have been exiled from Hermea, perhaps of your own accord or perhaps because you didn't measure up. However, you take with you some of the benefits of the excellent education afforded to its citizenry.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

MANTIS SCION

BACKGROUND

At least one of your parents is a member of the notorious Red Mantis assassins, merciless killers for hire who rarely fail to claim their marks. Whether on purpose or by simple exposure, you were trained from a young age in the art of stalking and killing people.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Stealth skill and the Assassin Lore skill. You gain the Assurance skill feat with Stealth.

PRESS-GANGED

BACKGROUND

You were forced into service as a sailor against your will. Perhaps you were punished for a crime, were drafted into military service, are repaying a debt, or simply were abducted. Though you were initially trained as a simple deckhand, you may have subsequently studied a trade under one of the vessel's specialists.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Sailing Lore skill. You gain the Experienced Professional skill feat.

SCHOLAR OF THE ANCIENTS

BACKGROUND

You're fascinated by the lost Azlanti Empire and have dedicated yourself to seeking out and studying every broken artifact or scrap of knowledge that remains, whether as an academic pursuit or simply for the joy of treasure hunting.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and the Azlant Lore skills. You gain the Quick Identification skill feat.

STORM SURVIVOR

BACKGROUND

Through luck or through skill, you managed to survive a catastrophic maritime disaster, such as a shipwreck or being thrown overboard. You have a keen sense for weather or situations that are similar to the one you escaped.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Weather Lore skill. You gain the Forager skill feat.

UNDERSEA ENTHUSIAST

BACKGROUND

You love diving and exploring the world beneath the waves, and long periods of swimming have trained you to move easily through the water. You're also fascinated by undersea creatures and cultures—and may even have a trace of one of them in your own lineage.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Ocean Lore skill. You gain the Underwater Marauder skill feat.



RED MANTIS ASSASSIN

You are a Red Mantis assassin, inducted by the mantis god and sworn to chase your prey to the end of the world and beyond.

RED MANTIS ASSASSIN DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in sawtooth sabers, deity is Achaekek, lawful evil alignment, member of the Red Mantis assassins; **Access** You are from Mediogalti Island.

You have learned how to stalk your foes and slay them with a sawtooth sabre. You become trained in Stealth and Assassin Lore; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead. Whenever your proficiency in any weapon increases to expert or beyond, you also gain that new proficiency with sawtooth sabers.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Red Mantis assassin archetype.

BASIC RED MANTIS MAGIC

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites trained in Religion, Red Mantis Assassin Dedication
You have learned limited divine magic from your Red Mantis training. You gain the Cast a Spell activity. You're a prepared spellcaster, able to prepare two cantrips and one 1st-level spell each day. You prepare these spells from a Red Mantis assassin spellbook, similar to a wizard's, containing three cantrips and two 1st-level spells. All the spells in your Red Mantis assassin spellbook, from this and later feats, must be either transmutation or illusion spells from the arcane spell list or a spell from the following list: *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *dimension door*, *modify memory*, *obscuring mist*, *paralyze*, *see invisibility*, *true strike*. Regardless of their usual magical tradition, your Red Mantis assassin spells are divine spells, as are any Red Mantis focus spells you gain.

You can prepare two cantrips and one 1st-level spell each day from those found in your Red Mantis assassin spellbook. You're trained in spell attack rolls and spell DCs for casting divine spells. Your key spellcasting ability for these spells is Charisma.

ADVANCED RED MANTIS MAGIC

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Basic Red Mantis Magic

Your Red Mantis magical training has improved. Add two 2nd-level spells to your Red Mantis assassin spellbook. You gain a 2nd-level spell slot that you can use to prepare a spell from your Red Mantis assassin spellbook.

At 8th level, add two 3rd-level spells to your Red Mantis assassin spellbook. You gain a 3rd-level spell slot that you can use to prepare a spell from your Red Mantis assassin spellbook.

At 10th level, add two 4th-level spells to your Red Mantis assassin spellbook. You gain a 4th-level spell slot that you can use to prepare a spell from your Red Mantis assassin spellbook.

CRIMSON SHROUD

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Red Mantis Assassin Dedication

Frequency A number of times per day equal to your number of class feats from the Red Mantis assassin archetype

You swathe yourself in a veil of red mist for 1 minute. While the shroud is active, you gain fast healing equal to half your level. You can Interact with your shroud, swirling it around you, to gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn. Finally, if you die while the shroud is active, you can choose to have your entire body vanish into red mist, leaving behind only your gear; you make this choice when you activate Crimson Shroud.

MANTIS FORM

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Basic Red Mantis Magic

You gain the *mantis form* focus spell. If you don't already have one, you gain a focus pool of 1 Focus Point, which you can Refocus by praying to Achaekek or researching your assigned kill.

RED MANTIS ASSASSIN FOCUS SPELLS

MANTIS FORM

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON POLYMORPH TRANSMUTATION

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Duration 1 minute

You become a mantis. You gain the effects of *insect form*, heightened to *mantis form's* level, and you can only transform into a mantis.



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NATIONS



ALKENSTAR [LN]
Constitutional Monarchy
Capital: Alkenstar City (53,600)



MANA WASTES [N]
Spell-Scarred Wasteland
Capital: None



GEB [LE]
Undead Dictatorship
Capital: Mechitar (42,000)



NEX [N]
Council of Wizards
Capital: Quantum (60,000)



JALMERAY [CN]
Colonial Princely State
Capital: Niswan (10,300)

PEOPLES

Dwarf
Garundi
Gnome
Keleshite
Mwangi
Vudrani

LANGUAGES

Common
Dwarven
Gnomish
Kelesh
Mwangi
Necril

Osiriani
Vudrani

FACTIONS



Arclords of
Nex



Pathfinder
Society



Whispering
Way

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Torag



Irori



Urgathoa



Nethys



Zon-
Kuthon

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Alcohol/
Drugs



Books/Lore



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Ores



Seafood



Spices/Salt



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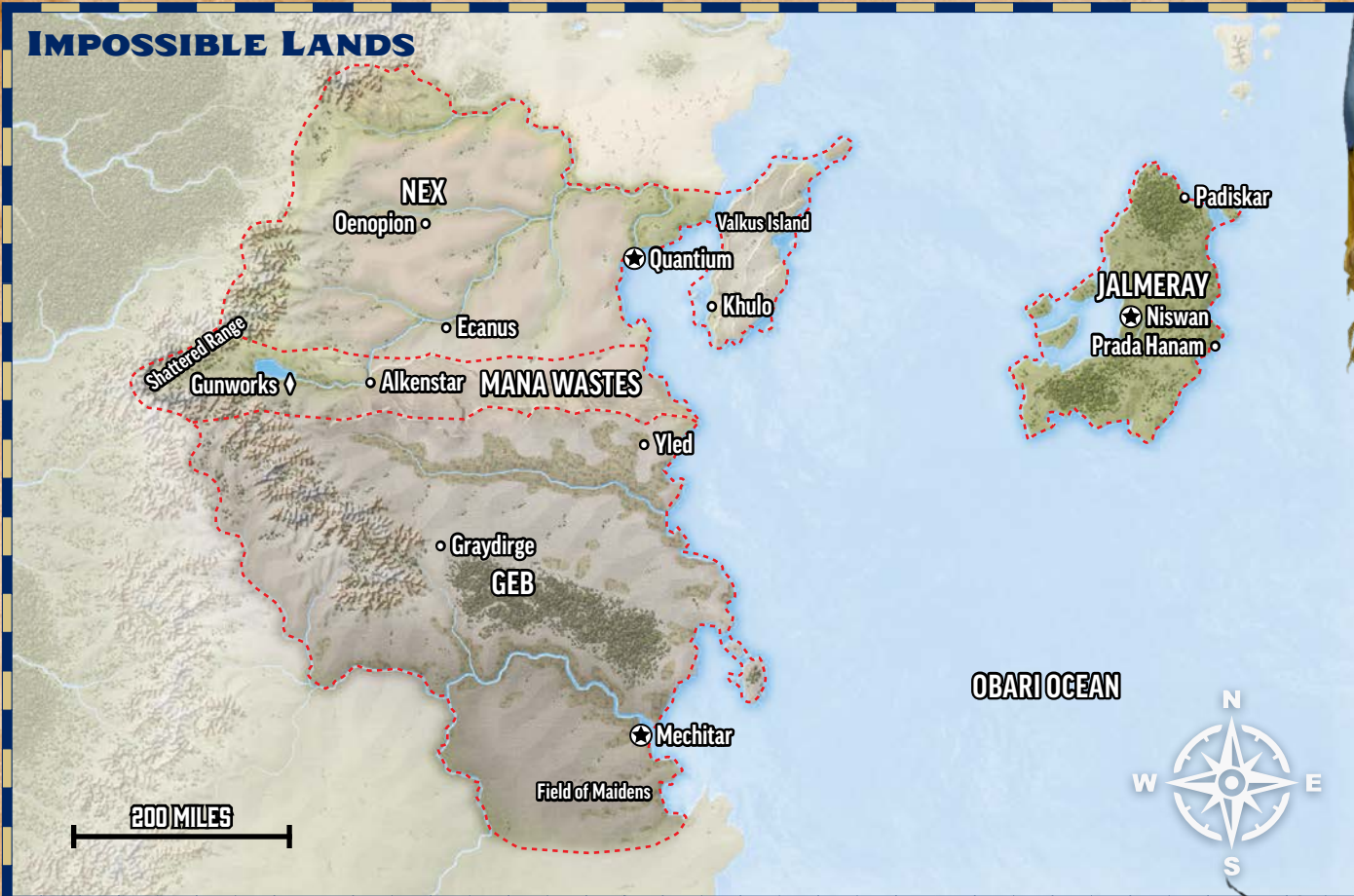
MWANGI
EXPANSE

OLD
CHELIAX

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TIMELINE

- 3000 AR Osirion reaches the height of its prosperity under the reign of the god-kings.
- 1498 to -1431 AR A union of four god-kings known as the Four Pharaohs of Ascension reign during the Second Age of Osirion's empire.
- 929 AR Osirion cedes control of its southernmost colony to the necromancer Geb.
- 892 AR The nations of Nex and Geb go to war.
- 149 AR Geb's mystics blight the landscape of Nex, rendering all but the kingdom's cities virtually uninhabitable.
- 166 AR The Archmage Nex unsuccessfully launches a siege against Absalom, erecting the mile-tall Spire of Nex in the Cairnlands.
- 253 AR Nex assumes control of the Isle of Jalmeray.
- 563 AR Khiben-Sald, the legendary Maharajah of Vudra, spends a decade on the Isle of Jalmeray, bringing Vudrani culture to the Inner Sea.
- 576 AR Nex vanishes from his capital in Quantum during a Gebbite attack that kills thousands of people.
- 632 AR A despairing Geb attempts to escape Golarion in an act of ritual suicide, but soon returns as a ghost.
- 2822 AR Vudrani rajahs wrest control of Jalmeray from the decadent Arclords of Nex.
- 3890 AR Geb abducts Arazni's corpse from the Knights of Ozem, reanimates her as a lich, and forces her to become his queen.
- 4329 AR Geb petrifies the invading army of the Pirate Queen Mastrien Slash, creating the Field of Maidens.
- 4588 AR Alkenstar, fleeing persecution from Nex, enters the Mana Wastes and discovers the ruins of Dongun Hold.
- 4601 AR The Duchy of Alkenstar is

The independent kingdoms of Garund's so-called Impossible Lands trace their histories back millennia. Even today the region's sparkling cities, breathtaking monuments, and arcane accomplishments seem rooted in some distant epoch when miracles were commonplace and legendary monsters walked alongside heroes bound for grand destinies. In prehistoric times, the region fell under the domain of a vast cyclops empire, whose megalithic ruins and broad, half-buried causeways hint at a grandeur seldom matched in the present day. Long after Earthfall toppled these monuments and reduced their builders into scattered, survivalist masses, armies of the god-kings of Osirion established cities and colonies amid the ruins. Pharaonic legions brought an end to older human empires like the Jistka Imperium and the Tekritanin League along Garund's northwestern coast. They also conquered many of the scattered indigenous peoples of the continent's east coast, whether through pacification or subjugation, greatly extending the borders of their kingdom. Over millennia, the power of Osirion faded, and the weakened pharaohs cut off all contact with their distant colonies, leaving these nations to develop as independent kingdoms.

The history of the Impossible Lands has been dominated by two of the region's most powerful nations—both of which take their names from their respective immortal wizard-king founders, Geb and Nex. The two kingdoms clashed thousands of years ago in a devastating, centuries-long arcane war that warped the fabric of the continent itself. The most obvious scar of this conflict is the twisted wasteland that lies between them, a gnarled landscape of magic-warped terrain ravaged by arcane storms known as the Mana Wastes. From nightmare beasts born of the Fleshforges of Nex to the countless undead making up the populace of Geb, the region remains stained with the hubris of these two mages, and the thought of their lands once having been free from Nex and Geb's tyranny seems more fable than fact to the people caught in their wake.

Despite this tumultuous history, the realms of Nex, Geb, and Jalmeray, along with the city-state of Alkenstar, count themselves among the mightiest and most fantastical nations in all the lands of the Inner Sea. Nex, who remains one of the most powerful and influential archmages Golarion has ever known, set the archetype for the Impossible Lands. Over the millennia of his immortal existence, he has taken control of the city-states of Quantum, Ecanus, and Oenopion, lavishing arcane innovations and architectural marvels upon them. Nex's hated enemy, the equally ancient ghost necromancer Geb, rules a cosmopolitan, prosperous nation that would be considered among Garund's wealthiest and most promising kingdoms, if not for the fact that most of its inhabitants are undead monstrosities who willingly followed their baleful leader into eternity to serve his dark designs forever. Off the coast, the lush isle of Jalmeray is a portal to western Casmaron, offering a slice of culture from distant Vudra on the doorstep of the Inner Sea. Monks from all over the world flock to the isle to hone their bodies and minds, following esoteric traditions handed down in antiquity by otherworldly spirits. Like Nex and Geb before them, these stalwarts intend through great effort and even greater creations to transcend the limits of the ordinary world—a task suited for nowhere else but the Impossible Lands.

ALKENSTAR

The arcane wars between Nex and Geb were not kind to the surrounding regions, often reducing their captured territories to blasted wastelands where warped radiation prevented all magic from functioning. The nation of Alkenstar arose in such a place, beneath the shadow of Dongun Hold—a dwarven Sky Citadel sealed by its former occupants to prevent it from becoming a prize handed back and forth between the two warring powers. Though the dwarves had abandoned their fortress more than a thousand years earlier, the surrounding ruins became a haven for a ragtag settlement of refugees and vagabonds. When a renegade engineer named Alkenstar fled from Nex to avoid criminal charges, he discovered the shattered ruins of Dongun Hold



ALKENSTAR

and used his technology to fortify the settlement, bring agriculture to its nearby plains, and transform the powerful Ustradi River into a literal engine of creation.

Not content to simply live in the shadow of the mighty Dongun Hold, Alkenstar devised an ingenious method to open the dwarven Sky Citadel and explore its many mysteries. He and his followers eventually tracked down the missing dwarves themselves, who now resided in an isolated vault deep in the Darklands where the practice of magic had died. A bargain between Alkenstar and the dwarves provided the fledgling city with a dwarven innovation perfected during the dwarves' time in the vault and destined to change the course of history: firearms. These weapons ensured that the refugees would never again be caught defenseless in the battles between Nex and Geb. And over the last century, the Grand Duchy of Alkenstar has grown into a powerful, if isolated, kingdom in its own right.

While Nex still claims the settlement as a nominal vassal, since its armies were the last to claim Dongun Hold in the Age of Destiny before the dwarves' retreat, no one takes this claim seriously outside the governmental halls of Quantum. Alkenstar currently operates as an independent city-state with holdings that include Dongun Hold and the town of Martel. The city of Alkenstar itself stands atop the Hellfallen Cliffs, overlooking a narrow valley where the Ustradi River plunges hundreds of feet over the massive Alken Falls on its journey into Nex. A layer of soot covers most of Alkenstar's brick-and-iron buildings, but elegant brass decorations shining through the grime hint at the grand architecture beneath. Voluminous clouds of steam hang over the city and sometimes cover its streets, mixing with the thick fog banks drifting off the Ustradi and the acrid black smoke churning from the city's omnipresent factories. At the southeastern shore of Lake Ustradi sits a massive castle called the Gunworks, where metallurgists and engineers of Alkenstar labor to develop firearms technology. Their proudest achievement is a massive cannon known as the Great Maw of Rovagug—an enormous bombard with a range measured in miles that is often used against the mutated giants of the Mana Wastes who raid the city nearly every summer.

founded; construction of the Gunworks begins.

4620 AR The Gunworks of Alkenstar are completed. The first firearms begin emerging from Alkenstar to be purchased by rich collectors and curious scholars.

4690 AR The Gorilla King of the city of Usaro in the Mwangi Expanse, Ruthazek, attacks Alkenstar and seizes the Gunworks' largest bombard as a trophy.

4716 AR The gates of the Refuge of Nex once again open in Quantum, stoking rumors regarding the archmage's imminent return.

4718 AR A grand disqualification of all of the Houses of Perfection leaves the Challenge of Sky and Heaven incomplete.

4719 AR Arazni abandons Geb, leading the ghost necromancer to return to active management of his undead realm.

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NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



GEB

For an ancient ghost born of anguish and resentment, Geb currently seems more engaged with his kingdom than at any point since Nex's disappearance.



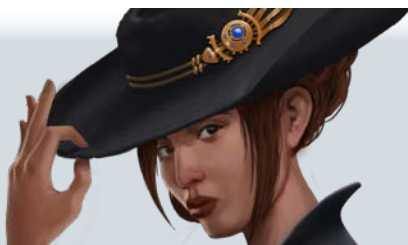
KHARSWAN

Thakur Kharswan, the smiling ruler of Jalmeray, must balance obligations to the island's mystics, monastic grand masters, and powerful spirits.



NEX

The immortal archmage Nex vanished so long ago that he is more legend than man to the citizens of the nation that bears his name.



TRIETTA RICIA

The popular scientist-duchess of Alkenstar honed her zeal for invention and cheerful demeanor while studying the notes of the city's founder.

The inventiveness that raised Alkenstar into a nation now permeates the attitudes of the country's residents, and its technological innovations keep it economically and politically relevant despite its seemingly precarious position. The city's famous clockwork sentries are only the most visible of Alkenstar's wonders. Guilds of enterprising metallurgists, alchemists, and engineers collaborate or compete to produce increasingly extraordinary discoveries. Alkenstar's status as a haven from the prying eyes of Nex and Geb has also attracted refugees and immigrants in a flow that rivals the mighty Ustradi, swelling the city's population and spreading knowledge and political philosophies in their wake.

Yet this rampant growth carries a price in exchange for Alkenstar's nigh-miraculous ascension into a global power. Though the nation's High Parliament and elite police do an admirable job enforcing law and order, Alkenstar remains a frontier boom town in a harsh and hostile land. The city's government and industries are convoluted and disordered, riddled with flaws and redundancies that have cropped up as organizational need outstrips bureaucratic capacity. Corruption and rivalries abound between clans, guilds, and families, with factions struggling to increase their own influence within the nation. Common folk rarely see the benefits of the city's industry, left behind by the rapid march of progress to eke out hard, short lives within the heavy smog from the workshops. Crime plagues the nation's outcasts, orphans, and poor, especially preying on the financial insecurity of desperate refugees from other nations.

Firearm and siege engine production has vastly increased over the last decade, thanks in no small part to the leadership of Grand Duchess Trietta Ricia, who is both a canny politician and a scientist in her own right. Guns, already popular among smugglers and revolutionaries in the Mwangi Expanse and the Shackles, have begun to trickle into northern Garund as well. Ricia urges greater contact with the outside world by exporting Alkenstar's fabulous creations far and wide, drawing even more customers, vagabonds, and would-be technologists to the city-state, despite the considerable dangers of the journey.

GEB

Three hundred years after the fall of Osirion's famed Four Pharaohs of Ascension, the pious tyrant Kenaton brought a semblance of stability to the declining empire, scouring Osirion of enemies and renewing the empire's grasp on distant territorial holdings. Rather than vanish across the horizon into eternal exile, the wicked necromancer Geb came to Osirion's southernmost colony, conquered it, and granted it his name, remaking it in his own necrotic image. Decades after his rise to power, Geb came into conflict with the archmage Nex, who had united a nation on the plains north of the necromancer's kingdom, cutting off land access to the markets of the Golden Road. By -892 AR, the territorial ambitions of both Nex and Geb erupted into catastrophic open conflict that would span centuries.

The war reached its terrible climax when Geb blighted the lands of Nex, starving its people and bringing it to the brink of utter defeat. Nex responded by unleashing a series of magical cataclysms that killed uncountable thousands of Geb's citizens. Anguished at the scope of the devastation, Geb animated all of the slain as a vast undead army, which he immediately sent marching north. In 576 AR—after nearly a millennium of mutually destructive warfare—Geb's undead armies made a final grand push toward Quantum, reaching the walls of Nex's palace, the Bandeshar. Poisonous yellow smoke choked the archmage's capital, killing thousands—but Nex himself apparently escaped into a demiplane known as the Refuge of Nex, never to return. Despite his apparent victory, Geb remained convinced that his old foe had somehow survived, and he lived the next several decades in bitter resentment, futilely waiting for Nex's imminent return. Nex's household servants, the so-called Arclords of Nex, also proved frustratingly resilient, repelling numerous attacks on the Bandeshar designed to seal Nex away for eternity. Finally, in 632, Geb's torment

grew too strong to bear, and he ended his mortal life in an act of ritual suicide. But even in death, Geb's hatred tethered his soul to Golarion as a ghost.

Thereafter, Gebbite society gave itself wholly to necromancy. Thousands of Geb's most fanatical followers killed themselves to bind their undead souls in service to their ghostly sovereign, swearing eternal fealty in the ultimate act of obedience. Today, more than 4,000 years later, the undead make up Gebbite society, and most mortals in the kingdom are either slaves or food. A complex corpus of legal documents known as the "Dead Laws" protect the rights of Geb's mortals and intelligent undead by regulating the feeding of ravenous undead, proscribing certain aspects of necromancy, outlawing the channeling of positive energy, and dictating the proper treatment and maintenance of slaves, both living and undead. These rules nominally protect the living—referred to as the "Quick" in the language of the Dead Laws—from random attacks by the hungry dead. But Geb's ghoulish low nobility, along with certain insatiable vampires, consider themselves exempt, often risking legal prosecution and permanent death to satiate their gluttonous cravings.

By royal decree, unless specified otherwise, all mortals who die upon Geb's soil are reanimated as mindless undead to serve as slaves in the nation's lush fields or lavish urban mansions. Mortals with business in Geb often arrange to become intelligent undead upon death to avoid this fate. Most mortals avoid going to Geb whatsoever. Mortal necromancers are an exception, largely because they are the only ones who know how to protect themselves from the depravities of Geb's nobility. The most puissant and ambitious necromancers of Geb join the ranks of the Blood Lords, 60 personal apprentices that Geb himself trained in the capital of Mechitar and tasked with administering the daily affairs of the kingdom. Once exclusively mortal, the Blood Lords are now overwhelmingly undead, and their numbers include vampires, wraiths, mummies, shades, and lichs.

Geb doesn't invite conflict with other nations, despite the brazen attacks so often made against it by would-be heroes hoping to destroy the undead kingdom. Tensions with Nex cooled once its leader fled Golarion, and zombie-harvested crops sent north are among the nation's most prosperous exports. Geb's undead ruling class doesn't age, so they can afford to play the long game and be patient, weaving political plots that span centuries, and which delve far more deeply into the international politics of the Inner Sea region than anyone realizes.

In recent centuries, Geb had largely withdrawn from the daily affairs of his kingdom, leaving its management in the capable hands of his imprisoned lich-queen, Arazni. A former herald of Aroden cruelly raised from death by Geb in retribution for repeated attacks by the paladins of Lastwall, Arazni ruled the nation for centuries before escaping Geb and his kingdom in recent years. With Arazni gone and the king more certain than ever of Nex's imminent return, Geb has returned to active rulership of his kingdom. The morbid avenues of Mechitar throng with skeletal celebrants in public processions honoring Geb's renaissance, and the ghost-sovereign's agents in the outside world are known to be gathering rare ingredients for what appears to be a series of obscene necromantic rituals carried out on a massive ceremonial scale. Far from the melancholic recluse who sought a solution in suicide, Geb today prepares himself and his undying kingdom for a grand destiny.

JALMERAY

The island nation of Jalmeray was once the domain of legendary Vudrani Maharajah Khiben-Sald. Once a favored

THE BLOOD LORDS OF GEB

The grim necromantic administrators of Geb rule from Mechitar's immense central pyramid, known as the Cinerarium. A legion of lesser necromancers, graveknights, skeletons, zombies, ghouls, and ghosts serves these Blood Lords as Mechitar's city guard, but in most cases the vile reputation of Geb's ruling class is enough to keep most of Geb's citizenry in line. While the 60 necromancers command obedience from the nation's citizens, their internal feuds and wars of assassination and intrigue are legendary. After the departure of Arazni, internecine strife has intensified, with most surviving Blood Lords squabbling to prove their loyalty to the newly rejuvenated Geb by slaying any colleague thought to have been too close to his former queen.

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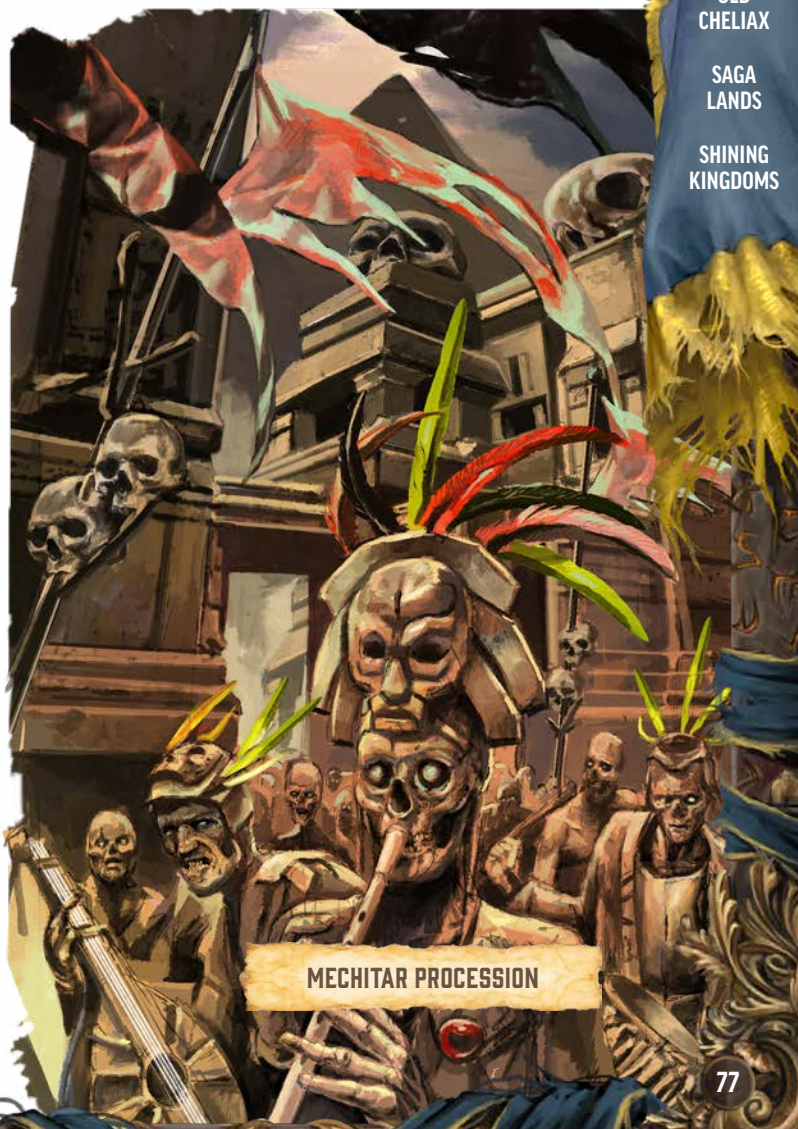
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MECHITAR PROCESSION

THE HOUSES OF PERFECTION

The four greatest and most influential monasteries on Jalmeray are known as the Houses of Perfection, where students and masters engage in the endless work of perfecting mind and spirit according to the teachings of Irori.

Monastery of Unblinking Flame: This house's ageless Grand Master Anandala eschews the physical combat favored by other houses in favor of occult philosophy.

Monastery of Unbreaking Waves: Reestablished only within the last decade, this house favors defensive styles that emulate the flow of water past obstacles.

Monastery of Unfolding Wind: Arming themselves only "with the air itself," adherents of Unfolding Wind specialize in unarmed fighting techniques, honing their bodies into deadly weapons.

Monastery of Untwisting Iron: Adepts of Untwisting Iron master monastic weaponry, particularly ones constructed of earth metals. This house has won two consecutive victories in the Challenge of Sky and Heaven and is highly respected.

guest of the archmage Nex, the maharajah rapidly outstayed his welcome in Nex's court, and the archmage began to view his newfound friend as a distraction and potential rival. To resolve the situation without conflict, Nex granted Khiben-Sald the whole of the isle of Jalmeray as his personal domain. Eventually, Khiben-Sald returned to his homeland, leaving behind only glorious monuments and conjured genies. The island nation changed hands twice afterward. The Arclords of Nex, who had been exiled from their nation in the power struggle following Nex's disappearance, took refuge on Jalmeray despite resistance from Khiben-Sald's remaining genies. Yet in 2822 AR, hundreds of Vudrani rajahs arrived in a vast fleet and claimed Jalmeray as their personal domain, presenting documents affirming their blood relation to Khiben-Sald and thus their rightful ownership of the island. When the Arclords refused to leave, the Vudrani summoned an army of genies that sank all but one of the Arclords' ships. Following this, the Vudrani unsealed their ancient monuments and stirred their otherworldly guardians to life once more.

Today, Jalmeray is the window to the east, a bastion of Vudrani culture on the edge of the Inner Sea region. Breathtaking marvels of architecture are combined with powerful magic to create the nation's beautiful and luxurious settlements, such as Jalmeray's capital, the many-tiered pagoda city of Niswan. Foreigners drawn to Jalmeray's unique sights are met by a friendly and hospitable culture, making the island a popular destination for those who can afford and manage the journey. Ancient noble families, powerful mystics, and the esteemed masters of monasteries oversee the needs of citizens and visitors alike, playing lip service to the nation's monarch but in truth handling most day to day affairs themselves.

While most of its population shares ancestral roots in Vudra, the streets of Jalmeray are walked by all manner of people and creatures, many of them visitors from distant lands. Genies and elemental beings remain from the island's ancient

days, tasked with guarding cities and cultivating the natural beauty of the nation into a splendor known across the world. Generations of humans and genies living side by side have given rise to a large population of people known as geniekin, who carry a spark of elemental heritage within them. Garudas and nagas send emissaries to Jalmeray's monarch, while rakshasas and asuras hide among the cities to tempt the pious into ruin.

Yet for all of Jalmeray's wonders, the nation's darker aspects burden the populace. In a land where the wondrous is commonplace, citizens often fall afoul of equally wondrous curses—those who cannot rid themselves of these fell magics often have nowhere else to turn but a shunned, quarantined island to the north of Jalmeray's shores. Crueler still is the fate of those born with signs of taint from wicked asuras or rakshasas, as they are forced to work backbreaking and unsavory jobs such as cleaning sewage.

Trade has made Jalmeray unthinkableably wealthy, but the nation is best known for its learning and philosophy. Academics melds with religion, with temples serving as bastions of learning and libraries boasting richly-illustrated copies of holy texts. Thousands of shrines dedicated to thousands of gods offer written guidance on the many paths



MONASTERY OF UNBLINKING FLAME

to attain enlightenment. Prestigious schools for every way and walk of life can be found within Jalmeray's cities, from magic to poetry to political intrigue and seduction. Jalmeray's famous monasteries, collectively known as the Houses of Perfection, export doctrines of physical, mental, and spiritual development across Avistan, Casmaron, and Garund.

These Houses are also the center of Jalmeray's proud tradition of exemplary martial arts. Students from throughout the Inner Sea venture to Jalmeray to test themselves against the challenges offered by the Houses. Those who wish to prove their worthiness must succeed at a series of seemingly impossible trials against emissaries of the elements themselves: racing against the wind-swift speed of a djinni, wrestling the mountainous power of a shaitan, outwitting the flame-sharp wit of an efreeti, or performing other, similarly fantastical, tasks. Those elite few who complete these tasks are trained to push their bodies to the peak of physical and mental perfection, achieving spiritual balance and opening their minds to transcend the normal limits of mortal potential. Once every decade, the Houses of Perfection meet in friendly competition in a grand tournament called the Challenge of Sky and Heaven. Students compete in the schools of historical knowledge, swordplay, unarmed fighting techniques, mastery of the self, arcane ability, and other esoteric disciplines. Thakur Kharswan and his vast legion of advisors known as the Maurya-Rahm sponsor additional contests, like the Solemn Sky Duel of Masters, which draws combatants not just from across the Inner Sea region but from all parts of the world.

MANA WASTES

The warped wasteland between Nex and Geb bears the indelible scars of 14 centuries of arcane conflict. In ancient days, the region was renowned for its natural beauty, which inspired breathtaking artworks from the dwarves of Dongun Hold. The dwarves ruled the land surrounding their Sky Citadel for centuries without harassment by the god-kings of Osirion or the petty tyrants who ruled in their ruined colonies, but when the archmage Nex waged war with the necromancer Geb, Dongun Hold found itself wedged between two implacable enemies. Minor skirmishes blossomed into clashes between vast armies, legions of constructs, potent summoned monsters, and ravenous undead. After centuries of shifting annexation by Geb or Nex, the dwarves of Dongun Hold withdrew into their Sky Citadel and collapsed the entrance to their imposing fortress, leaving their lands to be blasted into barren, arcane ruins.

From vast alchemical miasmas to chaotic eldritch storms to the unquiet souls of annihilated armies, the Mana Wastes swirl with unpredictable dangers seen nowhere else on Golarion. Rife with carnivorous plants, shattered-glass sandstorms, and poisonous fogs, the landscape itself seems singularly dedicated to destroying those who attempt to traverse or settle its tenacious wilderness. To the west, in a sprawling region of dead magic, the Grand Duchy of Alkenstar provides the Mana Wastes' most secure sanctum, drawing not just traditional refugees, escaped slaves, and wanderers, but increasingly merchants, foreign diplomats, and dwarves seeking to reunite with their returned cousins at Dongun Hold. Those journeying to and from Alkenstar

RELATIONS

The region's central conflict—a millennium of warfare between the immortal wizard-kings Nex and Geb—dwindled into détente centuries ago, leaving the two nations strongly positioned to defend themselves from anyone else who would dare try to defeat them. Thus the Impossible Lands are, for the moment, free of internal warfare, and while no one in Nex, Jalmeray, or Alkenstar wishes to get too cozy with Geb, the three get along well enough with one another to keep the region relatively peaceful.

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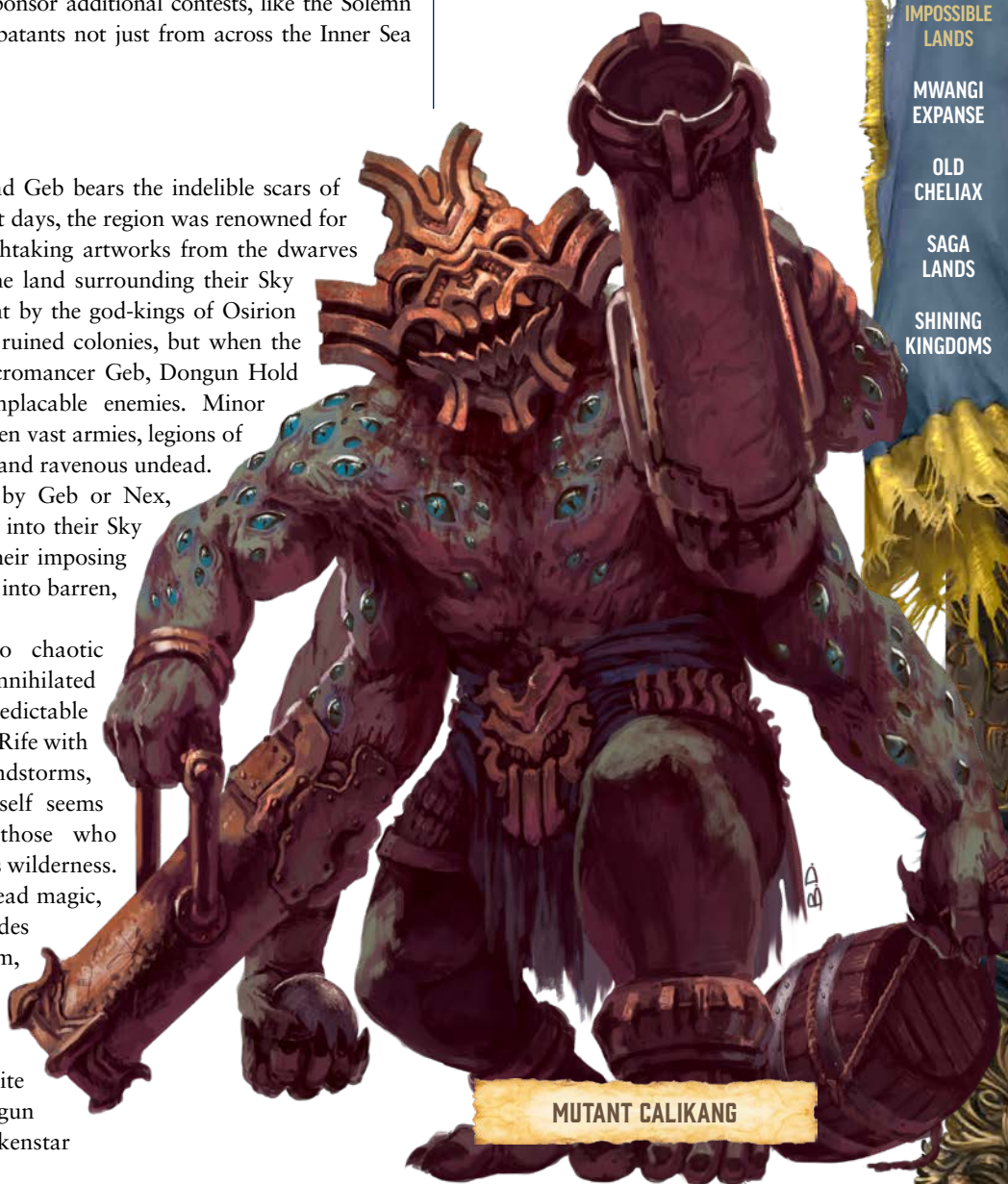
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MUTANT CALIKANG

THE ARCLORDS OF NEX

The Arclords of Nex trace their origins to the household servants and lesser apprentices of the great archmage, and in the 4 millennia since Nex abandoned Golarion, their power and influence has grown to spread throughout the Inner Sea region and beyond. The Arclords shape the politics of Nex's Council of Three and Nine, guide Absalom's next generation of spellcasters via the Arcanamirium, and serve as ostensibly loyal advisors in courts from Oppara to Azir, advising affairs from Molthune's defense against the Whispering Tyrant to the most effective sea routes for opportunistic Shackles pirates. Those who dedicate themselves to the study of Nex's secret journals and hand-transcribed original spellbooks can gain deep insight into the arcane secrets of Golarion and the Great Beyond, and these adepts often manifest and focus this knowledge in the form of a unique arcane eye.

must endure not just the terrors of the Mana Wastes' unnatural environment, but also the predations of the magic-warped monstrosities who call the place home—rifle-toting mutants, spectral soldiers, murderously erratic constructs, and worse.

Further west, the Mana Wastes sweep upward from Alkenstar into the hills and mountains of the Western Ravage. Here, cloaked by the same energies that keep magic out of Alkenstar, dwell several tribes of mutated giants, ettins, and ogres, brutal creatures who make near-annual summer raids on the city-state and engage in violent struggles with one another when not focused on a mutual enemy. After decades of suffering at the hands of those wielding Alkenstar's firearms, the giants of the Western Ravage now find it necessary to finally crack open Dongun Hold and plunder its wealth. Their raids on the Gunworks have already yielded dozens of longarms, scores of pistols, and several cannons—which the largest giants can wield like rifles.

In the east, the lowlands sprawl into a gnarled wasteland of jagged tors and rocky dunes called the Spellscar Desert. Virtually devoid of water and baked with blistering heat by day, the inhospitable terrain abounds with shattered, otherworldly ruins predating the devastation of the wizard-kings' war. The mutated inhabitants of these forlorn ruins, their bodies wracked by the same arcane abominations that warped and twisted the landscape, mercilessly prey upon travelers foolhardy enough to cross the desert.

The dearth of magic allows some semblance of normality within Alkenstar's territory in the Western Ravage, but the Spellscar Desert is constantly devastated by churning currents of raw magic, supernatural storms, tears in the veil of reality, and other disastrous aftereffects of the nearly endless arcane cataclysms of wizard-king warfare. These unusual effects warp both the land and its inhabitants, and occasionally bleed north up the Ustradi River or are blown across the plains of Geb and Nex upon uncharitable winds. Often these storms have no physical manifestation, but just as often they're accompanied by the march of pestilential ghost armies, cacophonous gibbering that echoes for hours, slicing rains of tiny metal shards, or other horrifying phenomena.

NEX

The archmage Nex, an avid arcanist determined to make his mark in a world newly filled with opportunity, arose in the centuries following Osirion's withdrawal from its imperial holdings in eastern Garund. Fueled by the kind of ambition that gave the Age of Destiny its name, Nex perfected his arcane craft to gain dominion over the powerful city-state of Quantum, located at the mouth of the mighty Ustradi River. From this seat of power, Nex swiftly subjugated the neighboring cities of Ecanus and Oenopion, gathering his conquered realms into a new kingdom bearing his name.

Over the following centuries, Nex traveled the world and the Great Beyond, establishing important theories of magic that remain foundational to this day. He funneled the treasures claimed during his adventures back into his kingdom, training hundreds of eager wizards in the secrets of the arcane discoveries he plundered from other worlds. He used *wish*-level magics to improve his kingdom and protect it from harm. Confident in his successes, he continued to march his construct armies further south to the lush farmlands of an abandoned Osiriani farming colony—now the domain of the necromancer-lord Geb.

MANA WASTES

The resulting relentless warfare between Nex and Geb spanned centuries, with each wizard extending his life and attempting to destroy the other through a series of increasingly catastrophic magical attacks. In one such escalation, Geb and his grim devotees conducted rituals that corrupted the rural lands of Nex, denuding its forests in an instant and forever blighting its plains. The wizards of Nex erected magical barriers to protect the cities, but the landscape beyond the city walls was reduced to wasteland. The ancient curses persist to this day, one of the worst of the many scars inflicted upon the world in the wizards' millennium-long conflict.

Ironically, destruction of the vast majority of his kingdom left Nex with more time to study and perfect his craft. He finally achieved true immortality when he created a personal demiplane at a flux point of multiversal energy, a domain of near-limitless power he called the Crux of Nex. Nex carved off a shard of the Crux to create the mile-tall Spire of Nex outside of Absalom, as well as the so-called Refuge of Nex, a supernatural haven he constructed in the basement dungeons of his personal palace, the Bandeshar. The Crux joined the Refuge and Spire into a vast, yet connected, multidimensional complex, and in 576 AR—with a Gebbite army at Quantum's gates and vaporous banks of poison gas seeping through its streets—Nex retreated into the Refuge, never to be seen again.

In the centuries since, the rule of the nation has fallen to a succession of factions that purport to represent the departed archmage's plan for the subjects and projects he left behind. The contentious Council of Three and Nine attempts to maintain consensus between Nex's squabbling sects and has managed to keep Nex unconquered since the day its founder vanished.

Open warfare with Geb decreased in the centuries following Nex's departure, and today the two nations maintain an uneasy standstill in their hostilities. The Arclords of Nex—descendants of the wizard's apprentices and household servants who purport to possess his personal writings and thus best understand his desires—claim that Nex would be appalled at the state of peace with his hated undead foe, pointing to the recent re-opening of the magical gates to the Refuge of Nex as a sure sign that the old conflict is about to reignite.

Nex's capital, Quantum, is a cosmopolitan metropolis with nearly 80,000 souls (not all of them mortal), monumental palaces, cloud-piercing spires, and teeming streets filled with all manner of humans joined by creatures that would be considered monsters elsewhere on Golarion. The Council of Three and Nine rules from the Bandeshar, and nervousness about what many interpret to be the imminent return of Nex himself is causing significant political rifts in the council that seem on the verge of metastasizing into a war of subterfuge. Across the barren, outlaw-ravaged wasteland, the alchemists of Oenopion toil to create the eldritch elixirs and potions so important to the nation's economy. The squalid city claims an impressive golemworks and an ooze colony that dominates a vast miasmatic lake at the center of town, a sentient hivemind useful for potent divinations and the disposal of faulty magical items, botched golems, and enemies of the state. The sprawling, heavily fortified town of Ecanus is the hub of Nex's vast military. Battlemages trained in warfare and tactical evocation form the backbone of the mobile force, reinforced by nightmarish beasts churned out by the city's monumental fleshforges.

EYE OF THE ARCLORDS

The Arclords of Nex have achieved a unique mastery of magic.

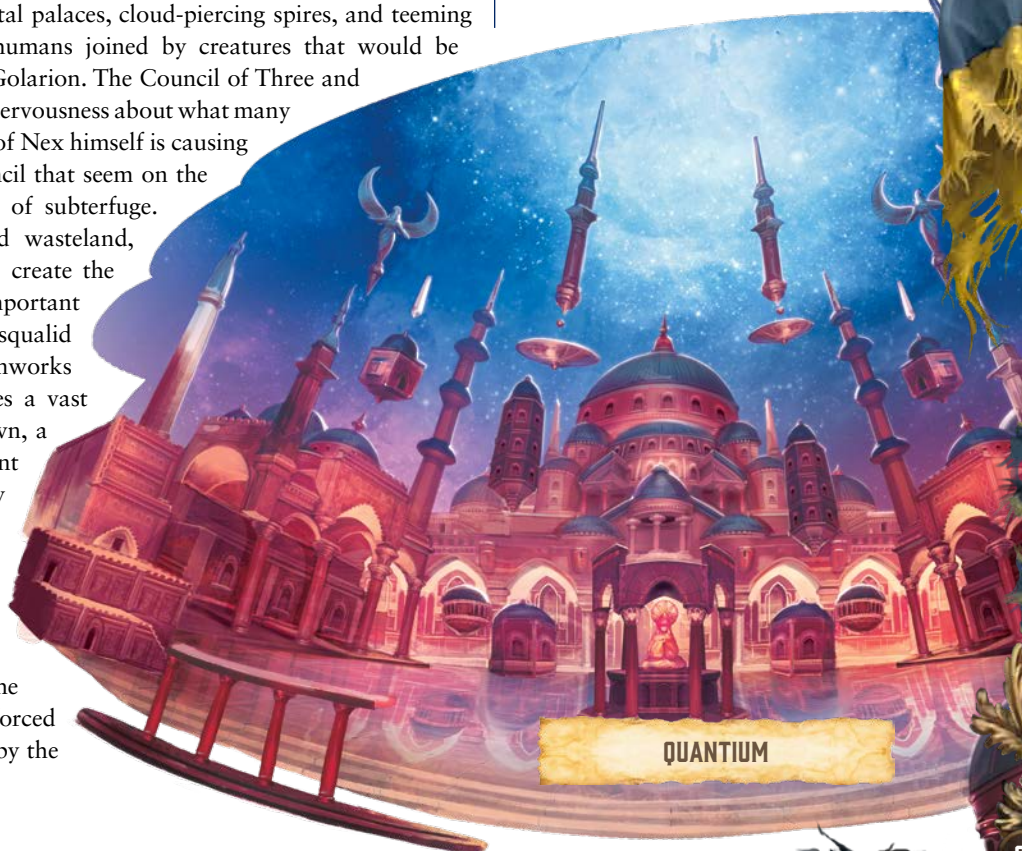
EYE OF THE ARCLORDS ◆ FEAT 2

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites expert in Arcana, Arcane Sense; **Frequency** once per day;

Access You are a member of the Arclords of Nex.

You open an incandescent third eye upon your forehead. The eye can remain open for 1 minute, and you can close it before then with a single action with the concentrate trait. It can remain open for 2 minutes if you're a master in Arcana, or 5 minutes if you're legendary. While the eye is open, you gain the following benefits: you gain the effects of the *detect magic* arcane innate spell from your Arcane Sense at the start of each of your turns without needing to cast the spell; you gain darkvision; you gain a +2 status bonus to Perception checks to Seek undetected and hidden creatures and to your Perception DC against Hide and Sneak. After your third eye closes, you are dazzled for an amount of time equal to how long you had it open.



QUANTUM

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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Impossible Lands region.

ALKENSTAR TINKER

BACKGROUND

Your dedication to the scientific inquiry of your native Alkenstar provides great insight into mechanical and chemical innovation.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Engineering Lore skill. You gain the Alchemical Crafting skill feat.

GEB CRUSADER

BACKGROUND

You grew up considering the existence of the undead nation of Geb an atrocity and trained to one day take part in destroying it and putting its vile inhabitants to their final rest. Key to your preparations is a thorough study of Pharamasma, Urgathoa, and other undead-related deities and their philosophies.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Religion skill and the Undead Lore skill. You gain the Student of the Canon skill feat.

MANA WASTES REFUGEE

BACKGROUND

Exposure to the corrupting influence of the Mana Wastes' strange energies has warped your inner essence, resulting in unpredictable interactions with magic items and more than a little know-how about surviving under bizarre and adverse natural conditions.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and the Wilderness Lore skill. You gain the Trick Magic Item skill feat.

NEXIAN MYSTIC

BACKGROUND

Your initiations into the Nexian mysteries and the philosophies of the Arclords of Nex grant you a preternatural comprehension of the arcane underpinnings of existence.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and a Lore skill related to one plane of your choice (other than the Material Plane). You gain the Arcane Sense skill feat.

OENOPION OOZE-TENDER

BACKGROUND

Your apprenticeship in one of Oenopion's unorthodox arcane and alchemical academies instilled in you a deep reservoir of mostly reliable esoteric knowledge, not to mention a deep resentment born of countless hours spent mucking ooze pens and feeding helpless creatures to ravenous, belching jellies and gelatinous puddings.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Ooze Lore skill. You gain the Dubious Knowledge skill feat.

PERFECTION SEEKER

BACKGROUND

You aspire to perfect your body and mind in the tradition of Jalmeray's Houses of Perfection, honing your acrobatic skills and mental faculties in preparation for a lifetime pushing the edge of what most consider possible.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Acrobatics skill as well as the Warfare Lore skill. You gain the Cat Fall skill feat.

QUICK

BACKGROUND

Staying alive among the scheming, ravenous undead of Geb required a deep knowledge of their motivations, capabilities, and weaknesses. More often than not, it also required the ability to weave alibis and life-preserving half-truths capable of swaying a stilled heart.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Deception skill and the Undead Lore skill. You gain the Charming Liar skill feat.



STUDENT OF PERFECTION

You studied martial arts at Jalmeray's Houses of Perfection.

STUDENT OF PERFECTION DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites powerful fist or expert in unarmed attacks; member of a House of Perfection; **Access** You are from Jalmeray.

You have learned the martial arts techniques of your House of Perfection. You become trained in your choice of Acrobatics or Athletics and Warfare Lore; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead. You gain the Ki Strike monk class feat, which grants you the *ki strike* ki spell and a focus pool of 1 Focus Point that you can recover using the Refocus activity as a monk does. Your ki spells from Student of Perfection are occult spells.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the student of perfection archetype.

PERFECT STRIKE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Student of Perfection Dedication

You gain the *perfect strike* ki spell. Increase the number of Focus Points in your focus pool by 1.

PERFECT KI ADEPT

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Student of Perfection Dedication

You gain the appropriate ki spell for your School of Perfection: *unblinking flame revelation* for Unblinking Flame, *unbreaking wave advance* for Unbreaking Waves, *unfolding wind rush* for Unfolding Wind, or *untwisting iron buffer* for Untwisting Iron. Increase the number of Focus Points in your focus pool by 1.

STUDENT OF PERFECTION FOCUS SPELLS

PERFECT STRIKE

FOCUS 2

UNCOMMON DIVINATION FORTUNE

Cast 2 verbal; **Trigger** You miss a Strike with an unarmed attack.

You call upon insight from your training to recover accuracy. Reroll the missed attack roll and keep the new result.

UNBLINKING FLAME REVELATION

FOCUS 3

UNCOMMON ABJURATION

Cast 4 verbal; **Requirements** Your previous action was a successful unarmed Strike.

Targets the creature you hit

Duration 2 rounds

You light your foe with revealing flame. The GM attempts a secret counteract check against each illusion affecting the creature; on a success, you suppress the illusion for the duration, rather than end the effect.

UNBREAKING WAVE ADVANCE

FOCUS 3

UNCOMMON EVOCATION WATER

Cast 4 verbal

Area 15-foot cone

Saving Throw Fortitude

You unleash a mighty wave from your hand that buffets back your foes. Each creature in the area must attempt a Fortitude saving throw. If a creature pushed by *unbreaking wave advance* would be pushed into a solid barrier or another creature, it stops at that point and takes 3d6 damage.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is pushed 10 feet.

Critical Failure The creature is pushed 20 feet.

Heightened (+1) The damage for pushing a creature into a solid barrier increases by 1d6.

UNFOLDING WIND RUSH

FOCUS 3

UNCOMMON EVOCATION

Cast 4 verbal

You travel on a rushing wind. Move two times: two Strides, two Steps, or one Stride and one Step (in either order). You can Stride or Step into the air during this movement, moving upward at a 45-degree angle at most; if you end your movement in the air, you fall after taking one action or when your turn ends, whichever comes first. A *wall of wind* appears in all the spaces you left during this movement, lasting for 1 round.

Heightened (5th) The *wall of wind* lasts 3 rounds.

UNTWISTING IRON BUFFER

FOCUS 3

UNCOMMON ABJURATION

Cast 4 verbal

You send currents of protective ki to the surface of your body that protect you from harm, at least until your enemies dissipate them. You gain 15 temporary Hit Points, which last for up to 3 rounds.

Heightened (+1) The temporary Hit Points increase by 5.



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NATIONS



BLOODCOVE [LE]
Secret Syndicates
Capital: Bloodcove (5,281)



KIBWE [CG]
Representative Council
Capital: Kibwe (3,800)



MZALI [LN]
Theocratic Dictatorship
Capital: Mzali (36,900)



NANTAMBU [NG]
Democratic Council
Capital: Nantambu (14,500)



SENGHOR [CG]
Mercantile Council
Capital: Senghor (26,430)



USARO [CE]
Anarchy
Capital: Usaro (8,790)



VIDRIAN [N]
Representative Council
Capital: Anthusis (8,900)

PEOPLES

Elven
Garundi
Halfling
Mwangi
Taldan

LANGUAGES

Common
Elven
Garundi
Halfling
Mwangi

FACTIONS



Aspis
Consortium



Green Faith



Magaambya

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Norgorber



Calistria



Sarenrae



Gozreh



Shelyn

RESOURCES



Books/Lore



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



Livestock/
Hides



Lumber



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Ores



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Textiles



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MWANGI EXPANSE



TIMELINE

- 3502 AR Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors return much lost knowledge to humanity within the Mwangi Expanse, particularly the art of wizardry.
- 2556 AR The Shory Empire is founded.
- 2323 AR Kho, the first of the Shory's flying cities, takes to the air.
- 2289 AR Golden age of Shory begins.
- 632 AR The Tarrasque, greatest of Rovagug's Spawn, destroys the flying city of Kho.
- 507 AR Its citizens devastated by contact with creatures from the Dark Tapestry, the Shory flying city of Ulduvai crashes into the Shattered Range.
- 2089 AR Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration attempts to annex the Mwangi Expanse, failing disastrously.
- 4138 AR Cheliah establishes the colony of Sargava on Garund's western coast.
- 4332 AR Pathfinder Durvin Gest casts the *Lens of Galundari* into Osibu's Nemesis Well and escapes the city with his memory intact.
- 4606 AR The massive hurricane known as the Eye of Abendego opens in the wake of Aroden's death, flooding the nations of Lirgen and Yamasa and creating the Sodden Lands.
- 4610 AR An invading force from Sargava marches to Mzali, only to be incinerated by the animated remains of the child-god Walkena.
- 4615 AR After evacuating their surviving citizens, Lirgen's entire cabal of ruling astrologers commits suicide.
- 4643 AR Paid by Sargava's Baron Grallus, various Free Captains fend off a Chelish fleet, establishing the colony's independence.
- 4684 AR The Gorilla King of Usaro sends an army through tunnels beneath the Shattered Range mountains

The Mwangi Expanse is a verdant region and a source of legends, tales, and rumors both inspiring and dire, but its inhabitants are not well known in the rest of the Inner Sea region. The Expanse is rich in beauty, art, and scholarship, and its people toil hard and develop cunning strategies to thrive in an oft-hostile environment. It is a land where disparate cultures regularly cross paths and diverse peoples thrive even amid the region's many dangers.

The Mwangi is a region so bountiful and resource-rich that few are ever left hungry or wanting. Ready access to food, water, fiber, and precious materials enabled many of the first Mwangi people to establish their own communities, cities, and even nations in complete isolation from the wider world. The city-states and countries presented here are but a few of the most well known; many more communities exist in this immense jungle, some of which have gone centuries without contact with the rest of the Mwangi Expanse, let alone the larger Inner Sea region.

BLOODCOVE

This decadent haven for piracy has only become more dangerous as it has grown more wealthy with ill-gotten riches. A political shakeup in the former nation of Sargava, now Vidrian, cut off the steady stream of bribes that kept the pirates near Bloodcove complacent. Lacking funds from Vidrian, the Free Captains have turned their eyes toward Bloodcove instead. The massive influx of Free Captains hungry for their own share of Bloodcove's wealth has caused a major disruption of power, with the Aspis Consortium—a notorious trading ring based in Cheliah—finding it difficult to maintain its once-uncontested control of the city. Influence now swings between the current Aspis leaders and the encroaching Free Captains, leaving the rest of the populace caught in the cross-fire of the vying factions.

Further complicating the shadow war that regularly spills onto Bloodcove's city streets are the colonialist refugees from former Sargava who have begun to throng Bloodcove in the hopes of making a fresh start. The chaotic port is far from kind to newcomers, however. In Bloodcove, subterfuge and shady dealings are the only reliable ways to gain traction amid the ever-swirling social miasma. The city's poor have little to no chance of clawing their way out of the darkest, seediest parts of the Cove, and immigrants soon learn that the best way to gain any standing is to ally with either the Aspis Consortium or the Free Captains, though this often requires reevaluating one's moral values.

KIBWE

The city of Kibwe is a bastion of trade nestled in the jungles of the eastern Expanse. Since time immemorial, traders from the coast have met here with caravans coming through the Ndele Gap from Nex, Katapesh, and other nations to the east, exchanging goods in Kibwe's sprawling markets and trading news of far-off places. As a result of this mingling, Kibwe has grown not only large and prosperous, but also wildly diverse, with humans, elves, and gnomes rubbing shoulders with giants, lizardfolk, kobolds, and other uncommon peoples in the name of commerce. Bargaining is the highest form of art in this city, and as the old saying goes, "If you can't find something in Kibwe, it doesn't want to be found."

No one alive today can say for sure who built Kibwe's towering granite walls, though all agree that they predate Holy Xatramba, the lost nation that controlled the city centuries ago before falling to demons. Rising thick and impregnable from the surrounding jungle, Kibwe's walls slope inward, their faces covered with thousands of ancient and often indecipherable runes. Inside, the city is a tangle of neighborhoods organized by nationality, ethnic group, or belief system, with first-time visitors sometimes complaining that the predominant language changes every time one crosses the road. Fortunately, the same ancients who built Kibwe's walls also provided a valuable navigational aid: the Pillar-Watchers, soapstone statues



JAHA

and idols perched atop high columns. Often taking bizarre shapes—tusked tiger-people or featherless humanoid birds, always armed with swords and shields—the idols are said to stand guard over the city, ready to come alive in the residents’ time of greatest need. While locals differ on how much they believe the stories, all can agree that the Pillars act as valuable landmarks in a city where street signs can change languages a dozen times in as many steps.

Kibwe maintains a strict neutrality in political affairs in the interest of greater trade. The city-state is governed by a council of representatives appointed by various clans and micro-communities. Public debates are common in the Adayenki Pavilion, a sacred and petal-strewn common space walled off from the bustle of the market by hanging tapestries and animal hides. Though this representative approach to democracy has historically resulted in a raucous but stable government, of late the council has been hard-pressed by forces both within and without. Since the council’s recent decision to outlaw slavery, the neighborhood of Bekyar Block has roiled on the edge of violence as former slavers plot to reverse the ruling. At the same time, international traders like the Aspis Consortium constantly seek to promote unrest in order to assume control of the city’s considerable mining claims, and the once-small Bwamandu Camp—the neighborhood devoted to taking in refugees from Usaro—has swollen with immigrants and threatens to overwhelm the city’s resources. With so much pressure, it seems like only a matter of time until something breaks, and it’s anyone’s guess whether Kibwe’s patchwork society will band together as one or come apart at the seams.

LAKE OCOTA

Travelers moving through the Mwangi do well to fear the beasts that live among the jungle’s canopies and waterways. Some of the most treacherous examples of such monsters live in and around Lake Ocota, a massive body of water connecting most of the Mwangi’s tributaries. However, even the threat of aquatic monstrosities cannot

to attack Alkenstar.

His forces make off with a number of firearms and the Gunworks’ biggest bombard as a trophy. After years of attacks against Sargava’s colonizers, the child-god Walkena sacks Kalabuto for the first time.

4710 AR Adventurers rediscover the city of Saventh-Yhi and slay the Gorilla King Ruthazek, causing massive disorder in Usaro.

4715 AR Native citizens overthrow Sargava’s colonial government, returning it to local rule and renaming it Vidrian. Vidrian ends its protection payments to the Free Captains of the Shackles, provoking the pirates to attack the new nation.

4717 AR Vidrian withstands the Free Captains’ retaliatory assault, cementing its place as a permanent nation and forcing the pirates to commit their raids on open waters.

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NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



ENOSHA

One of the most influential councilors in Nantambu, Enosha is plagued by rumors of witchcraft or being part catfolk when he's well out of earshot.



AVARNEUS

A hero of the Vidrian revolution, Avarneus's presence on Vidrian's council is one of the major factors keeping the newly minted government united.



ISAARA

The uncrowned economic queen of the harbors of Senghor, Isaara has her hand in every shipment that enters or leaves the city's docks.



VERSENNE

Versenne tirelessly leads the research of Lirgeni astrologers in Jaha and elsewhere who hope to put an end to the devastating Eye of Abendego.

keep the bravest and most foolhardy from attempting to lay claim to the lush fens, groves, and shorelines surrounding the lake. With the recent death of the Gorilla King distracting the shoreside city of Usaro, Lake Ocota has found itself overrun with entrepreneurs of all kinds.

Would-be settlers from across the Mwangi city-states, refugees from former Sargava, and colonialists from distant, resource-hungry kingdoms have swarmed Lake Ocota in hopes of seizing some of the land for themselves. The region is now a hotbed of strife. Settlers clash with one another, the local orcs struggle to remain in their homeland, and demon-tainted forces from Usaro vie to reestablish their haunted city's foothold in the region.

Lake Ocota's resident orc tribes long ago learned how to deal with the region's dangers and fought hard to establish their own settlements. These orcs have plenty of experience with dealing with Usaro's warriors and have even devised magical tattoos to ward themselves from Usaro's demonic influences. Now, the orcs must struggle tusk-and-nail to protect their homeland.

MZALI

The temple-city of Mzali was once the center of an ancient empire ruled by semi-divine sun-kings. Long ago, a powerful group of shamans called the Council of Mwanyisa successfully toppled the monarchy—yet the shamans were unable to hold the state together. Under their rule, the empire crumbled, until by the Age of Lost Omens they barely controlled even the half-empty capital city.

Given time, Mzali might eventually have been abandoned. Yet a century ago, members of the council received a vision prophesying the empire's rebirth. Soon after, while delving into one of the city's many hidden tombs, they discovered a child-mummy dressed in the garments of a sun-king. Ancient texts proclaimed the mummy Walkena, a legendary child-god who commanded magic beyond anything the shamans could imagine. The council promptly put this relic of their ancient power on public display, yet the resulting flood of local pilgrims to the city—and stories of fabulous treasures discovered alongside the mummy—drew the attention of Chelish colonists in Kalabuto. The colonists attacked Mzali only to be utterly immolated as the mummy miraculously sprang to life and called down fire from the sky.

Since his triumphant return, Walkena has ruled Mzali absolutely, with the Council of Mwanyisa reduced to an advisory role. Beneath his undead gaze, the city buzzes once more with the life. Thousands of Mwangi have flocked to serve Walkena, bolstered by the child-god's public mission to drive out northern colonizers and unite the Expanse under his own flag. Yet this rebirth of home rule is a double-edged sword, for Walkena's policies are far from progressive. Cruel and powerful, the mummy shows blatant favoritism to his supporters and sentences any who question him to the horrific and fatal Punishment of Seven Angry Suns. Trade with non-Mwangi is banned, and anyone found associating with outsiders without explicit permission is labeled a traitor. These pressures—combined with the fact that the new state of Vidrian recently managed to overthrow its colonialist regime without Walkena's help—have recently drawn many Mzali citizens away from the city, enraging their ruler and resulting in rumors that the child-god may be planning an attack against Vidrian. This tension has only intensified in the presence of the Bright Lions, a group of Mzali insurgents who seek to overthrow Walkena and return their city to the people.

Located on the banks of the Pasuango River, deep in the Mwangi's remote southern plains, Mzali is a sprawling mass of cathedrals and monuments that become reflected in the water that covers the streets every monsoon season. Knotted trees wrap massive roots around thick curtain walls and stone temple complexes, their shapes often integrated into the architecture, with most major structures surrounded by moats for protection and drainage. In the center of the city, Walkena's Temple of the Deathless Child towers above nearby buildings, yet the city is awash in ancient shrines to entities both contemporary and forgotten, some in active use and others

co-opted to house markets or tenements. As much a necropolis as a holy city, Mzali also holds dozens of burial mounds: pyramidal tombs dug deep into the earth with only the capstones visible, the rest of the monuments hidden beneath the foundations of other structures. Walkena himself was discovered in one such burial mound, and despite the danger, opportunistic grave robbers still occasionally sneak past the city's checkpoints in hopes of harvesting valuable relics from these unplumbed crypts.

NANTAMBU

Sometimes called the Song-Wind City for the cheerful chimes of colored glass that hang from its every building, Nantambu is a bastion of peace and sophistication. Canals from the Vanji River carry water not just to the city but through it, demarcating districts in great curving lines topped by graceful, arching bridges. In Nantambu's cosmopolitan markets, spices and magic from across the Expanse flow freely—yet the city needs no defensive walls, nor standing armies, for it is guarded by something far more powerful than stone or steel.

Founded by a legendary magician known as Old-Mage Jatembe, the Magaambya is the oldest academy of arcane magic in the Inner Sea region, and perhaps on all of Golarion. Looming over the city's lesser stone buildings, the academy's ring of 10 terraced towers form Nantambu's heart, each decorated with a massive mosaic of one of the legendary Ten Magic Warriors. Students from around the world come to study in its storied halls, focusing primarily on the meticulous art of wizardry. Teaching styles within the school vary greatly; some professors teach only through didactic oral traditions, while others promote the study of ancient texts—many penned by Old-Mage Jatembe and his disciples. The academy's teachers are notorious for sojourning in far-off lands and visiting scholars in other nations, meaning students must sometimes travel great distances to access particular mentors. The university also encourages fieldwork, and at any given time there are more tenured professors conducting research in the far corners of the world than in the school itself. Such professors often send their favorite students abroad to secure—or uncover—the ruins or artifacts they hope to study. In the Magaambya, it's said that a wizard learns both by reading and by doing—a philosophy sometimes termed “the Word and the Way”—and thus to shut oneself off from the world in perpetual study is at best counterproductive, and at worst miserly. In Jatembe's tradition, study is ultimately less important than using what you learn to serve others.

The Magaambyan emphasis on service is the source of Nantambu's strength, with the resident mages ensuring that no invading force has ever managed to come within 20 miles of the city. This protection extends to neighboring villages as well, and despite no formal agreements of fealty, more than a hundred such settlements gladly and gratefully pay tribute to the city. Supported by the college's faculty, Nantambu's governing council of elected magistrate-mayors presides over the city and surrounding territory, using the famous *Watcher's Stone* of Nantambiyan Tower to keep magical tabs on Usaro and other threats in the region.

ECONOMICS

The Mwangi Expanse is rich in natural resources. Its fertile soil gives life to copious forests, abundant crops, and rare herbs and medicinal plants, while its mountain mines produce countless tons of ore and gems. Unfortunately, this wealth has as often been as much of a curse as a boon in recent centuries, as locals are forced to defend their claims against militant colonists from Avistan. Much trade with northern nations is concentrated along the western coast, where ports like Senghor host trading ships from around the Inner Sea, while inland Kibwe caters to overland trade caravans from eastern Garundi nations and Nantambu attracts scholars from across the globe. For the most part, while residents may capitalize on opportunities provided by foreign trade, settlements within the Expanse are largely self-sufficient, trading with immediate neighbors and relying little on foreign imports—a fact that causes northern companies like the Aspis Consortium no end of frustration.



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RELATIONS

Without a unified government, the myriad cultures and cities of the Mwangi Expanse have an equally wide array of relationships with foreign nations and each other. In Nantambu and Kibwe, peaceful foreign traders are welcome regardless of their place of origin, while in Mzali non-Mwangi traders face execution or worse. Vidrian and other coastal nations maintain a well-earned hatred of both Cheliax—which would love to retake its former colony—and the Free Captains of the Shackles now that Vidrian no longer pays for protection.



SENGHOR GUARD

Yet Nantambu is far more than just an outgrowth of the Magaambya. Its reputation for scholarship has led to the establishment of many other prominent schools, teaching everything from science and smithing to Mwangi martial traditions. Small wonder, then, that the city should also host the largest Pathfinder Lodge in the Expanse. Famously accepting of strangers, Nantambu's populace boasts dozens of different ancestries, from Ekujae elves to Jaha lizardfolk, gnolls to catfolk. Here one can find even the most reclusive of Mwangi peoples, such as the shy anadi, many-eyed goloma, bone-feathered shisks, or inevitable-worshipping conrasu with their elaborate biological machines and living wooden exoskeletons. Regardless of their strangeness, all entities of goodwill are welcome in the Song-Wind City. This hospitality has only increased in the wake of the recent Lake Ocota land rushes, and each passing year sees the city grow more secure in its position as the cultural heart of the Expanse.

SENGHOR

The city-state of Senghor has had to make significant changes as of late, most notably due to the overthrow of Sargava and subsequent establishment of Vidrian. Previously, Senghor had a degree of importance as one of the Mwangi's few remaining safe trade hubs and home of the Expanse's most powerful navy. With the fall of Sargava's colonial regime, however, some of that protection is gone, since the Free Captains who once made a tidy profit from Sargava's bribes now raid the waters around Senghor to compensate for their losses, making trade with former partners difficult. Senghor's defensive fortifications and dozens of navy ships have kept these pirates from reaching the city proper, but anyone hoping to trade with Senghor nowadays must first wind their way through Free Captain blockades—a risk few are willing to take.

The dominant people of Senghor, called Caldaru, are unique to this city and have a distinctly different appearance from other Mwangi peoples. They are relatively tall, with green eyes and skin tones that range from olive to dark tan. Their dialect includes several unique words and phrases not found in any other Mwangi tongue. Senghoran mythology suggests that the Caldaru trace their lineage to a Garundi ancestry that no longer exists, and the unique architecture of the city only reinforces this legend.

Though Senghor once willingly traded with Sargava, the Caldaru have no interest in allowing strangers to gain a foothold in their city, so it was no surprise when they aided the Sargavan revolution to repel the Chelish colonialists. To keep things agreeable between Senghor and the new nation of Vidrian, the two have cemented a very tentative alliance, the goal of which is to keep colonizers from retaking Vidrian and to prevent any possibility of such outsiders gaining influence in Senghor. The alliance also establishes several trade and naval agreements, with the terms benefiting Senghor more than Vidrian. The people of Vidrian were grateful for Senghor's help in their young nation's earliest days, but as it has grown into its independence its citizens have begun to protest the unbalanced terms of the deal. Vidrian's leaders are pressuring Senghor in hopes of reworking the terms of agreement, but Senghor has yet to give in to these demands, heightening tensions between the two powers.

USARO

The grim city of Usaro looms over the delta where the Blood River meets Lake Ocota. Its ancient white ziggurats are adorned with grisly decorations made from the remains of the nation's enemies and its crumbling spires overflow with captured prisoners and slaves. Usaro was once ruled by the Gorilla King, the most favored servant of the demon lord Angazhan, but when adventurers killed the Gorilla King, the city fell to chaos. Many of the Gorilla King's minions—including his derhii lieutenants, gigantopithecus advisors, and charau-ka foot soldiers, scrambled to

fill the power vacuum. After several months of infighting, Kallijae elves descended upon the city, taking advantage of the disorder to liberate hundreds of the city's captives. A subsequent orc raid further splintered the city's populace, and when the orcs seized Usaro's totem of Angazhan, a minor artifact kept within the city's palace, many of the survivors claimed that the city had lost Angazhan's blessing.

While the city remains in a chaotic state, a burgeoning faction seeks to unite Usaro and destroy the city's enemies. Led by a Mwangi warrior and Angazhan worshipper named Shosenbe, the group calls itself the Chosen and promises to bring vengeance against the Kallijae and orc tribes. The Chosen have so far deflected further raids on the city. However, Shosenbe is reticent about his motives and allegiances, and some wonder if he truly has ties to the demon lord Angazhan or is following his own agenda.

VIDRIAN

The colonial nation of Sargava faced many hardships over the past few decades, ranging from isolation from its parent nation of Cheliox to constant financial extortion by the Free Captains of the Shackles. After years of constant adversity, the locals finally chose to enact change in their lands. What began as a small revolt by Mwangi servants and slaves soon became a complete overthrow of the nation's overlords. Some of the colonists, now several generations removed from the golden age of Cheliox and disdainful of the state of Sargava at the hands of their kin, found camaraderie among the Mwangi peoples and chose to fight alongside them.

The rebelling forces soon grew to massive numbers and were able to take the capital of Eleder with relative ease, displacing the domineering Baron Utilinus. Unfortunately, the rebels also had to contend with the Free Captains who had been exploiting the region. Not content to lose their easy stream of revenue in the form of protection money from Sargava, the Free Captains waged a bloody battle against the rebels, an ordeal that lasted for over a year. After countless engagements and a hastily written alliance with Senghor, the combined forces of the Mwangi and turncoat colonists successfully drove off the pirates. With the Free Captains routed, the lands became the new nation of Vidrian in 4717 AR.

Today, Vidrian's people work hard to use the advantages and resources that originally drew Cheliox to colonize the region to bring the country closer to economic stability. Some use the ships seized from defeated Free Captains to trade along the western coast of Garund. Ambassadors have set out into the greater Inner Sea region to help establish diplomatic ties; they've already found success in Absalom, Andoran, Osirion, and Ravounel, and their progress shows no signs of slowing.

The scars of colonization still burden the nation. Having just toppled the former rulers of Sargava, the people of Vidrian are all too aware of how easily their fledgling society could be reconquered. While all Vidrics agree that steps must be taken to rebuild their country's economy and protect the Mwangi Expanse from being colonized again, such

THE TEN MAGIC WARRIORS

Old-Mage Jatembe is widely regarded as one of the greatest spellcasters in history, having brought humanity out of the Age of Anguish following Earthfall by reintroducing the art of wizardry, but he didn't accomplish all his great deeds alone. Aiding him were the Ten Magic Warriors: powerful disciples dedicated to protecting the knowledge and people of Garund as civilization struggled to reassert itself. In his wisdom, Jatembe challenged his apprentices to give up everything for the sake of their mission, even their own identities, with each warrior wearing a golden mask bearing the visage of a different jungle animal. Stories of the magic warriors' exploits abound, such as how they defeated the King of Biting Ants to liberate the Doorway to the Red Star, or aided Jatembe in creating the *Ring of Nine Facets*. Most importantly, they acted as leaders and teachers for the people of the Mwangi Expanse, founding schools like the great Magaambya in Nantambu. In the end, they disappeared from history, leaving no tombs behind—though scholars have found evidence that one of them, known as Black Heron, was the primary architect of the Shory Empire.

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KHO

RAINKIN TATTOOS

Mwangi orcs wear elaborate magical tattoos to protect themselves from demonic influence.

BLESSED TATTOO

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON	ABJURATION	INVESTED
MAGICAL	TATTOO	

Price 90 gp

Usage tattoo; **Bulk** –

You can activate the tattoo as a reaction instead of a two-action activity, triggered when a demon attacks you or you attempt a saving throw against a demon's ability.

Activate ♦♦ envision, Interact;

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You gain the effect of protection against evil.

noble goals are easier said than done. The government of Vidrian is a pragmatic collective of disparate influential powers, each with a differing idea on how to guide the country forward, and their disagreements sometimes lead to disorganized gridlock. Diplomatic overtures aimed at other Mwangi nations have been met with reluctance, as these long self-sufficient city-states have little desire to give up their complete independence. The alliance between Senghor and Vidrian remains untested, and Vidrian's other allies, such as the spiderlike anadi, are reluctant to make military commitments. Worse, Vidrian's nearest neighbor, the powerful state of Mzali, seems more inclined to view the new nation as a potential threat rather than an ally.

The folk of Vidrian are a coalition of disparate Mwangi peoples, united under a common history, cause, and banner. A sizable population of former Sargavan colonists also remains in the nation, protected by law from retaliation. While their aid in the rebellion against their fellows and the Free Captains earned them citizenship, the stark change in Vidric culture that occurred after the Mwangi natives regained control of their land has resulted in a new source of friction between these two groups.

OTHER MWANGI LOCATIONS

The Mwangi Expanse teems with small nations and clans that each have their own unique culture and traditions. Below are a few more of the Expanse's most prominent settlements and regions.

JAHA

Unknown architects constructed this massive walled city long before Earthfall. The ruins were a point of fascination for the Lirgeni astrologers who originally came to Jaha after the Eye of Abendego destroyed their homes. Xenophobic and insular, these cultish stargazers traded only reluctantly with outsiders, even other Lirgeni. Two years ago, a coalition of Lirgeni kinfolk and lizardfolk astrologers from the Soddan Lands arrived at Jaha's gates, ready to force the issue and make the city's residents share their secrets. To their surprise, however, they found Jaha empty, its occupiers inexplicably absent.

Unnerved but undaunted, the coalition settled into the abandoned ruins, throwing open Jaha's doors for the first time in generations. Today, adventuring scholars are welcome to help the new residents decipher the city's many mysteries, particularly the disappearance of the previous Lirgeni occupants. While theories abound, many believe it may have something to do with the strange marker stones erected at various points around the city, or the miles of uncatalogued tunnels beneath its streets.

MUALIJAE NATIONS

Once part of a united kingdom, three major nations of Mwangi elves, known collectively as the Mualijae,



MUALIJAE ELVES

dwell within the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. In the west, the militant Ekujae serve as feared and revered guardians of the forest, locked in a decade-long guerrilla war with the Aspis Consortium. In the northwest, the Kallijae have long fought to protect local inhabitants—both elven and otherwise—from the predations of Usaro's raiding bands. The Alijae of the northern jungles defend the elven ruins of Nagisa, the White City, from those ignorant explorers who would risk unleashing its entrapped evils.

OSIBU

Hidden deep in the Screaming Jungle, utopian Osibu is the subject of countless legends—most of them true. Adventurers who make it past the city's defenses—flora and fauna controlled by a circle of druidic statues called the Twice-Honored Women—find a city paved in gold, its citizens nearly deathless thanks to the magic of their democratically elected leaders. In the city's center, the great arboreal regent Dimari-Diji has guarded Osibu's so-called Nemesis Well since before the fall of the *Starstone*, keeping anyone from entering its unplumbed depths or heeding its sinister whispers. Those who locate the city are greeted warmly, but visitors are not allowed to leave without agreeing to either a *geas* that binds them to keep the city's location secret or an herbal concoction that wipes all memory of Osibu's location from their minds.

RUINS OF KHO

The first Shory city to fly, Kho was also the first to fall. In –632 AR, this astonishing marvel of magic and technology came crashing down in a remote valley of the Barrier Wall Mountains, swatted from the sky by the Tarrasque, greatest of Rovagug's Spawn. Thousands died in the disaster; the survivors abandoned the wreckage of their home and disappeared into the jungles.

Today, Kho is a haunted place, its shattered domes and crumbling cisterns still sputtering and seething with ancient magic. Marids and other outsiders once bound to serve the Shory claim the ruins for their own, battling for supremacy with degenerate morlocks and fell beasts from the surrounding jungles and mountains. Yet despite the danger and the local Mwangi tribes' refusal to touch the city, the ruins remain a major destination for those explorers willing to make the perilous journey in order to claim the long-lost treasures and forgotten knowledge within the city's broken spires and half-buried temples.

SODDEN LANDS

When the permanent hurricane called the Eye of Abendego formed in the wake of Aroden's death, it catastrophically flooded the coastal nations of Lirgen and Yamasa. Today, the territory is a lawless, storm-wracked swamp stalked by monstrous predators, bloodthirsty boggards, and the aggressive lizardfolk Terwa Lords. Most of its original humanoid population has fled, and those who remain have banded together in gangs of survivalists who scavenge the wreckage. Still, disaster always attracts opportunists, and many adventurers travel to the ruined nations, now called the Sodden Lands, to loot cities lost to the storm. One of the few settlements still occupied is Hyrantam, Lirgen's former capital, where hundreds of towers built by the ruling Saoc Brethren now form tiny islands above the waves, connected by rope bridges and bedeviled by aberrations lurking beneath the water's surface.

INNER SEA ASTROLOGY

Many different cultures around the Inner Sea practice astrology—the art of reading portents and signs in the motions of the stars and planets. Less a religion than a science, the practice involves careful study and meticulous record keeping, and while some conventional astronomers denounce the tradition, they can't argue with the astrologers' sometimes surprisingly prescient predictions.

The most prominent constellations in Inner Sea astrology are those of the Cosmic Caravan. Astrologers split the night sky into 13 equal longitudinal sections for the 13 signs and use their positions in the sky to learn about both coming events and the traits of people born under them. From the beautiful Thrush to the sinister Follower, these signs are often associated with the Desna-worshipping Varisians or the ill-fated Saoc Brethren of Lirgen.



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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Mwangi Expanse region.

BEKYAR RESTORER

BACKGROUND

Though many Bekyars worship demons, you seek to pave a different path for yourself and your kindred, while also attempting to change other Mwangi's treatment of your culture.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Wisdom or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Abyss Lore skill. You gain the Group Impression skill feat.

BONUWAT WAVETOUCHED

BACKGROUND

You are a child of the Bonuwat people, and the sea's salt flows through your veins. You've taken to sailing and swimming gracefully and with ease, earning you the honorific "wavetouched."

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Ocean Lore skill. You gain the Underwater Marauder skill feat.

BRIGHT LION

BACKGROUND

You are a member of the Bright Lions and seek to overthrow the tyrannical reign of Walkena and free Mzali from his cruel whims. You're experienced operating undercover and have had to be cautious of what you say and who you trust, lest you fall afoul of the god-king's terrible punishments.



Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Deception skill and the Mzali Lore skill. You gain the Lie to Me skill feat.

MAGAAMBYA ACADEMIC

BACKGROUND

You studied magic at the prestigious Magaambya academy in Nantambu, learning magical traditions dating back to Old-Mage Jatembe and earning a pedigree respected by magical scholars almost everywhere.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in your choice of either the Arcana or Nature skill, as well as the Academia Lore skill. You gain the Recognize Spell skill feat.

SENGHOR SAILOR

BACKGROUND

As an experienced sailor from Senghor, you know that the only thing saving you from disaster on the high seas is a properly maintained ship. You know boat-building inside and out and you can quickly cobble together a solution in the event that something breaks.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Sailing Lore skill. You gain the Quick Repair skill feat.

SHORY SEEKER

BACKGROUND

You've dedicated your life to unraveling the secrets of the ancient Shory Empire, either through meticulous research or by traveling into dangerous and distant ruins to track down long-lost artifacts.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Shory Lore skill. You gain the Specialty Crafting skill feat.

SODDEN SCAVENGER

BACKGROUND

You've managed to eke out an existence in the storm-wracked Sodden Lands and have become an expert at scavenging food and tools.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Swamp Lore skill. You gain the Forager skill feat.

VIDRIAN REFORMER

BACKGROUND

You know that the only way your homeland of Vidrian can remain free from outside conquerors is by forging a strong and unified government. As such, you seek to bind your fellow citizens together through careful diplomacy and force of personality—or, if necessary, subterfuge and intrigue.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Politics Lore skill. You gain the Hobnobber skill feat.

MAGIC WARRIOR

You mix magic and martial prowess, following in the tradition of the Ten Magic Warriors of Old-Mage Jatembe.

MAGIC WARRIOR DEDICATION

FEAT 2

ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites ability to cast focus spells; **Access** You are from the Mwangi Expanse.

You have taken up a nameless mask and sworn the oath of the magic warriors. You become trained in your choice of Arcana or Nature and in Magic Warrior Lore; if you were already trained in the skill, you become an expert instead.

You hide your identity behind a mask representing an animal of your choice, corresponding to one of the general animal types in the *animal form* spell. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saves against divination effects, though sometimes refusing to remove your mask can cause issues in areas that don't respect or understand the magic warrior tradition.

Once you take this feat, if another creature ever learns your true face or name, you lose your abilities from this archetype. Close allies who knew of your decision to take the mask before your dedication don't break this taboo unless they tell someone else. To regain your abilities, you must discard your mask and obtain a new one of a different animal, then retrain Magic Warrior Dedication into a new Magic Warrior Dedication with your new mask. Your focus spells from the magic warrior archetype are the same tradition as your other spells (choose one if you have spells from multiple traditions).

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the magic warrior archetype.

MAGIC WARRIOR ASPECT

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Magic Warrior Dedication

You can alter your form to gain an aspect of the animal your mask represents. You gain the *magic warrior aspect* focus spell.

MAGIC WARRIOR TRANSFORMATION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Magic Warrior Dedication

You can transform fully into the animal your mask represents. You gain the *magic warrior transformation* focus spell.

NAMELESS ANONYMITY

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Magic Warrior Dedication

Your mask protects you further from divination. Once per day, you can cast *nondetection* on yourself, heightened to the highest level of spell you can cast; the spell ends immediately if your mask is removed for even a moment.

MAGIC WARRIOR FOCUS SPELLS

MAGIC WARRIOR ASPECT

FOCUS 2

UNCOMMON MORPH TRANSMUTATION

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Duration 5 minutes

You call upon the aspect of the animal from your mask, gaining physical features reminiscent of that animal. You morph slightly into that creature, gaining the Speeds and senses you would gain from using *animal form* to turn into the type of animal your mask represents; these special Speeds can't be increased by status bonuses or item bonuses.

MAGIC WARRIOR TRANSFORMATION

FOCUS 2

UNCOMMON POLYMORPH TRANSMUTATION

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Duration 1 minute

You transform into the animal from your mask. You gain the effects of *animal form*, heightened to *magic warrior transformation's* level, and you can transform into only the type of animal your mask represents.



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OLD CHELIAX

NATIONS



CHELIAX [LE]
Diabolic Monarchy
Capital: Egorian (82,100)



NIDAL [LE]
Militaristic Theocracy
Capital: Pangolais (18,900)



ISGER [LN]
Vassal State of Cheliaz
Capital: Elidir (11,900)



RAVOUNEL [CG]
Burgeoning Confederation
Capital: Kintargo (12,500)

PEOPLES

Gnome
Goblin
Halfling
Nidalese
Taldan
Varisian

LANGUAGES

Common
Gnomish
Goblin
Halfling
Infernal
Shadowtongue

Varisian

FACTIONS



Bellflower
Network



Firebrands



Hellknights

RELIGIONS



Asmodeus



Norgorber



Desna



Shelyn



Erastil



Zon-
Kuthon

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Armor/
Weapons



Jewelry/
Gems



Livestock/
Hides



Lumber



Luxury Goods



Mercenaries



Ores



Seafood



Ships



Spices/Salt



Textiles



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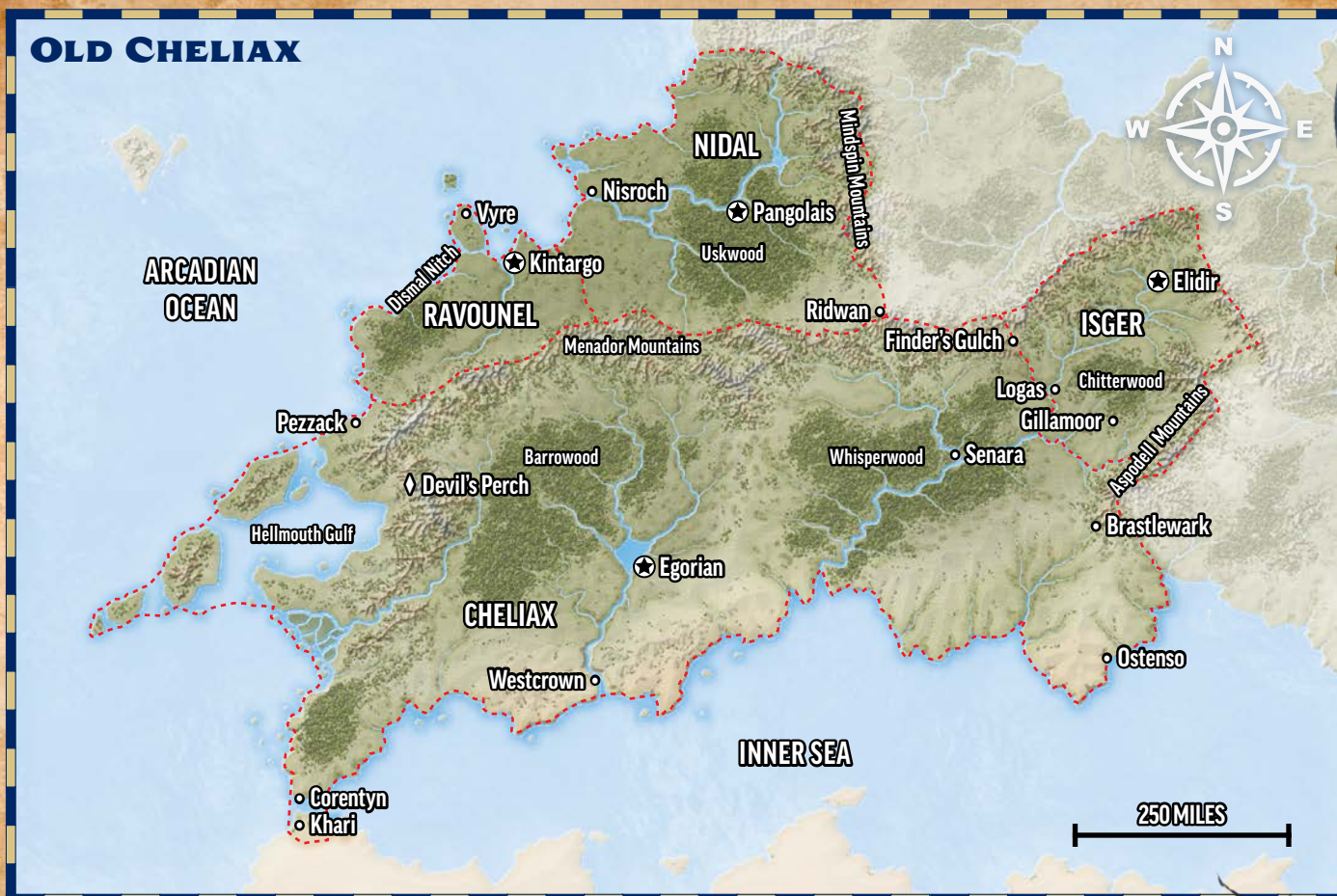
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OLD CHELIAX



TIMELINE

- 5293 AR Amid the devastation of Earthfall, three Nidalese horselords discover Zon-Kuthon and accept his bargain of eternal servitude in exchange for their people's salvation. They become the Black Triune, and Nidal becomes the Midnight Lord's domain.
- 1673 AR Vyre is founded by settlers from Corentyn hoping to escape Taldor's strictures.
- 2133 AR Taldor consolidates several conquered tribes' territories into the newly recognized province of Isgar.
- 3007 AR Cheliox's boundaries are drawn, and it's formally designated a province of Taldor.
- 4081 AR Under Aspex the Even-Tongued, Cheliox declares its independence from Taldor. Andoran, Galt, and Isgar are rapidly annexed to the new nation in a series of power grabs collectively dubbed the Even-Tongued Conquest. Cheliox begins to eclipse Taldor as the primary power and cultural influence in Avistan.
- 4305 AR Chelish Emperor Haliad III begins the Everwar and orders a Chelish incursion into Nidal.
- 4338 AR Under orders from the Black Triune, Nidal surrenders to Cheliox.
- 4576 AR The Order of the Rack, first of the Hellknight orders, is founded in Westcrown.
- 4606 AR Following Aroden's death, Cheliox falls into civil war. Molthune and Korvosa secede in the following years.
- 4640 AR House Thrune, backed by Nidal and a pact with Hell, emerges victorious from the Chelish Civil War. Queen Abrogail I institutes diabolism across the land, and the Church of Asmodeus is declared

Once one of the greatest human empires in Avistan, Cheliox has declined significantly in power and influence over the past century. When the god Aroden died, Cheliox collapsed into social upheaval and, shortly thereafter, civil war. Seeing an opportunity to seize power from chaos, House Thrune, which had long practiced the dark arts of diabolism in secret, entered into an open pact with the powers of Hell. Backed by legions of devils, the house's own fearsome armies, and the support of shadowcallers from the neighboring land of Nidal, House Thrune stamped out its enemies and claimed the Chelish throne. Following its victory, House Thrune ushered in sweeping changes, reshaping Cheliox into an infernal empire. Today in Cheliox, the official histories are little more than state-sanctioned propaganda, the government runs a merciless and labyrinthine bureaucracy devoted to elevating the ruthless and crushing the weak, and the once-white roses of Egorian now blossom in fields of luxurious, velvety black blossoms.

Yet, for all its insistence on discipline and authority, House Thrune's rule has not gone unchallenged. The city of Westcrown, in particular, has long been home to subdued dissent and underworld corruption, which came to a head when the Council of Thieves was unmasked and broken roughly a decade ago. Even more recently, two major rebellions—one successful, the other not—dramatically reshaped the balance of power and weakened House Thrune's grip on the region. Nevertheless, infernal Cheliox remains an immensely wealthy, influential, and well-armed nation, and House Thrune's rule continues to guide not only its own land, but also the fates of nations beyond its borders. Isgar, Nidal, and newly independent Ravounel all bear particularly tight and intricate ties with the devils' empire.

Devastated by years of bitter warfare following centuries of exploitative, near-colonial rule, Isgar remains a subordinate thrall to Cheliox. Its government is kept on a short leash and granted little agency to chart its own course. Out in the hinterlands, however, far from House Thrune's watchful eye, some Isgeri towns are developing their own unlikely alliances to survive.

The shadowy nation of Nidal also counts itself an ally to Cheliox, but its position is nearly opposite Isgar's. Steeped in millennia of sinister magic and the cruel religion of Zon-Kuthon, Nidal does not consider itself a vassal, but rather a close and valued advisor to a like-minded friend who could, perhaps, benefit from a little coaxing to become even crueler.

Ravounel, by contrast, broke away from Cheliox several years ago and declared itself an independent nation. Yet even after being formally recognized as a free state, Ravounel has found that it cannot fully escape its former ruler's influence. Cheliox holds Ravounel pinned against the sea, and the old empire's economic and diplomatic domination of the region is so complete that despite having supernatural protection against direct military incursion, Ravounel must remain in Cheliox's good graces to survive. For now, House Thrune seems inclined to accept its former archduchy's independence as an unfortunate but unchallenged fact, and it has dealt fairly with Ravounel. Yet as many on both sides are well aware, a devil's mercy is fickle, and its memory long. Should a few delicate circumstances change, Ravounel's sudden independence might just as suddenly be reversed.

CHELIOX

For over half a millennium, Imperial Cheliox was the dominant power across Avistan. When King Aspex the Even-Tongued broke Cheliox away from Taldor, annexed Andoran, and conquered Isgar and Galt, he began a centuries-long era of glory that saw Chelish influence—political, cultural, and military—spread across the continent. Bolstered by the favor of Aroden, patron god of humanity, the empire ascended to become a jewel of human civilization, an honor it held unchallenged for centuries. Cheliox's golden age ended with Aroden's death. In the turmoil that followed, the diabolist House Thrune made an infernal pact with the powers of Hell, the terms of which remain shrouded in deep secrecy. The result of that grand bargain,



THE CHITTERWOOD

however, still reverberates across the world. Allied with Asmodeus's legions of fiends, Queen Abrogail I seized power, beginning a dynasty that has held the Chelish throne for nearly a century.

Today, Cheliah is a proud but diminished empire, renowned for its wine, opera, and glorious architecture, but also for the devils in its streets and the cruelty of its laws. Under Thrune rule, the poor are viciously oppressed, crimes are punished by agonizing public excruciations and executions, and slavery is both commonplace and harshly practiced, with none of the legal protections that existed in Aroden's day. The church of Asmodeus is the state religion, and other faiths are permitted only by House Thrune's sufferance.

Yet Cheliah is also a realm of high refinement, stunning and sophisticated art, and undeniable grandeur in both public and private spaces. The polished elegance of Egorian, the bustling naval yards of Ostenso, and the aging magnificence of Westcrown—even with the damage from that city's recent rebellion only partially repaired—are among the wonders of human civilization. The empire's opera halls, palaces, and cathedrals are unrivaled in their splendor, even if the Asmodean cathedrals' resplendence bears a decidedly sinister cast. Cheliah's citizens tend to be ambitious, educated, and formidably intelligent; they deal with devils as equals or even treat the infernal as their lessers, never approaching the powers of Hell as abject supplicants.

Not all of the empire's citizens are fond of fiends, though outsiders sometimes assume otherwise. The various orders of Hellknights model themselves after Hell's ruthless discipline and unyielding law, but they do not venerate devils and, indeed, require recruits (known as armigers) to win knighthood by slaying a devil in single combat. Additionally, Iomedae, the chivalrous goddess of crusaders, was born in Cheliah, and the Inheritor's righteous faith remains strong there, despite recent events exacerbating the long-standing strain between Iomedae's church and that of Asmodeus.

Moreover, because Chelish culture values brilliance in nearly any pursuit, and because its nobles are perpetually striving for advancement against one another, it thinks itself more meritocratic than many societies on Golarion. Low-born but

Cheliah's state religion. Galt and Andoran break away from Cheliah in the decades that follow.

4697–4701 AR The Goblinblood Wars devastate Isger. Much of the Chitterwood is burned to the ground.

4715–4716 AR Two rebellions erupt simultaneously in Cheliah. The Silver Ravens rise in Kintargo, eventually forming the nation of Ravounel and forcing Cheliah to acknowledge its sovereignty.

The Glorious Reclamation, meanwhile, attempts to purify and reclaim the Chelish heartlands in Iomedae's name. After a year of heavy fighting, the Glorious Reclamation is crushed and its leaders are executed by public torture.

4717 AR Lord-Mayor Jilia Bainilus of Kintargo takes office as the first ruler of Ravounel, adopting the pre-Thrune Chelish title of "Domina."

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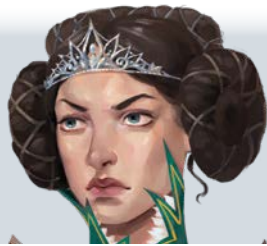
OLD CHELIAH

SAGA LANDS

SHINING KINGDOMS

NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



DOMINA JILIA BAINILUS

The ruler of Ravounel is a clever and forthright leader whose perspective has been informed in unusual ways by extraordinary experiences.



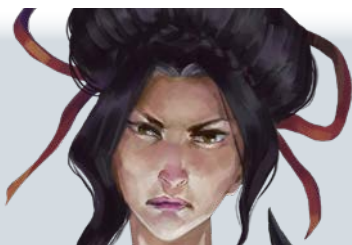
THE BLACK TRIUNE

Sworn to eternal servitude to Zon-Kuthon, the members of the Black Triune have ruled over Nidal since the days of Earthfall.



QUEEN ABROGAIL THRUNE II

A ruthless and effective ruler, Queen Abrogail has proven a strong leader and has maintained the power of Cheliah even in the face of many setbacks.



ARCHCOUNTESS LEVISVIA VASVION

This Egorian noble was instrumental in gathering forces to break the Glorious Reclamation. Her role in finding traitors has won her considerable acclaim in Cheliah.

talented individuals can always find patrons willing to advance their careers in exchange for profits or reflected glory and can often marry or bribe their way into titles of their own in time. The Hellknights, too, offer ready advancement for those who prove themselves in service. However, Cheliah is also merciless in enforcing the downside of its “meritocracy”: those unlucky enough to lack the qualities it values are treated as completely worthless, undeserving of even basic dignity.

Furthermore, this supposed meritocracy applies only to humans. Halflings, hellspawn, and the winged strix are shut out from opportunity altogether. Chelish halflings are almost all either servants or slaves, and they are treated with peremptory disdain. Hellspawn, who are descendants of humans with fiendish blood, are held in even lower regard, for they are seen as the fruits of an abhorrent lapse in self-control while dealing with fiends. The seldom-seen strix—enigmatic, black-winged humanoids—are commonly considered brutes, barely even capable of language.

These and other contradictions in its nature make Cheliah one of the most complicated of the world’s nations. Those contradictions have only sharpened over the past decade, which has not been kind to the infernal empire. Though still mighty, Cheliah has suffered a number of stinging setbacks. It lost a major armada in the Shackles, a significant blow to Chelish naval power that put an end, at least temporarily, to Cheliah’s hopes of expanding into the Mwangi Expanse. Next, a violent rebellion calling itself the Glorious Reclamation erupted in Westcrown, causing widespread social unrest before Queen Abrogail’s forces were able to crush the rebels and restore order. While Iomedae’s faith has not been outlawed in Cheliah following the Glorious Reclamation’s defeat, it is watched much more closely, and its adherents have learned not to criticize the queen in even the mildest of terms. Simultaneously with the Glorious Reclamation, a second rebellion broke out in the Archduchy of Ravounel, which declared itself an independent nation—a bitter pill that House Thrune was forced to swallow lest it suffer truly unacceptable consequences.

All these blows have pushed Cheliah into a position more precarious than it has occupied since the first days of the Thrune Ascendancy. The empire’s enemies, most notably Andoran, circle eagerly around it, waiting for a chance to pounce. They may find, however, that Cheliah remains a wily and dangerous adversary, and its weakness may be deliberately exaggerated as a ploy to draw in the foolish.

DEVIL’S PERCH

This stark reach of vertiginous red rocks and narrow canyons is home to the strix, who have an outsize reputation in Cheliah for savagery and xenophobia. For centuries, Chelaxians avoided the arid pillars and plateaus of Devil’s Perch, but the recent discovery of silver in the region has sparked new interest—and new hostilities between the native strix and human interlopers, which the Chelish government has only partially contained.

WHISPERWOOD

This vast and ancient forest in the empire’s heartlands has been left largely untouched despite centuries of settlement around it. Desperate outlaws sometimes seek refuge beneath its leaves, only to meet grisly misfortune. Local lore holds that a strange menace grips the Whisperwood, and it is well known that devils hunt its depths. A gate to Hell is rumored to lie in Scar Thicket, near the forest’s heart, but none of those who have ventured in to close this gate have ever returned.

ISGER

Since its founding, Isger has been a vassal state. It was formed with Taldor’s conquest of the area and, centuries later, it was annexed by Cheliah in the Even-Tongued Conquest of 4081. Unlike some of Cheliah’s other holdings, Isger did not break free during the Thrune Ascendancy, and it remains in thrall today. However, there are signs that the neglect and exploitation that have long characterized

Isger's relationship with its patron state are beginning to give way to a new era of closer involvement, for better and worse.

The Conerica River, which bisects Isger from east to west and connects Cheliox's sea trade to Druma and Lake Encarthan, is the nation's lifeblood. The river and its support roads are key to Isger's regional importance, so most of its military is tasked with protecting the trade routes from bandits, monsters, and other dangers. Because travelers and merchants rely heavily on the Conerica and its trade roads, settlements along the river—including the capital city, Elidir—are not the isolated rural settlements their wooden buildings and quaint architecture might suggest. Although their pierced balusters, colorful glass-bead hangings, and brightly painted frieze boards give even the finest homes in Isger a rustic air, these towns are relatively cosmopolitan.

Isger's hinterlands, however, have been less fortunate. Historically, Isger has always been something of an afterthought to its masters. Taldor and later Cheliox have held Isger as a vassal state, extracting its natural resources and talent while offering little in return. As a result, Isger has almost no industry, fortifications, or development outside the Conerica River's narrow band of prosperity. When the Goblinblood Wars of 4697 to 4701 erupted, they devastated a region that had no defense save valiant but badly overmatched local militias.

The Goblinblood Wars saw hundreds of goblin tribes, led by ferocious and disciplined hobgoblin commanders, boil out of the Chitterwood and flood across Isger, destroying and devouring all in their path. Although the goblin horde was eventually driven back by an unprecedented alliance between the forces of Cheliox, Druma, and Andoran, the toll in lost Isgeri lives and wealth was enormous. Those losses continue to define much of the country. Thousands of Isgeri children were orphaned by the war, and their weak, war-ravaged government could not help them. The Church of Asmodeus stepped in to fill that need, founding a network of orphanages to cultivate its young charges in the Archfiend's unholy faith. These children begin intensive training at early ages, enabling them to quickly master difficult arts, such as the arcane fighting style practiced by the Sisterhood of the Golden Erinyes.

The success of the orphanages' graduates has drawn notice in Cheliox. With the old empire weakened and its enemies gathering, some Chelioxians have begun to look toward Isger both for investment opportunities and as a potential first line of defense against Andoran. The increased Chelish presence is welcomed by some and quietly resented by others, but none can deny that, perhaps for the first time, Cheliox seems to have taken a serious interest in bolstering its vassal state. There are even rumors that Isger's long-serving steward, Hedvend VI, may soon be forced to abdicate his seat. Though Hedvend has always been a loyal right hand, House Thrune has expressed impatience with his incompetence and a desire to see Isger's throne occupied by someone more capable. This rumor has mostly been met with shrugs in Isger, where Hedvend is widely regarded as a Chelish puppet who has neither the interest nor the ability to help his own people. The overgrown remains of massacred towns and unmarked graves, neglected since the Goblinblood Wars, stand as mute testament to that.

INFERNAL CONTRACTS

Infernal contracts are powerful, magical bargains that devils use to secure the souls of mortals. They are rarely offered to evil mortals, whose souls are likely damned anyway; they are primarily devices for trapping good- and neutral-aligned souls. Every infernal contract must be signed in duplicate, with one copy going to the devil and the other to the mortal. Once signed, an infernal contract is absolutely binding, taking precedence over any other magical effect or immunity, and it can be broken only under specific circumstances. All infernal contracts specify a benefit and a payment (usually the signer's soul); all terms are negotiable before the contract is signed but become irrevocable afterward. Infernal contracts can be undone by destroying both copies of the contract.

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STRIX

SISTERHOOD OF THE GOLDEN ERINYS

This all-female monastic order is devoted to the teachings of Eiseth, the first erinys. Though founded in Cheliah, the sisterhood has found its greatest successes in Isgar, where its orphanages inculcate girls in an unarmed fighting style inspired by the sadism of barbed devils. The sisterhood's goal in combat is seldom to kill, but rather to inflict agony as they cripple and disfigure their victims. Members of the sisterhood must be lawful evil, lawful neutral, or neutral evil, and they must be female.

The Isgeri are not, however, the only ones to carry scars from the Goblinblood Wars. The goblins themselves paid a terrible price for their short-lived triumph. Not only were they massacred by the thousands in the final battles, but the victorious armies—and later, vengeful Isgeri survivors—burned great swaths of the Chitterwood to destroy the goblins' homes. From these hardships, a new strain of goblin leadership has emerged. Several goblin chieftains, brighter and longer-sighted than their predecessors, have formed an alliance between their tribes and made diplomatic overtures to nearby Isgeri settlements. Given that the war's wounds remain raw, the tribes' progress is slow, but they have established some mutual defense agreements with nearby towns, and they have begun to change how goblins are perceived in the region. Isgar's rural towns and villages, accustomed to making their own decisions without any help from a disinterested central government, have found some of these goblins to be more reliable allies than their own nominal lords.

This shift in relations is driven by need. Undead have long bedeviled this land, particularly in remote places such as Finder's Gulch and the plague-ravaged ruins of Gillamoor, where rotting and ravening zombies stalk through the crumbling houses of the dead. Urgathoan cults proliferate among blood-soaked battlefields and the blackened remains of torched villages, feeding on the fear and pain that still linger in those haunted sites. These malign forces have grown stronger and more numerous since the Goblinblood Wars and, some say, since Tar-Baphon's rise. Whether or not that rumor is true, it is certain that neither goblins nor humans can afford to ignore the rising tide of undead in Isgar's hinterlands much longer.

NIDAL

Time scarcely seems to touch the shadow-chained nation of Nidal. Ten thousand years ago, when Earthfall cast the world into darkness, three ancient horselords of Nidal threw themselves on the mercy of Zon-Kuthon, the Midnight Lord. They pledged that if the god of shadow and pain interceded to protect them, they and all their descendants would be sworn to him eternally. Zon-Kuthon accepted their bargain, gifting the trio with cursed immortality as the Black Triune and sealing Nidal's fate ever after. All Nidalese since then have been born into Zon-Kuthon's faith, and from earliest childhood they are taught that pain is sacred, suffering is joy, and their holiest duty is to endlessly refine and sharpen those sensations into sacraments.

The Midnight Lord's hand lies heavy on his land. Unnatural gloom blankets Nidal, from the shade of the enormous, black-leaved trees over languidly glittering Pangolais to the perpetual storm clouds over the port city of Nisroch. Colors seem to drain away as one moves toward the heartlands of Nidal, leaving the world tinted subtly monochrome. With the presence of Zon-Kuthon so palpable throughout the nation, Nidal has never cared overmuch about either expanding or defending its territory. Its borders are divinely drawn, and they haven't changed since the days of the Black Triune's pact.

The sole major interruption in Nidal's history was its conquest by Cheliah, which ushered in a period of reform and openness unusual for the insular, theocratic nation. After Aroden's death, however, the relationship between Nidal and Cheliah changed



SHADOWFLAME RIFT

once more, with Nidal immediately throwing its full force behind House Thrune in the Chelish Civil War. Once House Thrune was firmly in power, the alliance between Nidal and the diabolist regime became stronger than ever, with agents of each country frequently serving in the other. Today, Nidalese clerics, shadowcallers, and advisors can be found throughout Cheliah and its holdings, wielding their influence to bolster House Thrune's power and thus spread holy suffering across the land.

Life within Nidal, meanwhile, continues much as it always has. The Umbral Court, Nidal's shadow-touched aristocracy, governs on behalf of the Black Triune. Shadowy agents enforce the court's authority outside the major cities and abroad. The Umbral Court is heavily intertwined with Nidal's other main sources of authority—Zon-Kuthon's church, the pale druids of the Uskwood, and the specialist magical academies that train Nidalese shadowcallers and shadowbinders—but these organizations are distinct, albeit overlapping, and their goals sometimes conflict. This is particularly true of the Uskwood druids, who see little value in the Chelish alliance and would prefer to withdraw the government's full attention back into Nidal altogether.

Farmers, fisherfolk, and artisans pay lip service to Zon-Kuthon while trying to raise their small, close-knit families in his shadow. Though many might prefer to live differently, they have been under the Midnight Lord's yoke for so long that they can imagine no other existence—and hope is dangerous in this land, especially when a grim but assured peace is the alternative. The nation's long stability has allowed many families to spend generations perfecting their skills, so Nidalese glass, intricately cut jewelry, and ornamental metalwork are unsurpassed in Avistan. Additionally, because Nidal is the only civilization in the Inner Sea to have survived the destruction of Earthfall intact, it is a repository for lore that exists nowhere else in the world. To this day, scholars of history and religion make pilgrimages to the dark cities of Nidal, braving the Midnight Lord's regime in exchange for the chance to study archives unlike any other in the Inner Sea region.

Far outside the cities, on the gray-grassed Atteran plains, live a hardy, proud people who are descended from the original Nidalese horselords and still observe many of their traditions. These clans are famed for the swiftness and courage of their horses, which are prized across the Inner Sea. Their heritage and cultural links to ancient Nidal grant the modern horselords a degree of freedom that no others in their shadowbound land enjoy, but even they dare not defy the Umbral Court directly. Nevertheless, the Atteran Ranches harbor many of the devotees of Desna who call themselves Dreamers. These idealists share the secret, guarded hope that, someday, it may be possible to break Zon-Kuthon's grip on their land.

Nidal is also home to sizable populations of caligni, kayal (also known as fetchlings), velstracs (sinister fiends from the Shadow Plane), and light-averse undead such as vampires. Caligni are children of Old Calignos, an Azlanti settlement. They have developed their own unique traditions, pieced together from accounts of ancient Azlant, within the broader auspices of Nidalese culture. Kayal, descendants of humans who were long ago stranded on the Shadow Plane and altered by its magic, prefer to blend into human society as much as possible. Velstracs and vampires in Nidal, meanwhile, flaunt their natures openly and tend to hold privileged positions, in keeping with their power and the terror they inspire in others.

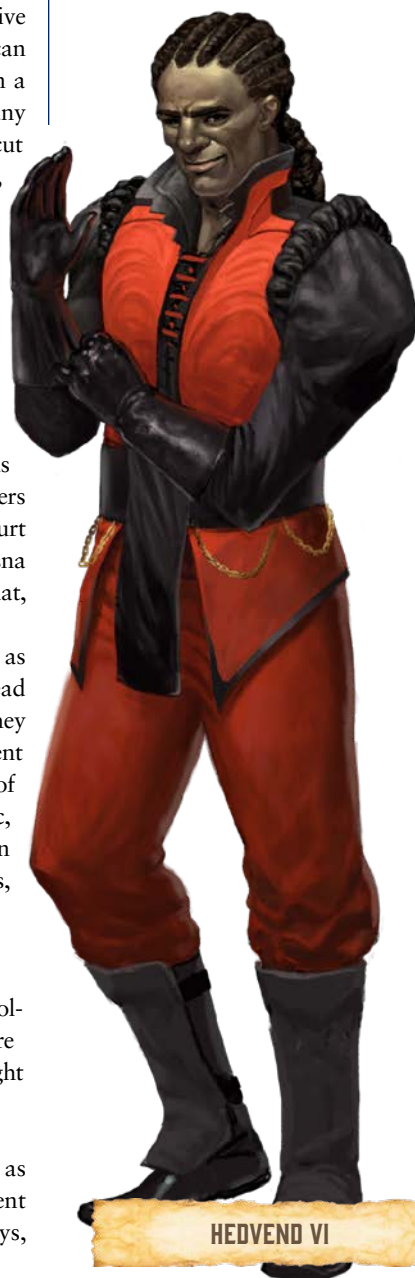
THE MINDSPIN MOUNTAINS

This steep, forbidding range serves as a natural barrier between Belkzen, Nidal, Molthune, Nirmathas, and Varisia. The dwarven cities of Janderhoff and Kraggodan are in the Mindspins, as are the nation Oprak and Citadel Vraid, home to the Hellknight Order of the Nail. Otherwise, the mountains hold few notable settlements outside the handful of strategically important passes linking one nation to the next.

The wilder regions of the Mindspins are home to dragons and giant tribes, as well as harpies, manticores, drakes, and other strange, fierce monsters. Ancient ruins, some dating to before Earthfall, lie hidden among the peaks and valleys, including several wonders from long-lost Thassilon.

RELATIONS

Cheliah is the center of all its neighbors' foreign relations. Under House Thrune's diabolist rule, it maintains a close and mutually beneficial alliance with Nidal. Prior to its recent setbacks, Cheliah treated Isger like a colony to be mined for its resources and otherwise disregarded, but now that events have forced House Thrune to reconsider its positions, it is beginning to invest more in building up Isger. Chelish relations with Ravounel are, unsurprisingly, rather strained.



HEDVEND VI

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THE USKWOOD

The dense, black-leaved Uskwood cloaks the heart of Nidal, including the shade city of Pangolais. This ancient forest has been carefully shaped and guided by Zon-Kuthon's faithful for millennia, resulting in an eerie, ominous wood that is not precisely "wild" in the way that most of Avistan's untamed forests are, but has rather been nurtured into a garden of nightmares.

The Shades of the Uskwood are the druidic order sworn to the Uskwood's mysteries. All members are albino, losing their natural pigmentation (if any) as part of their initiation ritual. Their alignment must be lawful evil or neutral evil, and they must worship Zon-Kuthon.

RAVOUNEL

The latest and most drastic shift in the Old Cheliox region is the independence of Ravounel, which seceded from Cheliox and declared itself as a free nation a few years ago. Under the leadership of Domina Jilia Bainilus, the former Lord-Mayor of Kintargo, Ravounel has threaded the delicate line between shoring up its own position as a regional power and maintaining cordial, if strained, relationships with its neighbors. Domina Bainilus must also preserve harmony between the various powers within Ravounel through diplomatic means, since she does not have the military strength to force compliance from her subjects and cannot afford to alienate any allies in the fragile new state. Although she has performed admirably so far, the difficulty of her position has increased as tensions mount between Cheliox and Andoran.

Ravounel gained its independence by unusual and dramatic means. A rebel group, the Silver Ravens, uncovered a long-forgotten infernal document, the Kintargo Contract, and determined that its terms held a loophole that could be used to legally break House Thrune's grip on the Archduchy of Ravounel. The Silver Ravens deposed Paracount Barzillai Thrune, who had used his temporary seat in Kintargo to plot treason against his own house, installed Lord-Mayor Bainilus as the leader of this new nation, and worked to unite various factions within Ravounel behind her. Upon attaining office, Lord-Mayor Bainilus chose the title "Domina," an old-fashioned honorific that had fallen into disuse after the Chelish Civil War.

The choice of title was meant to signal both that Ravounel now stood outside House Thrune's hierarchy and that she intended to govern in keeping with old Chelish values—which might be interpreted either as a subtle rebuke to House Thrune's perversion of those values, or an indication that she did not intend to repudiate Ravounel's Chelish heritage and connections. This ambiguity is deliberate, and characteristic of Ravounel's positions.

Several disparate groups hold influence within Ravounel. First and foremost are the wealthy families of Kintargo, who control the shipping concerns, established industries, and domestic trade networks within the new country. Sea trade is particularly important, because the collapse of the Menador Gap has cut off land trade until Ravounel can clear the gap; this is an expensive and ongoing project, and it has spurred a certain amount of resentment toward the Silver Ravens, who won the nation's independence in part by deliberately destroying the pass to prevent Cheliox from attempting a military takeover. Now that invasion is no longer an immediate risk, many are second-guessing the costs that Ravounel incurred to prevent it.

Other influential groups in the new realm include the aquatic elves of the Dismal Nitch, the strix of the Ravounel Forest, and the self-styled Kings and Queens of Vyre, the City of Masks. These last have kept Ravounel's government at a flirtatious distance, offering it sporadic and unreliable support without pledging any formal allegiance. Each of these groups offers valuable trade goods, military defenses, and regional intelligence, but none are accustomed to coordinating their interests or activities with the others. The new government of

VYRE

Ravounel is forever coaxing them to cooperate, and they have sometimes chafed at its demands. Meetings of the Council of Peers, as the factions' representatives are called, can be fractious.

The Bellflower Network, a secretive, halfling-centric organization that smuggles escaped slaves out of Cheliah to freedom, has also developed a strong presence in Ravounel, which has outlawed slavery under the new regime. However, Ravounel's emerging status as a haven for escaped slaves has caused it quite a few headaches, as slave-hunters such as the Hellknight Order of the Chain demand the government's cooperation in apprehending fleeing slaves. An additional complication is that some Kintargan nobles, whose sympathies and business connections remain with Cheliah, have taken to kidnapping slaves and selling them back to the infernal empire. While Domina Bainilus would dearly love to put an end to this practice, she does not yet have the political or economic strength to confront these nobles, who collectively could threaten the stability of her regime.

Despite this, the mood in the young country is overwhelmingly optimistic. Cheliah's most ardent loyalists have returned to their mother country, and the citizens who remain are determined to build Ravounel into a fairer and kinder society. Most of its people never believed they would live to see a day in which, after a largely bloodless revolution, they could declare their independence from the empire of devils and force House Thrune to respect that independence. If that means Ravounel must be slightly poorer and less grandiose than it was as an archduchy of Cheliah, this is little loss, for at least now its wealth and prestige can be shared more equitably among its citizens.

VYRE

The independent city-state of Vyre, known as the City of Masks, predates Cheliah and has long been famous for its riotous entertainments. Gambling halls, fighting pits, brothels, and hawkers of every imaginable vice crowd the city, catering to wealthy Chelaxians seeking a respite from their regimented lives. Since Ravounel declared independence, Vyre's status has become even more ambiguous. The masked Kings and Queens who rule the city declared their support for Ravounel while simultaneously encouraging their Chelish visitors to continue carousing as if nothing had changed—and, indeed, little seems to have changed in Vyre today. The same cruel entertainments that were available under Queen Abrogail II's rule are still performed under Domina Bainilus's flag, and the same promise of anonymity is offered to its guests. Beneath the surface, however, much is in flux. Vyre is a center of Norgorber's worship, and Vyre's current position as a playground between Cheliah and Ravounel has created a perfect opportunity for Norgorber's faithful to harvest secrets, sow betrayals, and sabotage both sides of the divide.

ECONOMICS

Cheliah has a strong and well-developed economy that circulates trade goods from across the world, produces everything from fine wines and olive oils to masterful artworks, and imports all manner of wares and people, whether as purchased slaves or as honored dignitaries invited for tours and residencies. Cheliah's trade, particularly in luxury goods, is highly valued across the continent.

Isgar mainly exports lumber, food, and ore, and imports only basic manufactured goods. However, it's a vassal state of Cheliah, so its trade imbalance enriches only Cheliah's coffers. Tolls and tariffs on the Conerica River trade are key to its economy.

Nidal exports silver jewelry, glasswork, and other finely crafted luxuries. It imports slaves, wines, and edible delicacies, but the nation is largely self-sufficient.

Ravounel is still finding its bearings with respect to trade. At present, it trades mostly with Cheliah, dealing in fish, marble, lumber, salt, silver, and other natural resources. The tourist trade through Vyre is also critically important for the young nation's emerging economy, even if Vyre's masked rulers are unreliable about sharing their wealth.

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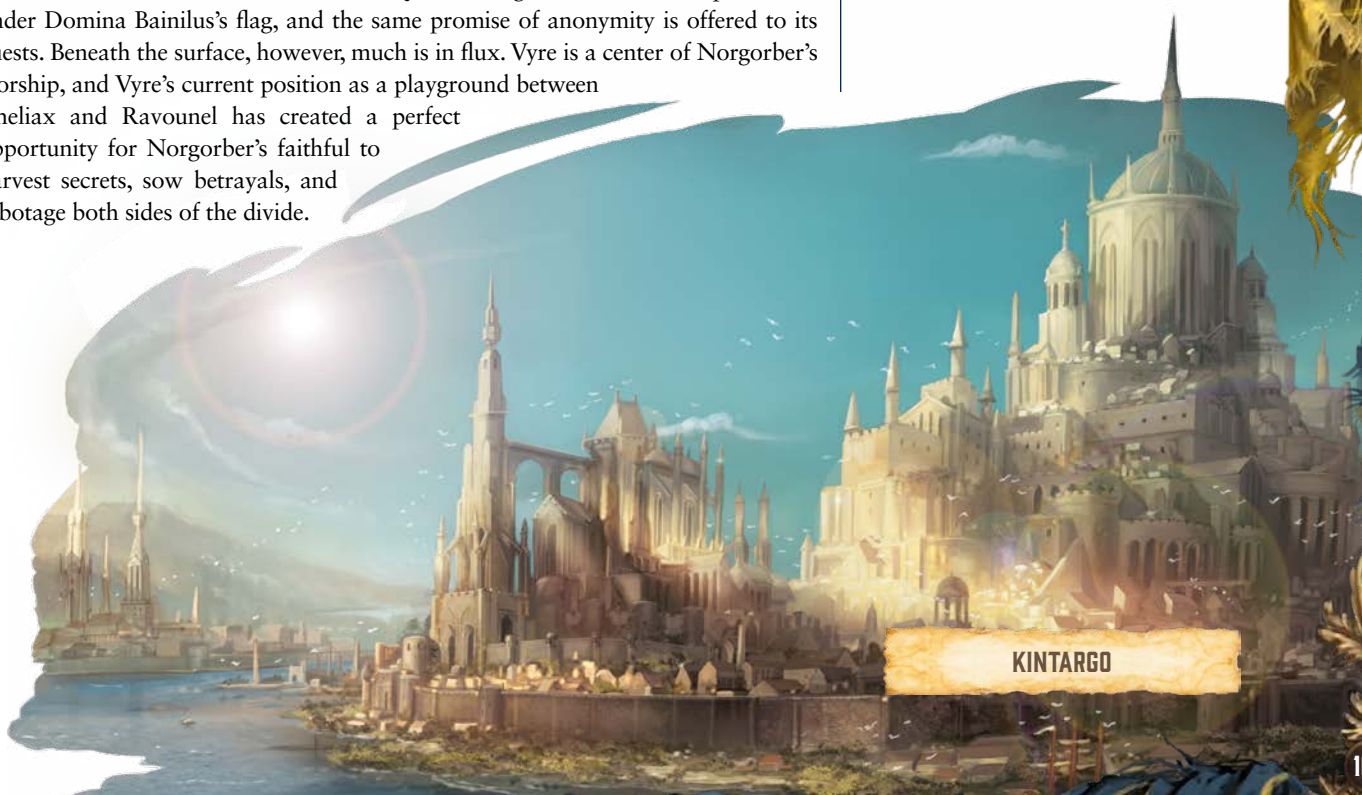
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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Old Cheliax region.

ATTERAN RANCHER

BACKGROUND

You grew up breeding and training the famous horses of the Atteran Ranches in northern Nidal. You may even be sympathetic to the Desnan dissidents who hide there from the Umbral Court.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Dexterity, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Nature skill and the Animal Lore skill. You gain the Train Animal skill feat.

BELLFLOWER AGENT

BACKGROUND

You joined a secret society dedicated to freeing halfling slaves,

most likely from the cruelty of Chelish reign. You know how to smuggle people in and out of countries.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Stealth skill and the Underworld Lore skill. You gain the Experienced Smuggler skill feat.

CHELISH REBEL

BACKGROUND

You joined the fight against House Thrune. You may have helped liberate the nation of Ravounel, or you might be involved in another rebellion, such as Pezzack's, that studied Ravounel's successes.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Kintargo Lore skill. You gain the Streetwise skill feat.

CHILD OF WESTCROWN

BACKGROUND

Whether you come from Westcrown or elsewhere, you hold the values of pre-Throne Cheliax dear. You disdain the infernal government, but you are proud of your country and do not consider yourself a rebel.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Westcrown Lore skill. You gain the Group Impression skill feat.

GOBLINBLOOD ORPHAN

BACKGROUND

Your family, whether goblin, hobgoblin, or human, died in the Goblinblood Wars. Though you were marked by these losses, you managed to survive through your own resilience and resourcefulness.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Goblin Lore skill. You gain the Assurance skill feat with Survival.

SHADOW HAUNTED

BACKGROUND

You are from Nidal, and regardless of your personal values, Zon-Kuthon has a claim on your soul due to an ancient pact. The Midnight Lord's unsettling influence is bred deep into your bones.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Shadow Plane Lore skill. You gain the Quick Coercion skill feat.

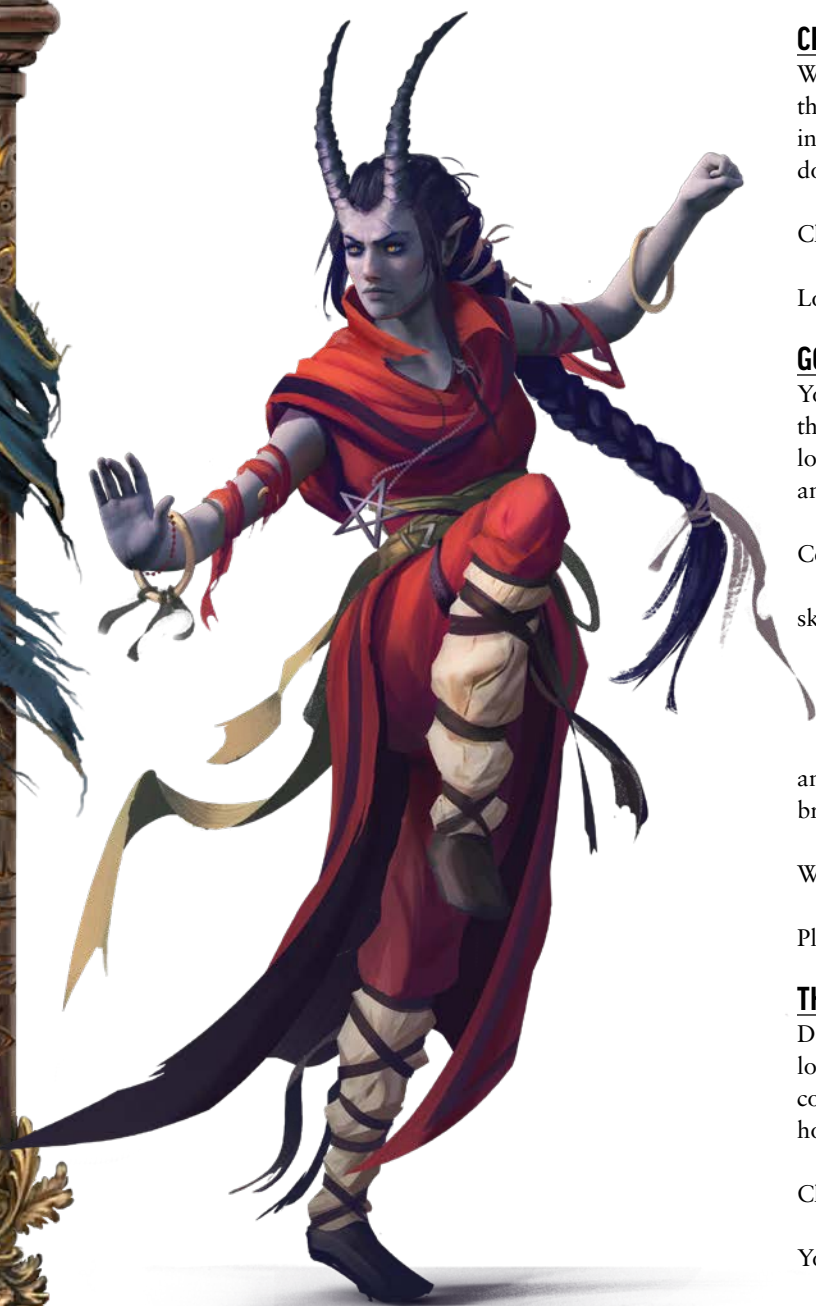
THRUNE LOYALIST

BACKGROUND

Despite the setbacks Cheliax has suffered recently, your loyalties lie with the devil-backed House Thrune. You consider the current queen to be the rightful ruler of your homeland, and you are willing to act against her enemies.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Religion skill and the Hell Lore skill. You gain the Student of the Canon skill feat.



HELLKNIGHT ARMIGER

You have presented yourself to a Hellknight citadel as a candidate to become a fearsome Hellknight. You believe that all who live must be forced to obey law, and you adventure as a test of your loyalty, discipline, and courage. Someday you will take the Hellknight test and battle a devil in single combat to prove your strength and join the Hellknight ranks.

HELLKNIGHT ARMIGER DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of a Hellknight order, trained in heavy armor as well as your order's favored weapon; **Access** You are from Old Cheliah.

Your Hellknight training teaches you to terrorize others into compliance, but you also study the structure and hierarchy of Hell. You must survive painful tests of your body and mind called reckonings, which steady your mind against all sorts of trauma. You gain resistance to mental damage equal to 1 + your number of class feats from the Hellknight Armiger archetype and other Hellknight archetypes. You become trained in Intimidation and Hell Lore; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead.

Special You can't select another dedication feat except dedication feats for higher positions within the Hellknights until you have gained two other feats from the Hellknight armiger archetype.

ARDENT ARMIGER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Armiger Dedication

You have been trained to resist the manipulations of fiends, and your Hellknight discipline makes you difficult to influence. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saves against mental effects that specifically improve your attitude and to your Will DC against someone Coercing you, Demoralizing you, Making an Impression on you, or Making a Request of you.

If a mental effect would compel you to act in a way that violates your Hellknight order's tenets (as determined by the GM), you can attempt to break free from the effect as a reaction triggered by receiving the violating order, and you gain a new Will save against the effect. You can attempt this new save only once for a given effect, even if you are compelled to violate your order's tenets multiple times.

DIABOLIC CERTITUDE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Hellknight Armiger Dedication

Trigger Your turn begins and you can observe a devil.

Your Hellknight training drilled details of Hell's denizens deep into your mind. Make an attempt to Recall Knowledge about a devil you're observing. If you roll a critical failure on this check, you get a failure instead.

MORTIFICATION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Hellknight Armiger Dedication

Your reckonings have prepared your body for physical punishment. Choose bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, based on the nature of your physical reckonings. You gain resistance to the chosen damage type equal to your number of class feats from the Hellknight Armiger archetype and other Hellknight archetypes.

ARMIGER'S MOBILITY

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites expert in heavy armor, Hellknight Armiger Dedication

You've learned how best to move in heavy armor. When wearing heavy armor, if you meet the Strength requirement, instead of reducing the movement penalty by 5 feet, you reduce the penalty by 10 feet (typically reducing the penalty to 0). If you are a dwarf with the Unburdened Iron feat, increase your Speed by 5 feet.



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SAGA LANDS

NATIONS



IRRISEN [N]
Monarchy
Capital: Whitethrone
(24,900)



LANDS OF THE LINNORM KINGS [N]
Tribal Monarchies
Capital: Kalsgard (72,080)



NEW THASSILON [N]
Arcane Meritocracy
Capital: Xin-Shalast
(12,500)



REALM OF THE MAMMOTH LORDS [N]
Tribal
Capital: None



VARISIA [N]
City States
Capital: None

PEOPLES

Azanti
Dwarven
Elven
Goblin
Gnome
Kellid

Shoanti
Taldan
Tien
Ulfen
Varisian

LANGUAGES

Common
Dwarven
Elvish
Goblin
Gnomish
Hallit

Jotun
Shoanti
Skald
Thassilonian
Tien
Varisian

FACTIONS



Firebrands



Pathfinder
Society



Sczarni

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Gorum



Cayden
Cailean



Lamashtu



Desna



Nocticula

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Armor/
Weapons



Books/Lore



Cheese



Grain/Fruit



Jewelry/
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Livestock/
Hides



Lumber



Magic Items



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Ships



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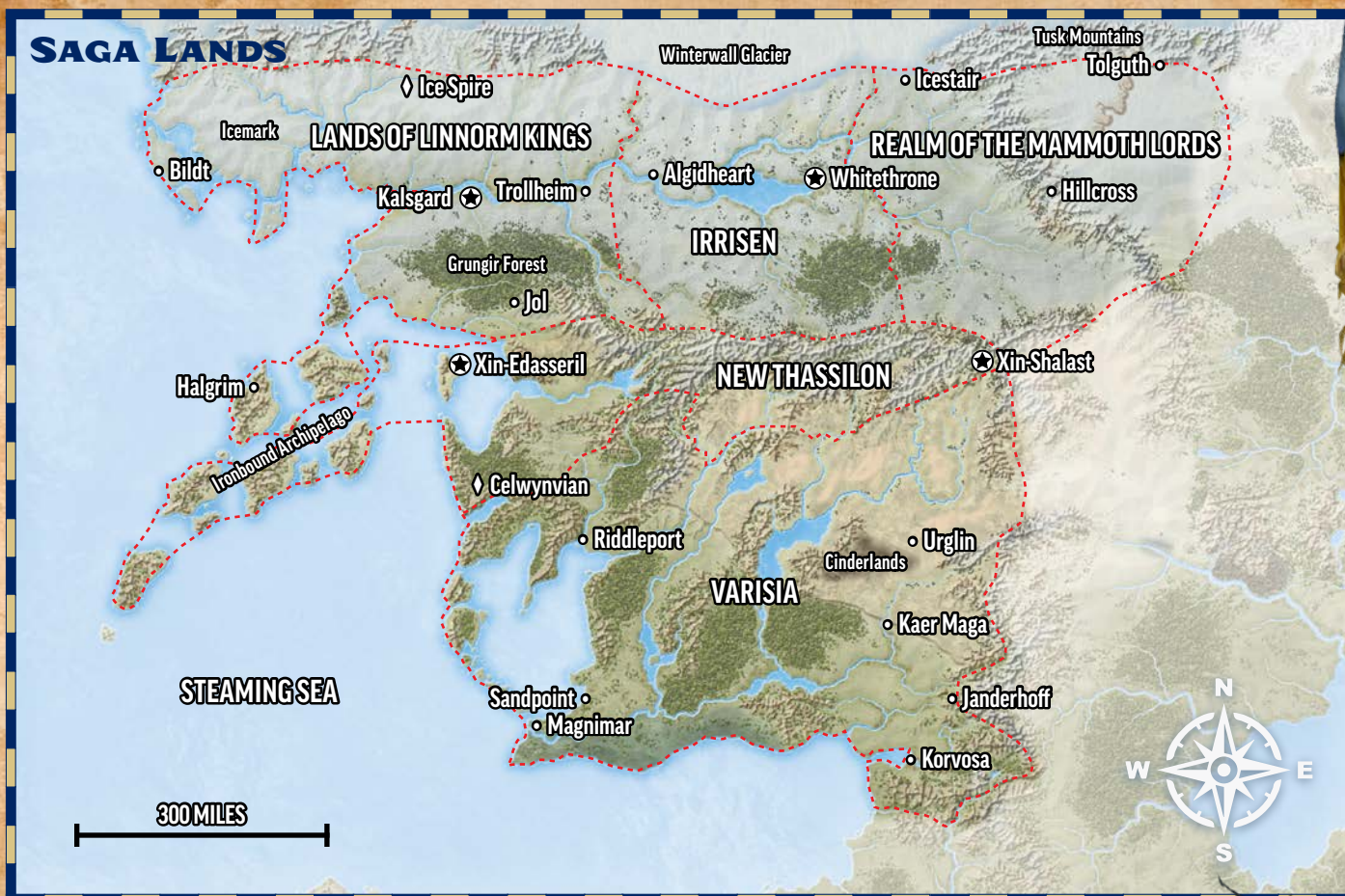
IMPOSSIBLE
LANDS

MWANGI
EXPANSE

OLD
CHELIAX

SAGA
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TIMELINE

- 5293 AR Thassilon is destroyed in Earthfall, and the runelords retreat from the world.
- 473 AR Linnorm King Ulvass makes the sea voyage to Arcadia and establishes Valenhall there as an earthly paradise.
- 1975 AR Ulfen longships raid heavily along the west coast of Avistan, devastating coastal settlements in what is now Cheliah.
- 3313 AR Baba Yaga comes to Golarion, humiliates the Linnorm Kingdoms by driving the Ulfen residents from a portion of their ancestral lands, and founds Irrisen in that region.
- 4407 AR Cheliah founds the city of Korvosa in southern Varisia.
- 4507 AR Chelish soldiers force the Shoanti out of the lowlands and up to the Cinderlands.
- 4584 AR Settlers from Korvosa, fed up with Cheliah's influence over Korvosa, travel west and found Magnimar.
- 4608 AR In the wake of the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, thousands abandon Korvosa for Magnimar.
- 4613 AR Elvanna becomes queen of Irrisen.
- 4682 AR Queen Domina of Korvosa convinces the Hellknight Order of the Nail to relocate to her city's hinterlands.
- 4702 AR Runelord Karzoug awakens and begins to gather his power.
- 4704 AR White Estrid defeats the linnorm Boiltongue and recruits it rather than slaying it to prove her strength.
- 4707 AR Runelord Karzoug is defeated by a group of adventurers; word of Thassilon's mysteries begins to spread throughout the Inner Sea region.
- 4708 AR King Eodred perishes, leaving Korvosa in the hands of Queen Ileosa, whose harsh rule brings about a time of plague and cruelty.

The northwestern reaches of Avistan boast vast woodlands, towering mountain ranges, sweeping deserts and tundra, and sprawling swamplands, yet not all is wilderness. Kingdoms, clans, and free cities alike can be found throughout this far-flung stretch of the Inner Sea region, each with its own traditions and legends. Indeed, the stories that come from this part of the world truly are the stuff of legends, as one might expect of a region known as the Saga Lands.

The story of the Saga Lands begins well before Earthfall, when a band of exiles from the ancient nation of Azlant fled eastward and gathered here. Under the leadership of a man named Xin, these exiles founded the empire of Thassilon, which swiftly grew in power. It wasn't long before Xin's self-appointed governors, seven specialized wizards known collectively as runelords, turned against their king and assassinated him. The runelords then each seized control of one of Thassilon's nations, and in time they came to view each other as enemies. They enslaved giants to build staggering monuments, commanded dragons and monsters as specialized heroes and guardians, and ruled cruelly over the Varisian and Shoanti people whose land the runelords had claimed to build their empire.

When Earthfall came, it devastated Thassilon as it did other parts of Golarion, yet the runelords had foreseen the looming catastrophe. Each developed their own solution to escape death from the apocalypse, but none of them appreciated the magnitude of the coming devastation. Though they had hoped to emerge from their shelters in the aftermath, they instead remained locked away for millennia, neither alive nor dead.

In time, the legacy of Thassilon faded, and the rule of the runelords was remembered in oral traditions as something more akin to parable than actual history. The lands once dominated by the runelords were reduced to wilderness in which the survivors from Earthfall built up their own societies, while explorers and settlers from southern regions constructed cities over the ancient ruins. Today these lands host a wide range of peoples and cultures. In the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, the right to rule and lead raids is determined by one's ability to defeat a powerful linnorm dragon in combat. East of this, in the nation of Irrisen, generations of witches descended from a legend hold the reins of rule, and winter is a constant presence. The Realm of the Mammoth Lords occupies the northeastern portion of the Saga Lands, past the reaches of the ancient Thassilonian empire, and is home to valiant warriors who ride megafauna into battle. In the southern extent, the frontier realm known as Varisia, once the heart of Thassilon itself, has seen new sagas to rival any that have come before.

In recent years, Varisia and Irrisen alike have seen tumult and change. In Irrisen, the cycle of rule by a cabal of winter witches has been disrupted, and none can say where the land's new queen aims to take her country. Meanwhile, Varisia has witnessed the rise of Thassilon's runelords from the forgotten past. Heroes stepped in to first defeat one runelord, and then most of the other runelords who followed.

IRRISEN

The nation of Irrisen is known throughout the Inner Sea region as a land of magic and wonder, an enchanted place where winter is constant, wild animals can talk, and mysterious spellcasters known as the winter witches rule. Yet none of these stories make any pretense that Irrisen is a place of comfort and delight. The stories of Irrisen's sagas are told to children by parents as parables—they must mind their elders and be good, lest the winter witches snatch them away and feed them to their true leader, the legendary Queen of Witches: Baba Yaga. In the case of Irrisen, these childhood fairy tales are even more accurate than one might think.

Baba Yaga herself exists, but she does not hail from Golarion. She traveled to Avistan nearly 1,400 years ago from a distant, unknown world and subjugated a portion of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings during a particularly harrowing and brutal winter, claiming the land as her own. She killed all who resisted and



IRRISEN

enslaved those who did not. Her conquest of Irrisen took a mere 23 days, and the nation has remained locked in the throes of winter ever since.

For many of those years, Irrisen has clashed with its western neighbor, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Memories of defeat linger in that proud nation, and even as the centuries wore on, the Linnorm Kings and their subjects could not forget the swift and humiliating defeat Baba Yaga handed them during those 23 days. The border between the two nations has long been fraught with fighting and intrigue, but the wards protecting Irrisen are as potent as their witch leaders.

Baba Yaga herself did not linger after her triumph. As if the act of conquering the land were all that mattered, she left its rule in the hands of one of her daughters, a cruel witch who was promised eternal youth in return for keeping the nation safe and secure. Every 100 years, though, Baba Yaga returned to reclaim the ruling queen, taking that daughter away to accompany her on her journeys to other worlds and leaving a new daughter installed on the throne.

After 13 queens, this pattern collapsed. The fourteenth ruling daughter was a woman named Elvanna, said to be the most cruel of a long line of cruel queens. As the time of Baba Yaga's return drew near, Elvanna grew more and more convinced that she deserved to remain Irrisen's ruler forever. When her mother arrived, Elvanna triggered a devious trap and captured Baba Yaga, then turned her magic toward spreading the curse of winter to other lands. Only the timely intervention of a band of heroes halted her plot, freed Baba Yaga, and saw Elvanna's defeat. Today, for the first time since its founding, Irrisen is ruled by someone other than a winter witch, yet this should not necessarily be taken as a hopeful sign. Queen Anastasia may be young, but as an exile of the same world her ancient grandmother Baba Yaga hailed from, she has the potential to wield great power. Just how she will choose to exert this power in her stewardship over Irrisen has yet to be unveiled. Certainly, Irrisen is no safer a place today than it has been for centuries, and with rumbles of embittered witches who regard Queen Anastasia as the "Fraud Queen," it remains to be seen if her rule will match the century-long reigns of her 14 aunts.

- 4709 AR A falling star strikes an isle just south of Riddleport, causing a tsunami that damages the city. Drow appear for the first time on the surface of the world in Riddleport and in the ruins of Celwynvian.
- 4712 AR Adventurers from Magnimar reconstruct the lost *Sihedron*. Their efforts accidentally trigger the rise of the isle of Xin from the nearby sea, creating a tsunami that damages ports as far away as Hermea.
- 4713 AR Queen Elvanna is defeated after she attempts to usurp Baba Yaga's influence over Irrisen; Queen Anastasia takes the throne as Irrisen's first non-winter witch ruler.
- 4718 AR Other runelords emerge, chief among them Runelord Alaznist, whose damage to the flow of time threatens reality before she is ultimately defeated by heroes; New Thassilon is founded.

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NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the region.



QUEEN ANASTASIA

While Queen Anastasia hails from a distant world where magic is a poorly understood myth, she has adapted to her new role as queen of Irrisen with grace.



RUNELORD BELIMARIUS

Envious Belimarius clings to the old traditions of Thassilon and sees herself as the only true runelord remaining alive; she jealously eyes Sorshen's power and lands.



LORD-MAYOR SABRIYYA KALMERALM

When Magnimar's previous lord-mayor died under mysterious circumstances, townsfolk elected this silver-tongued merchant, scandalizing the city's nobles.



QUEEN SORSHEN

One of the most powerful wizards to rule in ancient Thassilon, Sorshen hopes to sculpt New Thassilon into a haven for exiles from across the world.

Today, Irrisen remains in the grip of unending ice and snow. Even Baba Yaga herself seems unable, or at least unwilling, to end the reign of winter within the land. As such, the land remains eternally frozen, with frost goblins, winter wolves, ice trolls, and all manner of rime-coated fey posing common threats to those who have little other choice but to keep their heads low and their minds focused on simply making it one day at a time. That the first few years of Queen Anastasia's rule have resulted in less agony for the land's citizens is not taken as indication of a blissful future. Life in Irrisen has always been tough, and many still feel that the new queen's kindness is a cruel trick intended to grant hope only to rip it away just as the citizens start to trust again. And beyond the dissidents and spurned witch relations of the prior ruling castes plotting intrigue and fomenting rebellion, there is always the threat to the west of the Linnorm Kingdoms—memories of defeat still linger there, and with an untested queen on the throne, it may be only a matter of a few months before a new invasion begins.

WINTERY SPELLS

The eternal winter of Irrisen has inspired numerous spells, but the simplicity of the snowball spell has resulted in use throughout the Saga Lands.

SNOWBALL

SPELL 1

ATTACK COLD EVOCATION WATER

Traditions arcane, primal

Cast >>> somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

You throw a magically propelled and chilled ball of dense snow. The target takes 2d4 cold damage and potentially other effects, depending on the result of your spell attack roll.

Critical Success The target takes double damage and a -10-foot status penalty to its Speeds for 1 round.

Success The target takes full damage and a -5-foot status penalty to its Speeds for 1 round.

Failure No effect.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d4.

LANDS OF THE LINNORM KINGS

As in so many other regions along the northern edge of Avistan, life is hard for the people of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. What land that isn't frozen marsh is heavily strewn with stones and boulders—starvation is thus a constant threat in the barren winter months. Traditionally, the people of the Linnorm Kingdoms fought against the cruel specter of hunger by taking to the seas in their distinctive longships, engaging in violent coastal raids along Avistan's extensive western coastline in order to secure valuable plunder and supplies. As the centuries wore on and the lands to the south grew more heavily populated, more organized, and thus more dangerous to raid, many of the Linnorm Kingdoms turned in their swords and shields for the tools of trade, and their long trips south sought to secure mercantile alliances rather than blood-won conquest. Yet some of the Kingdoms found such changes to tradition as dishonorable to their ancestors, and others simply preferred the act of raiding to the pursuit of trade.

The harsh land and harsher winters are far from the only dangers in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Vast reaches of wilderness, ranging from rocky tundra to tangled forest to rugged hills, cut wide swaths between the settled reaches of the kingdoms, and in these lands dwell monsters. Capricious fey are common in these places, as are bloodthirsty trolls and murderous giants, strangely enchanted animals that can both plead for their lives and utter dire curses, and the unquiet spirits of the restless dead who haunt the places where they fell. The most dangerous are linnorms—primordial dragons of vast size and great strength. Facing a linnorm in

combat is folly for all but the most formidable warriors, and even in death these mighty dragons bestow hideous curses that can linger for a lifetime in the flesh and bones of their killers. In the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, however, anyone who aspires to rightfully rule a kingdom must seek out a linnorm, confront it, and defeat it in combat.

Sometimes, this violent rite breeds controversy. For example, none saw King Opir Eightfingers slay his linnorm—he merely returned to the city of Jol with a severed linnorm’s head, already decaying, as proof of his deed. Those who whispered that Opir found a dead linnorm and absconded with its head learned to keep their suspicions quiet after enough grisly and very public executions. When New Thassilon rose along the Linnorm Kingdom’s southern borders, King Opir made his final mistake and launched an ill-advised series of raids against the holdings of Runelord Belimarius. His defeat left his kingdom without a leader, although none found Opir’s body among the dead in the battlefield. Some say the fallen king languishes in a hidden dungeon somewhere in the island reaches of western New Thassilon, while others whisper that he fled to the mountains and even now is building a new army and will soon return to his place on the throne. That Opir left behind no friends interested in looking into his disappearance or seeking a potential resurrection only further deepens the mystery of his fate.

Elsewhere in the Linnorm Kingdoms, King White Estrid upended tradition by subjugating a linnorm upon defeating it and taking it into her service instead of slaying it. Her mercy toward the linnorm Boiltongue was met initially with skepticism, but her enemies quickly learned that a ruler with a linnorm to back her demands is mighty indeed. King Thira Ash-Eyes was less merciful to her linnorm foe, killing the beast and then claiming the throne in the region’s capital of Kalsgard after her father, King Sveinn Blood-Eagle, set sail to the west on a quest to retire to the afterlife in legendary Valenhall. The Varki ranger Nankou caused a stir by taking the title of linnorm king in Icemark, shocking many Ulfen warriors—though none can dispute the new king’s triumph over a linnorm, most Ulfen never expected one of the Varki people to claim what they consider to be an Ulfen title. The most recent king to take a throne is the legendary adventurer Ostog the Unslain, who claimed the throne of Jol after Opir’s disappearance. Whether Ostog can keep his title of Unslain for long while holding his throne, only time can tell.

NEW THASSILON

Runelord Karzoug was the first of Thassilon’s seven runelords to wake after thousands of years in stasis, trapped just beyond the borders of reality until an unwitting stone giant wizard set in motion the process enabling the runelord’s return. A band of heroes stood against Karzoug and his giant armies and defeated him, and in the process resurrected the legacy of Thassilon. When the revelation spread through Avistan that Varisia was once the site of a powerful and ancient empire of wizards that had been lost to time, adventurers, explorers, scholars, and investigators came from far and wide to study and learn more about Thassilon.

Leaders among Varisia’s city-states grew worried, though, for seven runelords had vanished at Earthfall, and if only one rising from slumber could wreak so much havoc, what then would happen if the others rose as well? At their urging, a new band of heroes sought out an ancient artifact, the seven-pointed *Sihedron*, and rebuilt it from its shattered parts. Originally created by Thassilon’s founder, the mighty wizard Xin, the *Sihedron* held within it the secrets of Thassilonian magic and would be a valuable defense against the other runelords should the time come.

ECONOMICS

The greatest exports of the Saga Lands are its legends. Potent magical items and powerful secret traditions remain hidden in the land’s ancient tombs and have made many adventurers famous and rich. Beyond such ephemeral and unreliable treasures, the Saga Lands are rich in natural resources—vast forests, untouched lodes of precious metals, and a plethora of fish and game can be found in the region. As the role the Saga Lands plays in the region grows, control of these resources will surely be a key factor in guiding the region’s global standing and fate.



THIRA ASH-EYES

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NOCTICULA

Until recently, Noctacula dwelt in the Abyss, where she ruled as the Queen of the Succubi. Though her legacy is one of assassinations against fellow demon lords, she has abandoned her empire and her very nature to rise from the Abyss as a new deity. Now known as the Redeemer Queen, Noctacula has cast aside her former association with lust and slaughter to welcome artists and exiles alike to her faith. Her worshippers—who are chaotic neutral, though her message is spreading to others—hold the powers to bring works of art to life and to manipulate the essence of night for creation. Her symbol is a smirking moon bearing a crown, and her favored weapon is the dagger. Worship of Noctacula is strong in New Thassilon and western Varisia, and it is gaining purchase elsewhere—particularly in parts of Nidal, where many rebels seek a different expression of the wonders of midnight than the pain and loss Zon-Kuthon glorifies.

Yet when the other runelords inevitably began to rise, Varisia's reigning heroes and the *Sihedron* alike vanished without a trace. A new band of heroes rose to face the challenge, discovered the *Sihedron*'s fate, stood against Runelord Alaznist, and prevented her from altering time itself to turn the Saga Lands into an empire of pain and wrath. But the heroes needed help to achieve this goal, and they found it in the most unlikely of places—Runelord Sorshen.

Once the ruler of Eurythnia along Varisia's southern coast, Sorshen was one of the most powerful of the seven runelords, and after the events of the recent return of the runelords settled, she was one of only two who survived. Sorshen and her counterpart, Runelord Belimarius, went on to claim a swath of thinly inhabited land along the northern edge of Varisia consisting primarily of the towering Kodar Mountains. This became New Thassilon.

The land of New Thassilon itself is further divided into two smaller kingdoms. Sorshen rules Eurythnia, the larger of the two, but her rule over this land is light and her involvement in the life of this land's subjects subtle. Working as her adviser and benefactor is her once-demonic patron Noctacula, a newly ascended divinity associated with midnight, exiles, and artists. Together they seek to fashion Eurythnia and, in time, all of New Thassilon into a place where those with no other land to call their own can seek shelter, an asylum state for exiled politicians, subversive artists, and misfits of society. As queen of Eurythnia, Sorshen has abandoned the trappings of runelord and does not seek to follow in the footsteps of her fellows Karzoug and Alaznist. She's seen their attempts at rule by force fail and has realized that the world has moved on since Thassilon's fall. Wiser and accepting of this change, Queen Sorshen seeks to build New Thassilon into a place that can exist peacefully alongside its neighbors.

This view is not shared by her co-ruler to the west. Runelord Belimarius continues to be poisoned by the sting of envy, despite mercy and understanding from the heroes who could have destroyed her. She seems incapable of looking upon her neighbors' holdings without jealousy, despite the fact that her own power remains great. Her first major act as ruler was a short but pivotal war with King Opir Eightfingers, whose realm in the Linnorm Kingdoms lay just north of her own. Her defeat of this unpopular ruler ironically cast her in a more favorable light, yet the gratitude of those who had grown tired of Opir's posturing is likely to be short-lived. Sorshen knows Belimarius is an unstable element and may be the greatest threat to her hopes of New Thassilon finding a more peaceful position in the Saga Lands. Though resigned that it's simply a matter of time before something must be done about her rival, Sorshen nevertheless abstains from dissenting publicly, allowing Belimarius to forge her own fate.

One significant development among the citizens of New Thassilon is the evolution of the title of "runelord" itself. In ancient Thassilon, only seven at a time

EURYTHNIA

held this title—it was synonymous with “governor” or “ruler” as much as it indicated mastery over arcane magic. But now, many have begun to explore and examine what it meant to be a runelord. In time, the notion of runelord may well make the transition from a governmental title to a widespread term. One of this movement’s most vocal and compelling leaders is a woman named Aethusa, the so-called “Thrice-born Queen,” who claims to be the reincarnation of not one but two runelords of old.

REALM OF THE MAMMOTH LORDS

The hearty folk of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords are surrounded by upheaval. To the west, the land of Irrisen recently lost its queen and is in the middle of the first significant change in the inheritance of power in 14 centuries. To the south, the orcs of Belkzen seem on the cusp of transitioning from a more warlike and brutal way of life into something new, with their refusal to rejoin the ranks of their one-time oppressor Tar-Baphon as a potential catalyst. But it was to the east that the biggest change surrounding this realm took place, for here, with the closing of the Worldwound, the Mammoth Lords have less to worry about with each passing day. Every demon slaughtered now lessens the whole, whereas before it seemed as if untold more sprang from the rift between worlds with each minor victory. The Mammoth Lords are proud that through it all, life in their lands has remained largely unchanged. They point to this as a strength, seeing it as proof that their ways and traditions have not only withstood the test of time, but vanquished it. And while there is wisdom in these beliefs, there is also bravado, for not all is safe and sound in this rugged landscape.

One need look no further than the Mammoth Lords themselves—various bands of nomadic Kellids—for proof of the land’s dangers, for the Mammoth Lords are very much a product of this region. Here, megafauna of all sorts live wild, from armored glyptodons and giant ground sloths to ravenous cave bears and smilodons. None are larger or mightier than the mammoths that travel the plains of this land in vast herds.

The Mammoth Lords earned their name by mastering these elephantine creatures, as well as many other types of megafauna. These animals serve the Mammoth Lords as mounts, guardians, and engines of war. The Mammoth Lord clans have no central organization and instead gather along extended family lines; occasionally multiple families join together as followings. The followings keep territories that often clash with others, but they have no true capital city. Now that the orcs have grown more peaceful, Irrisen has gained a potentially gentler queen, and the Worldwound has healed, these clashes are growing. Some of the wiser among the Mammoth Lords see that the lack of conflicts along the borders has left the more violent-minded of the various followings without real enemies to face, leaving them to invent conflicts with each other.

Traditionally, the Mammoth Lords have had another sort of enemy closer to home—the frost giants. But as with the more distant dangers, the giants have seemed to fade

RUNELORDS

When the wizard Xin founded the realm of Thassilon, he hoped to create a nation free from the excesses and elitism of Azlant. This dream was dashed when the runelords assassinated him and took control of his empire. Though the title of runelord has passed between many individuals throughout history, the seven runelords that returned to plague Golarion in present times were Alaznist the Runelord of Wrath, Belimarius the Runelord of Envy, Karzoug the Runelord of Greed, Krune the Runelord of Sloth, Sorshen the Runelord of Lust, Xanderghul the Runelord of Pride, and Zutha the Runelord of Gluttony.



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RELATIONS

The longest-running tension in the Saga Lands is without a doubt the grudge between the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and Irrisen. Now that the frozen land has an untested new queen, many among the Linnorm Kingdoms are agitating for a rekindling of old wars. Just to the south, New Thassilon is beset with its own perils as rivals Sorshen and Belimarius hold drastically different visions for the future. The city-states of Varisia continue to increase their influence and fame with the nations to the south, for this land's ports offer some of the most lucrative destinations and opportunities for trade in all of the Saga Lands.

from view. The prouder of the Mammoth Lords attribute this too to the superiority of their way of life, bragging that giants can witness “smaller folk” defeating their kin in battle only so many times before they retreat for good. Some Mammoth Lords have already taken to calling the giants a folktale of the past, despite the fact that proof of their kind remains scattered throughout the land in the form of lost oversized weapons or immense bones left behind by not-so-ancient battles.

The giants have not vanished, though. The greatest among them, Jarl Gnargorak, is no fool, but neither is he kind and forgiving. He and his frost giants have clashed against the Mammoth Lords his entire life, and the voices of his ancestors remind him that this has always been the way of things. Jarl Gnargorak foresees a day in the not-so-distant future when his people rule this land, and the Mammoth Lords are extinct. For now, this canny leader has ordered his armies far into the Tusk Mountains to hunker and remain in quiet wait. He knows the Mammoth Lords see the victories along their borders as engendering weakness and that they claim responsibility for changes beyond their borders that were not directly due to the Mammoth Lords' actions—that they have benefited from the acts of outside heroes. And so Jarl Gnargorak waits for the followings to grow fat and lazy, at which time he will march his armies down from the frozen mountain heights to claim the lands he sees as rightfully belonging to the Jotun.

VARISIA

While the other realms of the Saga Lands may have longer histories as established nations, the stories of recent years have catapulted the wilder reaches of Varisia into modern awareness. Much of Varisia's ancient past, when it formed the bulk of the empire of Thassilon, has only recently been rediscovered by modern historians and scholars. And while Cheliaz toyed for a few years at expanding its reach into this land, today Varisia is largely in the control of three other groups. The most widespread of these groups is a motley collection of pilgrims and travelers from all corners of the world, resulting in a wide diversity among the cities in Varisia. But while many of these relative newcomers have dwelt in Varisia for several generations, they are still regarded at best as “new blood” by the land's indigenous Varisian and Shoanti people. For Varisians, the integration of the newcomers was marred by numerous clashes between cultures, with prejudice and misunderstandings making initial attempts to live and work together choppy, but when compared to the Shoanti experience, the Varisians' interactions seem almost idyllic. The Shoanti had always had a smaller footprint in their ancestral lands than the Varisians, and while Varisians are traditionally nomadic, the Shoanti



MAMMOTH RIDER

were more prone to settling down, living in clan-based groups known as quahs. When Cheliax founded a colony named Korvosa along a large bay in the heart of Shoanti lands, which contained a strange and ancient pyramid sacred to the Shoanti, violence erupted between the Chelish colonizers and the displaced Shoanti. After a prolonged and bloody conflict, the colonizers ultimately won; the bay is now known as Conqueror's Bay, and Korvosa is the largest city in Varisia. The Shoanti of the region were forced to abandon their homeland and relocate to the north, into the harsh wilds known as the Cinderlands. Prejudice against Shoanti is rife in Korvosa to this day, and the displaced Shoanti have not forgiven the Chelish invaders.

Geographically, Varisia is divided into two distinct regions. The northeastern portion is plateau, and the southwestern portion is lowlands, consisting of a mix of forested mountains, lush grasslands, verdant forests, and sprawling swamps. In the eastern lowlands, the city of Korvosa is by far the largest settlement. The city has proudly clung to the traditions of its Chelish founders, but those traditions were challenged recently when Queen Ileosa Arabasti gained control after the sudden death of her husband. At first, the people of Korvosa worried that she was ill-equipped to rule, but soon they learned quite the opposite: Ileosa was filled with ambition equaled only by her cruelty, and she proved to be a deadly tyrant indeed. Her rule was relatively short and ended violently, but her time in control has changed Korvosa forever. Thousands died during her regime—many to the ravages of a disease known as bloodveil, a disease Ileosa helped to spread—and her one-time guards, the Gray Maidens, fractured into competing mercenary bands after her defeat.

In the western lowlands, the greatest city is Magnimar, founded by expatriates from Korvosa at the site of an ancient Thassilonian monument—a crumbled bridge known as the Irespan. Well to the north of Magnimar, the region's third-largest city is a haven for pirates and other scoundrels: Riddleport. However, the small town of Sandpoint may well be the most influential in the land, for not one but three legendary groups of heroes got their start from this coastal town. The first of these groups defeated Runelord Karzoug, while the second (of which Ostog the Unslain was a member) eventually traveled to distant Osirion before splitting apart to each forge their own stories throughout the Inner Sea region. The third group escorted local barkeep Ameiko Kaijitsu over the Crown of the World, where they aided her in reclaiming her birthright to become empress of the nation of Minkai.

The greatest danger Varisia has faced in recent years only recently came to pass. Events set in motion 10 years before by Runelord Karzoug's awakening came to a head as several other runelords rose and fought for dominance. One of the most powerful of their number, Runelord Alaznist, seized control of an ancient artifact that allowed her to manipulate time. If not for the intervention of yet another group of heroes with roots in Varisia, Alaznist would have transformed the Saga Lands into her own rune-blasted, devastated empire.

All of these adventurers have left such a significant mark on the world that one could argue Varisia's most potent and important exports to the Inner Sea region are in fact its heroes. Yet Varisia also seems to produce no shortage of epic dangers that require equally epic solutions. Only time can reveal who might be the next great villains—and their heroic counterparts.

MEGAFAUNA MINIONS

Mega fauna animal companions are mostly similar to other animal companions of the same category, though they look different, and they have one difference in their upgrade path. If you take a feat that would normally allow you to choose to have your companion become a savage or nimble animal companion, a mega fauna companion instead can choose to become a savage or indomitable companion. An indomitable companion increases its Constitution modifier by 2 and its Strength, Dexterity, and Wisdom modifiers by 1. It deals 3 additional damage with its unarmed attacks. Increase its proficiency rank in Athletics to expert and its proficiency rank in barding to expert. It also learns the advanced maneuver for its type. If your companion is Medium or smaller, it grows in size by one category. Its attacks count as magical for the purpose of ignoring resistances.



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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Saga Lands region.

MAMMOTH SPEAKER

BACKGROUND

You have learned the secrets of taming the mighty mammoths and other megafauna of the far north. Perhaps these talents are a part of your people's traditional customs, or perhaps you sought out these massive animals of your own accord.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Nature skill and the Animal Lore skill. You gain the Train Animal skill feat.

SHOANTI NAME-BEARER

BACKGROUND

You are a member of a Shoanti quah and have gone through its coming of age ceremony, gaining the traditional tattoo of your quah and earning your adult name.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Quah Lore skill. You gain the Combat Climber skill feat.

THASSILONIAN TRAVELER

BACKGROUND

You come from ancient Thassilon, one of the citizens that appeared out of time alongside the city of Xin-Edasseril. You know many things that have been long forgotten... along with many things that are no longer correct.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and the Thassilon Lore skill. You gain the Dubious Knowledge skill feat.

ULFEN RAIDER

BACKGROUND

You are an Ulfen warrior, feared among Avistan for the merciless and devastating raids your people once conducted along the shores. Though the days of these Ulfen raids are largely past, you have been trained to strike terror into the hearts of those who face you.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Sailing Lore skill. You gain the Intimidating Glare skill feat.

VARISIAN WANDERER

BACKGROUND

You have spent your youth wandering the lands of Varisia and beyond among the brightly painted wagons of a Varisian caravan. You have heard endless tales of your people's history and lore, and have learned many songs and stories from the disparate people you have met.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Performance skill and the Circus Lore skill. You gain the Fascinating Performance skill feat.

WINTER'S CHILD

BACKGROUND

Your or one of your ancestors hails from Irrisen, and some spark of the icy region's magic has manifested itself within your bones. The blood of Baba Yaga's legacy runs in your veins, and you are at one with the mysteries and dangers of the frozen land.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and the Weather Lore skill. You gain the Arcane Sense skill feat.

WITCH WARY

BACKGROUND

You have little love or trust for spellcraft and those who practice it, and have developed a paranoid knack for recognizing such tricks. You are constantly on guard for the magic of witches and have been trained to spot the signs of those with minds affected by magic.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Occultism skill and the Curse Lore skill. You gain the Oddity Identification skill feat.



RUNESCARRED

The rune magic of Thassilon and its descendant nations has left its mark on your very flesh. As a runescarred, you have an unusually close connection to this ancient magic, which has become a newly emerging field of study for small pockets of interested scholars in both Varisia and New Thassilon.

RUNESCARRED DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Arcana; **Access** You are from the Saga Lands.

Whether through blood (if you're Varisian, Shoanti, or New Thassilonian) or by exposure to rune magic, you have become runescarred, with visible, glowing runes on your body in the form of tattoos or scars. You might have possessed these marks before gaining the archetype, but you only truly became runescarred when you chose to study and tap into the runes' power. You become an expert in Arcana and you also become trained in Thassilon Lore, or an expert in Thassilon Lore if you were already trained in it.

Choose one cantrip from the arcane list. One of the runes on your body corresponds to the chosen cantrip, and you can cast the chosen cantrip as an innate arcane spell.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the runescarred archetype.

SPELL RUNES

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Runescarred Dedication

The magical runes on your body grant you several magical abilities. Choose a 1st-level arcane spell. You gain a spell rune on your body corresponding to the chosen spell, which you can cast once per day as an innate spell. At 6th level, you gain a spell rune corresponding to a 2nd-level arcane spell, and at 8th level, you gain a spell rune corresponding to a 3rd-level arcane spell.

LIVING RUNE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Runescarred Dedication

You've bridged a connection between the runes on your body and the magic of runestones, allowing you to place an armor rune on your living flesh. Your body can hold a single property rune; you can't etch a property rune on your body if it has requirements on the type or category of armor or if the property would affect the armor instead of its wearer. If you wear armor, you gain the property rune's effects in addition to any effects of that armor.

WARDING RUNE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Runescarred Dedication

Your runes provide a warding effect that protects you against a specific school of magic. Choose a school of magic other than divination. You gain a rune on your body corresponding to that

school, and you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all saving throws against effects of that school.

GREATER SPELL RUNES

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Spell Runes

You gain more powerful spell runes. You gain a spell rune corresponding to a 4th-level arcane spell. At 12th level, you gain a spell rune corresponding to a 5th-level arcane spell, and at 14th level, you gain a spell rune corresponding to a 6th-level arcane spell.



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SHINING KINGDOMS

NATIONS



ANDORAN [NG]
Democracy
Capital: Almas (76,600)



GALT [CN]
Revolutionary Anarchy
Capital: Isarn (42,700)



DRUMA [LN]
Mercantile Oligarchy
Capital: Kerse (18,300)



KYONIN [CG]
Monarchy
Capital: Iadara (56,340)



FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS [LN]
Multiple Monarchies
Capital: Highhelm (39,917)



TALDOR [N]
Bureaucratic Empire
Capital: Oppara (109,280)

PEOPLES

Dwarven Taldan
Elven
Half-Elven
Gnome
Keleshite
Kellid

LANGUAGES

Common
Dwarven
Elven
Gnomish
Hallit
Kelish

FACTIONS



Eagle Knights



Lion Blades



Prophecies of Kalistrade

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Iomedae



Calistria



Sarenrae



Erastil



Torag

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Armor/
Weapons



Cheese



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



Jewelry/
Gems



Livestock/
Hides



Lumber



Luxury Goods



Ores



Ships



Textiles



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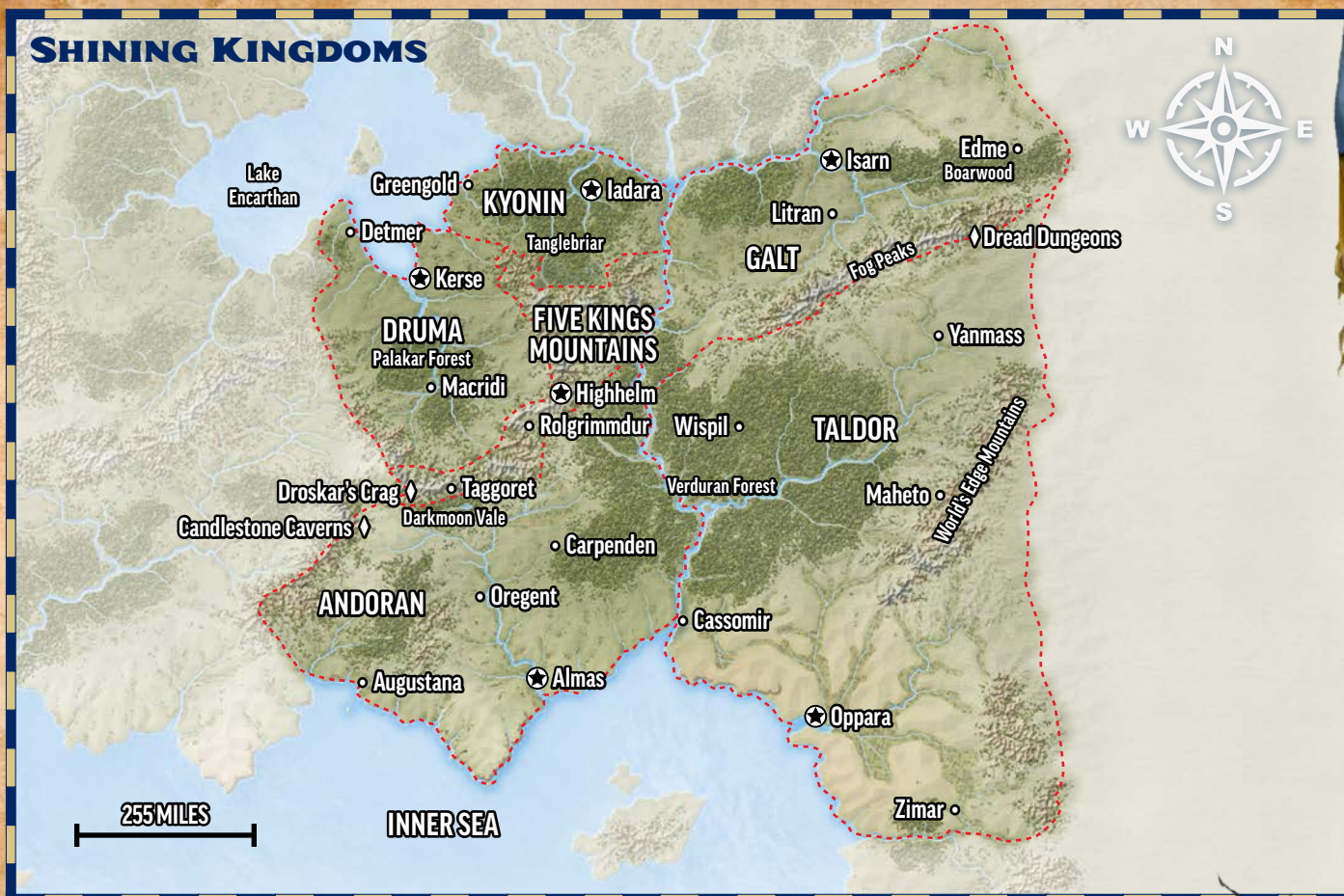
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TIMELINE

Circa

- 5293 AR Earthfall plunges Golarion into the Age of Darkness.
- 4987 AR The dwarves of Tar Taargadth breach the surface of Golarion and reach the Five Kings Mountains, completing the Quest for Sky.
- 4202 AR Gnomes emerge from the First World onto Golarion, particularly in wooded regions such as the Verduran Forest.
- 1281 AR First Emperor Taldaris unifies the city-states along the Inner Sea coast to found Taldor.
- 318 AR The dwarves of Tar Taargadth establish Highhelm, the first Sky Citadel.
- 4 AR Qadira and Taldor first come into conflict as their expanding borders overlap.
- 1 AR Aroden raises the Isle of Kortos from the Inner Sea and becomes a living god, with Oppara as the initial center of his worship.
- 1551 AR The dwarven kingdom of Tar Taargadth falls to a massive assault by orc invaders.
- 2332 AR The Prophets of Kalistrade orchestrate the signing of the Kerse Accord, ending 700 years of dwarven civil war and securing independence for the nation of Druma.
- 2497 AR The nascent demon lord Treerazer begins his perversion of the Fierani Forest in Kyonin.
- 2632 AR Elves return to Kyonin from their refuge of Sovyrian and confront Treerazer.
- 3827 AR Taldor's General Arnisant, hero of the Shining Crusade, defeats the Whispering Tyrant, leading to the Whispering Tyrant's imprisonment in Gallowspire.
- 3841 AR After centuries of conflict, Taldor signs the Treaty of the Wildwood with the druids of the Verduran Forest, establishing peaceful relations.
- 3980 AR Droskar's Crag erupts in the Five Kings Mountains, sparking a long decline that culminates in the dwarves

The history of the region known as the Shining Kingdoms is long and storied, most notably as the heart of the once-mighty empire of Taldor. While Taldan influence is still heavy across the region—from ethnicity and language to cultural traditions and even infrastructure—the area was already home to many before Taldor's Azlanti progenitors settled here. Humans of the Kellid ethnicity, along with elves, dwarves, and gnomes, made their homes here in ages past, and their descendants remain to this day, having witnessed the rise and fall of heroes, empires, and even gods.

Earthfall left its mark on this region, as it did on others. The elves, having some foreknowledge of the disaster, fled through their magical portals called *aiudara* to the realm of Sovyrian, leaving only a small number behind to eke out a living on the ruined world. It was during this time that the dwarves undertook their Quest for Sky, emerging from their underground homes to found the nation of Tar Taargadth—and driving orcs onto the surface ahead of them. Not long after, gnomes fleeing some unknown terror from the First World arrived via planar portals, settling in this region's rich, wild woodlands. Only as humanity began to recover from the Age of Darkness did refugees from old Azlanti bloodlines join with local Garundi, Keleshites, and Kellids to carve out homes along the northwestern border of the Inner Sea. Centuries later, First Emperor Taldaris unified these city-states to found what would become Taldor, the largest human empire in Avistan.

The thousands of years since Taldor's founding have shaped the region in countless ways. When Aroden became a god and raised the Isle of Kortos from the sea, his worship was centered in Taldor's capitol, Oppara. It was the Taldan Empire that led the Shining Crusade to resist and eventually imprison the Whispering Tyrant. But the empire was not infallible, and over time portions of the empire broke away. Elves returning from Sovyrian reclaimed Kyonin as their own, and the dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains retained their autonomy despite their own internal turmoil. Just how weak the empire had grown was revealed when its western holdings revolted, breaking off to become the empire of Cheliox in a relatively peaceful secession. The death of the god Aroden and the subsequent strife within Cheliox sparked further divisions, as the lands of Galt and Andoran, though partners in their succession from Cheliox and founded on similar philosophies, diverged in practice, with the latter establishing a functioning democracy while the former struggles in perpetual revolution. Even those lands that Taldor managed to retain have seen tremendous change over the centuries, most recently with the crowning of the realm's first grand princess.

ANDORAN

Andoran is the first democratically governed republic in the Inner Sea region, and as a result is perhaps best known for its message of freedom. Though a young nation, having broken away from Chelish rule only 50 years ago, Andoran has earned its place among the recognized political powers through a strong economy, a powerful navy, and bold efforts to combat the practice of slavery even beyond its borders.

Perhaps due to its youth, Andoran keeps a close eye on its neighbors. Taldor's revitalization under Grand Princess Eutropia is not as welcome in Andoran as in other countries: despite Eutropia's many reforms and improved diplomacy, she's still a hereditary monarch who prevented a people's rebellion. Andoran has also taken note of Cheliox's recent weaknesses, and rumors abound that the two nations may be headed for war—a sentiment encouraged by Andoran's leader, Supreme-Elect Andira Marusek, a retired general of the Steel Falcons known for her opposition to the Chelish slave trade. Last but not least, prudence leads Andoran to carefully observe the follies of its cousin nation of Galt in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes, lest bloody revolution undermine all that Andoran has achieved over the past decades.

The Eagle Knights of Andoran, state-funded soldiers and spies dressed in iconic blue-and-gold uniforms, are often associated with abolitionist efforts, though the various divisions within the organization are seldom understood beyond the nation's borders. The Golden Legion is composed of elite soldiers who fight alongside



TALDOR

Andoran's standing military. The Steel Falcons (and their naval counterparts, the Gray Corsairs) operate independent of the regular military, specializing in battling slavery and tyranny both at home and abroad. Most secretive of the knights are the Twilight Talons, who provide intelligence and espionage for a government that officially disavows any knowledge of their existence.

Yet not every organization in Andoran lives up to the nation's lofty ideals. Renowned across the Inner Sea region, the innocuous-sounding Lumber Consortium was originally a criminal syndicate predating Andoran's independence, and the consortium's financial influence remains unparalleled. Ties between the consortium and several longstanding members of the People's Council have raised questions about whether the nation needs safeguards in place to prevent corruption of elected officials, yet somehow these measures never seem to come to fruition.

DARKMOON VALE

An infamous region tucked along Andoran's northern border, Darkmoon Vale is one of the nation's few patches of truly dangerous wilderness. Its distance from Almas allows the Lumber Consortium to operate nearly unchecked here, claiming the city of Oregent as its headquarters. But the area's riches—from darkwood and other lumber to silver and access to the Isgeri border—are not easily claimed. Centuries of logging have strained relations with the woodlands' fey protectors, while bands of predatory lycanthropes and flame drakes hunt the lonely hills. More perils come from the nearby Candlestone Caverns, an extensive cave system home to kobolds, duergar, undead, and more, made all the worse by deep passages to the Darklands that allow even more dangerous creatures access to the surface.

MAGICAL EAGLE KNIGHT EPAULETS

Epaulets are part of nearly every Eagle Knight uniform, so enchanted versions of these items are common among the Eagle Knights.

- 4081 AR Cheliah breaks away from Taldor in the Even-Tongued Conquest, also annexing the provinces of Andoran and Galt.
- 4606 AR The god Aroden dies, causing worldwide disasters and plunging Cheliah into civil war.
- 4667 AR The first Revolutionary Council forms in Galt after rebelling against Thrune-dominated Cheliah; the *final blades* are commissioned and put into service.
- 4669 AR Andoran declares independence from Thrune-dominated Cheliah and forms a fledgling democracy.
- 4717 AR Andoran establishes a successful colony on the shattered ruins of Azlant.
- 4718 AR Grand Prince Stavian III of Taldor has half the Taldan senate murdered. The ensuing War for the Crown is dramatic and bloody, with Eutropia eventually claiming the throne as grand princess.

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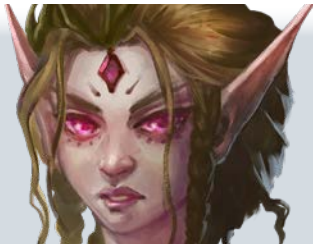
OLD CHELIAIX

SAGA LANDS

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NOTABLE FIGURES

The following are key public figures in the Shining Kingdoms.



QUEEN TELANDIA EDASSERIL

Always a formidable figure in elven politics, Kyonin's queen has capitalized on the return of the Whispering Tyrant to strengthen ties with other nations.



GRAND PRINCESS EUTROPIA

Despite a blood-soaked ascension to the throne, Taldor's first empress has proven to be a ruler devoted to moderation and well-considered improvements to the nation.



HIGH PROPHET KELLDOR

The current head of the Prophets of Kalistrade commands near-total control over the affairs of both the Kalistocrats and Druma's Resplendent Bureaucracy.



SUPREME-ELECT ANDIRA MARUSEK

An experienced general known for years of abolitionist military efforts, Andira Marusek was elected to lead the People's Council of Andoran in 4716 AR.

GOLDEN LEGION EPAULET

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL INVESTED

Price 55 gp

Usage worn epaulet; Bulk L

These gleaming golden epaulets are issued to Eagle Knight officers and worn as part of the uniform. While they can be enchanted to provide a variety of effects, the *Golden Legion epaulet* remains the most common.

Activate \blacklozenge (Command); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Issue an order as part of the command. You and each ally within 60 feet who follows that order gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws against fear until the beginning of your next turn.

DRUMA

The lands to the southeast of Lake Encarthan stand alongside the Five Kings Mountains as the only portions of the Shining Kingdoms to have never been claimed by the Taldan Empire. These plains and forests were first home to one of the oldest Kellid cultures on Avistan, along with a sizable fey contingent in the central Palakar Forest. Once the dwarves emerged, the region became a holding of the Five Kings Mountains, remaining so until 2332 AR, when the signing of the historic Kerse Accord simultaneously ended 700 years of dwarven civil war, gained Druma its independence, and proved once and for all the economic mastery of the Prophets of Kalistrade.

To say Druma is run by the Prophets of Kalistrade—a Druman pseudo-religious group infamous for their strict self-denial and ceaseless pursuit of wealth—is only partially correct. Technically, the Resplendent Bureaucracy—a body of hundreds of civic administrators—governs the nation, and membership in the Prophets of Kalistrade imparts no official governmental power. In practice, however, the tremendous financial resources under the Kalistocrats' control grant them more influence than that wielded by the official government. Furthermore, the Kalistocrats themselves are led by a High Prophet who legally has the authority to countermand the Bureaucracy's rulings. The current high prophet, Kelldor, leverages powerful divination abilities and a sharp acumen to all but predict the future, and has used his power to build relationships with the rulers of several Inner Sea nations.

While the white-robed Kalistocrats are recognized throughout the Inner Sea, Druma's military is equally well known. Formally the Mercenary League, the organization and its members are generally referred to as "Blackjackets" due to their iconic all-black uniforms. Given their status as the army of a nation of phenomenally wealthy traders, the Blackjackets are outfitted with the highest quality armor and weaponry and receive some of the best training—and highest pay—of any Inner Sea military. As a result, the Blackjackets' loyalty to the Resplendent Bureaucracy is legendary, and individual Blackjackets are decidedly and unhesitatingly amoral when carrying out their orders.

The current power of the Blackjackets can be attributed to High Prophet Kelldor, who began building up the Mercenary League 2 years ago with an "Edict of Preparation"—orders to nearly double the army's recruitment and training. The result has been an enormous force of highly skilled warriors with specialized training to combat orcs and undead, putting Druma in a unique position to weather the return of the Whispering Tyrant. As a result, the nation has not suffered as much as its neighbors from the rise of Tar-Baphon, though as lucrative trade routes have been choked off—particularly along Lake Encarthan—some citizens have begun to worry that the legions of undead may be a problem that not even money can solve.

In the meantime, the Kalistocrats maintain their lucrative trade networks, welcoming the opportunity to increase trade with Kyonin and jockeying to establish themselves as a primary conduit between the elven nation and the rest of the world. Some attempt to force alliances with Galt's new leadership in hopes that stability in that nation will prove more profitable, while others simply conduct what trade

they can in basic supplies and armaments. Ultimately, Druma has changed little in response to recent events, with its citizens reminding each other that, regardless of who wears the crown in neighboring nations, money remains everyone's king.

FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS

Dwarves first emerged onto Golarion's surface from the depths of the Five Kings Mountains. Looking out from those craggy peaks at an endless alien sky, their leaders understood for the first time just how tenuous and vulnerable their people would be in this strange land. Thus they built Highhelm, the first and greatest of their Sky Citadels, finding safety and familiarity in its stone halls and clever fortifications. From here, the kingdom of Tar Taargadth spread across the surface of Avistan, growing powerful and fruitful during the Age of Anguish. Yet it was not to last: in the millennia that followed, many subsequent Sky Citadels were lost or conquered, their territories increasingly invaded by orcs and humans, until in 1551 AR the kingdom finally collapsed. In its place rose the five fractious, smaller kingdoms that gave the mountain range its current name. These in turn fell to civil war and invasion, their communities growing small and insular. Today, the region still lacks a single central government, and while High King Borogrim the Hale convenes the Gathering Council among the region's leaders, and many dwarves across the Inner Sea region view the mountain range as an ancestral homeland, it's been over 250 years since the dwarves of these mountains could be said to be a single people.

Despite this, the dwarves' longstanding traditions have given their society tremendous stability. In addition to resisting invasion from without, they've weathered their own struggles from within, most notably the societal decline following the eruption of Droskar's Crag in 3980 AR, during which much craft and culture was lost as the dwarves of the region turned to the worship of Droskar under Ordrik Talhrik. Since Ordrik's fall 250 years ago, the dwarves of the region have revived many of their ancient ways. Today, the Five Kings Mountains are the center of a growing dwarven renaissance, as Five Kings dwarves begin to reestablish contact with other dwarven nations isolated by the fall of Tar Taargadth, or adopt ancient dwarven magical practices such as those of the shamanic Rivethun. This newfound confidence in dwarven culture has also led to increased traffic with the neighboring elven realm of Kyonin, and the ensuing surge of collaboration between artisans continues to produce works of unparalleled beauty and function.

The major settlements of Larrad, Highhelm, Kovlar, Taggoret, Rolgrimmdur, and Tar-Kazmukh have remained relatively safe and stable despite recent upheavals in nearby nations. Tradition and stability don't translate to ignorance or naiveté, though. The dwarves keep a wary eye on Tar-Baphon, the increased tensions between Cheliah and Andoran, the Ironfang hobgoblins, and even the newly established realm of New Thassilon. The cities here have maintained strong trade relations with neighboring nations, particularly mercantile Druma but also Andoran, Isger, and Taldor. Trade with Galt has largely ceased with that nation's fall into chaos, though some merchants have no qualms about selling equipment to the Gray Gardeners or resistance fighters.

Much of society in the Five Kings Mountains involves the worship of the traditional dwarven gods. While Torag is generally recognized as the foremost dwarven god, he is but one of a larger dwarven pantheon: Magrim and Angradd watch over battles, with many mentor-mentee relationships holding these two up as a model, though Trudd is popular among more impulsive youths. Folgrit represents mothers, wives, daughters, and those who provide emotional labor, while dwarves look to Bolka for aid in matters of the heart—which,

ECONOMICS

The Shining Kingdoms region commands a wealth of resources, and as such the nations' economies center primarily around exporting materials and goods. Andoran's economy was built around the logging industry, while the Five Kings Mountains produce high-quality metalwork, gemstones, and other crafts. Kyonin, too, is renowned for its artistry and focuses primarily on exporting finished goods, while Druma flexes its unparalleled mercantile influence and trade networks. Taldor continues to lead the region in areas of art, music, and culture, though shipbuilding has also been a longstanding economic engine along the coast. What commodities the region does import tend to be luxury goods and glamorous wares, particularly via Taldor's capital of Oppara.



EAGLE KNIGHT

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THE FINAL BLADES

Galt's *final blades* are powerful artifacts.

FINAL BLADE

ITEM 20

RARE **ARTIFACT** **DEATH** **EVIL** **NECROMANCY** **OCCULT**
Bulk 40

A Large or smaller restrained or willing creature can be executed by a *final blade*. As an artifact, a *final blade* cannot be harmed by any but a very specific means.

Activate 1 minute (Interact); **Effect** You execute a creature restrained beneath the blade. The executed creature takes 11d10 slashing damage and must succeed at a DC 45 Fortitude save or be decapitated as though it suffered a critical hit with a natural 20 from a +3 *major striking vorpal scythe*.

The soul of a creature executed with a *final blade* is trapped, and the creature can't be returned to life through any means, even a *miracle* or similar magic. A *final blade* can hold any number of souls in this way, and they can be released only through a complex ritual known only to the Gray Gardeners or through the destruction of the *final blade*.

like emotional labor, is seen as a challenge and vocation comparable to battle and forge-work. Those dwarves who facilitate relationships and serve as diplomats and ambassadors to other nations look to Grundinnar for guidance and support. Kols is the subject of much respect and is invoked in formal oaths, such as the common phrase “Kols witness these words.” Of the larger dwarven pantheon, only Dranngvit and Droskar are rarely worshipped, though they are still recognized as necessary—albeit unsavory—parts of lived experience, and therefore the pantheon.

GALT

Though generally acknowledged as a geographic region, Galt is hardly a nation, as its government and social structure have been shattered by decades of ceaseless, bloody revolution. What was once a society known for brilliant poets, artists, and philosophers flared into rebellion under Thrune-controlled Cheliah, but while Andoran managed to follow its democratic ideals into peace, Galt is now inhabited by mobs of paranoid, revolutionary fanatics. The nation's out-of-control radicals have overthrown the institution of nobility and most other institutions along with it, and Galt's bastions of education have been converted to political prisons. More than a dozen governments have come and gone in the 50 years since the initial revolution, with none able to govern effectively or hold control for more than a few years. Infrastructure and social support systems fell by the wayside, leading to widespread poverty and displaced citizens, banditry, and unchallenged attacks by fell beasts.

The current Revolutionary Council has existed for longer than most of Galt's regimes, though it shows signs of its own impending collapse. For more than a decade, Citizen Korran Goss held the council together through a talent for redirecting the mob's rage away from himself and the council, blaming neighboring nations for Galt's troubles. But like so many leaders before him, Korran found himself the target of a ruthless campaign of violence that even his tremendous force of personality could not turn aside. The Revolutionary Council is now headed by Citizen Camilia Drannoch, a populist leader who insists that Korran's habit of blaming external forces for Galt's failings only led to a worsening of its condition. Under her leadership, the Revolutionary Council has ostensibly begun a campaign

to root out rogue elements and destabilizing influences within Galt, though in many cases this effort has merely allowed Camilia to manipulate the mob into removing those who would threaten her position.

There have been only two constant factors in Galt since its fall into chaos: the Gray Gardeners and the guillotines known as the *final blades*. The Gray Gardeners are Galt's executioners, an order of masked enforcers based in the city of Litran. Anonymity is the key to the Gray Gardeners' safety and their power, as they can act as faceless arms of the Galtan mob, yet their power is such that no individual dares risk their ire out of fear of experiencing the *final blades* firsthand. The guillotines hold powerful enchantments that trap their victims' souls, lest the condemned be revived through magic or delivered into the clutches of Chelish devils.

These instruments of death have proven impervious to physical harm, though rumors have begun circulating in Isarn that underground agents have finally found a ritual to destroy the *final blades* and release all of the souls trapped within.

Galt has few relationships with any other nations or organizations.

Envoys from Kyonin have recently established a modest presence in Isarn, and the Pathfinder Society maintains a small, secretive lodge in Woodsedge, but most nations view Galt as a kind of a disease, watching from afar and hoping its chaos doesn't spread. Taldor is still reeling from its own revolution scare during the convoluted succession from Grand Prince Stavian III to Grand Princess Eutropia, and Andoran upholds Galt as a cautionary tale, as both nations were founded upon the same principles.

RIVETHUN DWARF

KYONIN

Although many people in the Inner Sea region see the elves of Kyonin as standoffish and isolationist—a stereotype unintentionally reinforced by the elves' long focus on various internal struggles—the newly returned threat of Tar-Baphon has drawn the elves' attention outward once more. Elven experts' own experience and historical records suggest that it's only a matter of time before Tar-Baphon becomes an unavoidable threat to the entire region, and thus Kyonin's leadership has begun sending more diplomatic emissaries to other nations in preparation for a large-scale war that could ravage the continent. At the same time, this need for greater cooperation with other nations has led Kyonin's leaders to open their own carefully watched borders to ambassadors and visitors from a wide array of ancestries and nations.

This elven push for international alliance is seen by many as a drastic change from Kyonin's traditional policy, yet elven records and memories reveal many instances of similar collaboration against evil, now long forgotten by younger nations. Still, the elven love of freedom means that many of these efforts are the acts of like-minded individuals rather than ruling institutions—in truth, even the elves' current undertakings are less the result of a formal governmental order and more a collective drive among individuals to work toward the greater good. The fact that Kyonin's assistance is almost never a national decision, but instead the independent undertaking of numerous individuals, has given rise to the widespread opinion that elves as a whole care little for the other nations of Avistan. The recent destruction of Lastwall has rallied many younger elves into action, hoping to combat their nation's reputation for ambivalence as well as the Whispering Tyrant.

Despite a heightened involvement on the global stage, life in Kyonin has changed little over the centuries. The elves continue their appreciation of deep learning, crafting, and the arcane arts, though the influx of outsiders into the realm has led to the introduction of new ideas that diverge from purely elven tradition. Elves' apparent disinterest and detachment belie a keen eye on current events, a shifting political landscape, and growing and changing threats on a global and long-term scale. Even within the courts of Queen Telandia Edasseril, intrigue abounds as disparate factions vie for influence, and not all players agree with the decision to allow outsiders into the realm. Likewise, even this increased outreach has not overcome longstanding rivalries: Kyonin remains at odds with the River Kingdoms, especially regarding the human-occupied elven ruin of Sevenarches, and Razmiran's hostile policy toward the elves has caused an ongoing cold war across the West Sellen River.

Those groups who question the wisdom of allowing outsiders into Kyonin have been most convincing with regard to the Fierani Forest, and especially the capital of Iadara, where several *aiudara*—elf gates—link the elven realm to distant lands, and where the Sovyrian Stone that powers all *aiudara* is carefully hidden away. For this reason, parts of the city remain swathed in illusion and supernatural mists to deter non-elven visitors from straying from their designated areas. Ironically, many of these same groups worried about the safety of the elven capital also appreciate the influx of non-elven warriors from the north, who bring experience

THE SIXTH KING OF MOUNTAINS

The Five Kings Mountains are known for their dwarven residents, yet the mountains are home to another denizen of note. The great wyrm red dragon Daralathylx has roamed this part of the world for more 2,000 years and established a lair among the Five Kings Mountains around 3001 AR. As one of the most powerful dragons in all of Golarion, Daralathylx has come to be known as the "Sixth King of the Mountains." The dwarven residents of the region are ever watchful, lest their wrathful neighbor reemerge and rampage across the Shining Kingdoms.

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FINAL BLADE

TREERAZER

Spawn of the demon lord Cyth-V'sug, the nascent demon lord Treerazer somehow incurred his sire's wrath and was cast from the Abyss. Finding Golarion to his liking, Treerazer set about making a home for himself on the Material Plane, eventually settling in the abandoned elven homeland of Kyonin. Though he has since been contained in the swamps of Tanglebriar, Treerazer retains his nominal divinity, and some cults worship him as a god.

from the demon-hunting Mendevian crusades that may be crucial in elven efforts to contain the threat of Treerazer in Kyonin's southern reaches.

TANGLEBRIAR

The elves' long retreat to Sovyrian during the Age of Darkness may have saved their people, but their escape left their ancestral lands to rot and ruin. During their absence, the nascent demon lord Treerazer claimed much of Kyonin, twisting and perverting its sylvan majesty, culminating in an attempt to warp the Sovyrian Stone itself into a permanent portal to the Abyss. Fortunately for Golarion, this last atrocity was detected before it could succeed, prompting the elves to return to Golarion en masse in a ferocious counterattack. In the centuries to follow, elven forces drove the nascent demon lord from the heart of their realm, sequestering him in a vast swamp they dubbed Tanglebriar. Yet in spite of their migration back to the world they'd abandoned and their reformed ties with humanity and other nations, they've remained unable to destroy Treerazer completely or force him out of their lands.

While few elves would say their conflict with Treerazer has been a success, most acknowledge that the threat the demon lord poses has been largely contained. Of late, elven forces have gained reinforcements as some crusaders from the Worldwound chose to join in the efforts against Treerazer rather than continuing south to confront Tar-Baphon, giving defenders renewed hope that victory may finally be within sight.

The guardians of Tanglebriar cannot rest easy, however. Threats still creep from the swamp with deadly regularity, in the form of demons, dark fey, carnivorous fungi, and several cults that worship the nascent demon lord. Additionally, Treerazer is the son of the demon lord of fungus and parasites Cyth-V'sug, and though the two are estranged, the waning of Cyth-V'sug's influence in Fangwood Forest and the Worldwound has stirred fears that the two might reconcile. United, the two demon lords might have the strength to launch an offensive to take control of all Kyonin and beyond. Worse yet, either might form an alliance with Tar-Baphon, a possibility that has scouts and skirmishers on a perpetual lookout.

TALDOR

Taldor is one of the oldest nations in the Inner Sea region, at one point having held the majority of Avistan under the Lion Throne's control. The empire's history of expansion, military might, and heroic glory are baked into its citizens' self-image, and even the lowliest peasant tilling Taldan soil takes pride in the fact that she's Taldan. Millennia of tradition have taken their toll on the realm, however, and the empire now holds only a fraction of the lands it once controlled. An ongoing, intermittent war with the neighboring satrapy of Qadira has instilled an anti-Keleshite and anti-Sarenite prejudice among many Taldans, and the nation's longstanding policy of agnatic succession, limiting the lines of succession to male descendants, has led to an unfortunately sexist trend in politics and society as a whole. The nobility's focus on prestige and personal power has consumed a disproportionate share of attention and resources, leaving the lower classes in increasingly dire straits and allowing the empire's once-magnificent infrastructure to slowly crumble.

A recent and hotly contested transition of power in Taldor has begun to overturn some of these trends. Grand Princess Eutropia Stavian is the first woman to rule Taldor in the empire's history, following the Taldan Senate's vote to overturn the longstanding policy of limiting the crown to male heirs. Though still relatively new to the throne, Eutropia has already proven herself a formidable monarch with her wise arbitration and cunning diplomacy, upholding the proud and rich Taldan culture while



KYONIN

investing in the realm's long-neglected infrastructure. With the aid of her resurrected brother Prince Carrius—who bears a strong spiritual connection to some of the greatest of Taldor's past emperors—she's already managed to heal some of the divides caused by the bloody civil war that accompanied her rise to power, and by all accounts appears poised to revitalize Taldor as a nation. Yet the War for the Crown is still a fresh wound, and the old guard of Taldor has not yet fallen away. Many of Eutropia's former rivals remain in powerful positions and still oppose her rule, and plots and schemes circulate within every echelon of Taldan society.

Taldor has long maintained an impressive military whose forces include the Taldan Horse, Taldan Phalanx, and Imperial Navy, but these assets have come to the fore with Tar-Baphon's move to claim Absalom—itself not so far from Taldor's capital of Oppara. Nearly any Taldan can recount the nation's glorious leadership in the Shining Crusade and the victory the Taldan General Arnisant achieved there, and many in the nation view Tar-Baphon's return as an opportunity to once again shine on the field of glorious battle. Military outposts that not so long ago were devoted to skirmishes with Qadiran forces are now training troops for the potential return of the Whispering Tyrant, and the city of Cassomir has undergone a massive revival as the navy has begun building new ships at an unprecedented rate.

Taldor as a whole maintains a close watch on neighboring lands. Some of this is handled through official channels, but a substantial portion of this work falls to the unseen hands of the secretive Lion Blades. Primarily recruited from Oppara's famous bardic colleges, Lion Blades specialize in infiltration, espionage, and even assassination to further their nation's goals. The Lion Blades' current leader is Dominicus Rell, who officially served as an advisor to the previous Grand Prince Stavian III and continues in that role for Eutropia, though rumor within the Lion Blades suggests a growing divide in agents' loyalty, with some favoring a senior agent named Laurisa Tromaine over Dominicus.

VERDURAN FOREST

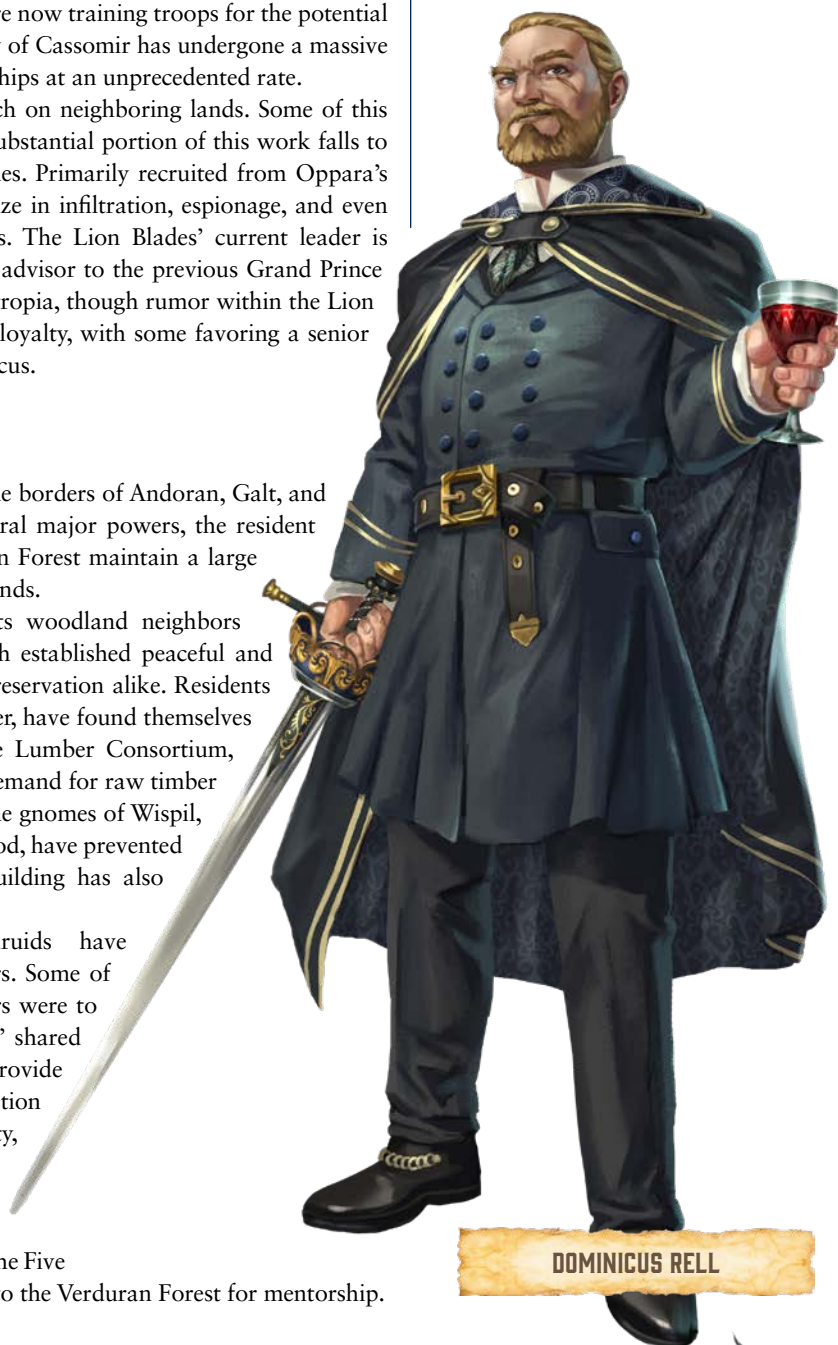
The largest woodland in Avistan straddles the borders of Andoran, Galt, and Taldor. Despite existing at the crux of several major powers, the resident druids, gnomes, and fey within the Verduran Forest maintain a large degree of autonomy from the surrounding lands.

Taldor long ago came to terms with its woodland neighbors through the Treaty of the Wildwood, which established peaceful and mutually beneficial terms for logging and preservation alike. Residents of the Andoren portion of the forest, however, have found themselves in a growing conflict with loggers and the Lumber Consortium, especially as impending war has driven up demand for raw timber throughout the region. Only the efforts of the gnomes of Wispil, in accordance with the Treaty of the Wildwood, have prevented similar tensions with Taldor, whose shipbuilding has also increased demand on Verduran timber.

Long isolationist, the Wildwood druids have nevertheless found new allies in recent years. Some of Kyonin's first overtures beyond their borders were to the Verduran Forest, given the two cultures' shared appreciation for natural lands. The elves provide the Wildwood Lodge with current information on the outside world—an increasing necessity, as the forest's proximity to Absalom means it will have little chance to remain neutral in any conflict with the Whispering Tyrant. A growing number of Rivethun dwarves from the Five Kings Mountains have also begun traveling to the Verduran Forest for mentorship.

THE GREEN FAITH

The Green Faith predates any empire, and for ages its worshippers—usually druids, though also the occasional primal sorcerer or cleric—have claimed the Verduran Forest as a center of worship. The Wildwood Lodge is the oldest and best-known of these orders, holding the Isle of Arenway as a particularly sacred site and defending the forest as a whole from interlopers.



DOMINICUS RELL

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BACKGROUNDS

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable for characters from the Shining Kingdoms region.

FINAL BLADE SURVIVOR

BACKGROUND

You fell prey to the whims of the Galtan mob and were scheduled for execution by *final blade*, but through skill—or sheer luck—you managed to talk your way out of it.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Deception skill and the Revolution Lore skill. You gain the Charming Liar skill feat.

KALISTRAD Follower

BACKGROUND

You follow the philosophy of the Prophecies of Kalistrade, seeking to build up your wealth in this life so that you might meet the next world on your own terms.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Kalistrade Lore skill. You gain the Bargain Hunter skill feat.

KYONIN EMISSARY

BACKGROUND

You were trained to be an ambassador of the elven land of Kyonin, and you have now been sent out into the wider world to build alliances between Kyonin and the neighboring kingdoms.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Politics Lore skill. You gain the Multilingual skill feat.

LUMBER CONSORTIUM LABORER

BACKGROUND

You have suffered as a worker for the unscrupulous Lumber Consortium, laboring under harsh conditions in dangerous wooded regions of Andoran.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Dexterity, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and the Forest Lore skill. You gain the Assurance skill feat with Athletics.

RIVETHUN ADHERENT

BACKGROUND

You have spent time learning the practices and traditions of the ancient Rivethun dwarven shamans and can recognize all sorts of magic. You may have chosen your own road since then, or you may remain an adherent of the philosophy.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Occultism skill and the Spirit Lore skill.

You gain the Recognize Spell skill feat.

TALDAN SCHEMER

BACKGROUND

Whether willing or unwilling, you have been involved in the many cutthroat political intrigues within Taldor. You might have been born into it as a member of the aristocracy, or you might have taken an active role in the recent events of the War for the Crown.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Politics Lore skill. You gain the Hobnobber skill feat.

WILDWOOD LOCAL

BACKGROUND

You might have been born and raised among the druids of the Verduran Forest, or you may have spent time among them as an adult and come to know their ways.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Nature skill as well as the Forest Lore skill. You gain the Natural Medicine skill feat.



LION BLADE

You've trained as a spy in service of Taldor, learning secrets of disguise, manipulating crowds, and deceiving various sorts of magic users with ease. You likely dropped out of the Kitharodian Academy, Taldor's premier bardic college, in order to train at one of the Lion Blade's elite Shadow Schools.

LION BLADE DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Lion Blades, trained in Performance; **Access** You are from Taldor.

Your lion blade spy training helps you conceal yourself and your identity. You become trained in your choice of Deception or Stealth and in Espionage Lore; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead. 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.

Special You cannot select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Lion Blade archetype.

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 blink 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 on your Stealth checks when in a crowd of at least 10 creatures and a +4 circumstance bonus on 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 are unarmored or wearing light armor.

You advance and retreat quickly. You gain a +10-foot status bonus to your speed.

SPY'S COUNTERMEASURES

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

You've learned how to analyze and fake your responses to the most common magic used against spies. Whenever you succeed at your save against a divination or mental effect, you can Identify Magic to identify the spell as a free action triggered when you succeed, even if you didn't notice the spell being cast.

If you successfully identify a divination effect targeting you and the spell would normally fail or have no effect, you can create a substitute result, causing the spell's caster to think the spell succeeded, with a result of your choice. If you successfully identify a mental effect targeting you and the spell would normally fail or have no effect, you can make it appear as if you were affected and attempt to play along with the spell; if the spell normally establishes a mental link, it functions normally but you can disregard any commands you receive through the link.

FLICKER

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

You use your movements and disguises to make yourself a flickering blur. You gain concealment until your next turn. As usual for concealment involving an obvious visual manifestation, you can't use this concealment to Hide.



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GLOSSARY AND INDEX

This appendix contains brief explanations and page references for the content presented in this book, including new rules, locations, deities, organizations, and so on. New rules content is marked with an asterisk (*).

Abadar Lawful neutral god of cities, law, and wealth. Known as the Master of the First Vault. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 437

Absalom Largest city in the Inner Sea region, located on Starstone Isle and originally founded by Aroden. 12–23

Absalom Reckoning The most commonly used calendar in Avistan and Garund, consisting of 52 weeks across 12 months. The current year is 4719 AR.

Abyssal Believed to be the first language developed in the Outer Sphere. Commonly spoken by demons.

access Certain uncommon abilities, feats, and other options have an Access entry. Characters who meet the criteria in the entry gain access to that option. 10

Achaekkek Lawful evil god of assassins, divine punishment, and the Red Mantis. Known as He Who Walks in Blood. 65

Age of Darkness The age following Earthfall, which ranged from –5293 AR to –4294 AR.

Age of Lost Omens The age brought about by the death of Aroden, ranging from 4606 AR to the modern day.

Aldori duelist* (archetype) 35

Alkenstar A city-state located in the central Mana Wastes. The city is known for unique technologies, including firearms. 74–76

Andoran A relatively young nation in southern Avistan known for its adherence to democracy and personal freedom. 122–124

Arazni Neutral evil god of the abused, dignity, and unwilling undeath. Known as the Unyielding. 41

Arcadia One of Golarion's continents. West of the Inner Sea region past the ruins of Azlant. 6–7

archaic wayfinder* (magic item) 17

Arclords of Nex Mages with formal training in the ways of the archmage Nex. 80

Aroden Lawful neutral god of humanity, innovation, history, culture, and fulfillment of destiny. Known as the Last Azlanti. Now deceased. 14, 21

Asmodeus Lawful evil god of contracts, pride, slavery, and tyranny. Known as the Prince of Darkness. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 437

Aspis Consortium A prominent trade organization that spans the Inner Sea. Known for its unscrupulous practices. 86

Avistan One of Golarion's continents. It makes up the northern half of the Inner Sea region. 7

Azlant One of the greatest nations during the Age of Legend. The empire was destroyed during Earthfall, and its ruins remain among the islands of the Arcadian Ocean. 8, 62–63

backgrounds* 22, 34, 46, 58, 70, 82, 94, 106, 118, 130

Barrier Wall A large mountain range spanning across southern Osirion, Rahadoum, and Thuvia. 50–51

Bekyar One of the major Mwangi ethnic subgroups living in southwestern Garund.

Belkzen A region in northwestern Avistan. Known as the home of several orc clans. 38–40

Bellflower Network A secretive organization dedicated to the liberation of halfling slaves, especially in Cheliax. 105

Besmara Chaotic neutral goddess of piracy, sea monsters, and strife. Known as the Pirate Queen. 65

black pearl aeon stone* (magic item) 63

blessed tattoo* (magic item) 92

Bloodcove A port city located in the western Mwangi Expanse. Known for the prominence of pirates and other criminals among its populace. 86

Bonuwat One of the major Mwangi ethnic subgroups living along Garund's western coast.

Brevoy A nation in northeastern Avistan. Known for its political uncertainty. 26–28

Calistria Chaotic neutral goddess of lust, revenge, and trickery. Known as the Savored Sting. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 437

Casandalee Neutral goddess of artificial life, free thinking, and intellectual apotheosis. Known as the Iron Goddess. 30

Casmaron One of Golarion's continents. Located immediately east of the Inner Sea region. 7

Cayden Cailean Chaotic good god of bravery, ale, freedom, and wine. Known as the Drunken Hero. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 437

Cheliax A nation in southwest Avistan. Known for its ties to diabolic rule. 98–100

Common An alternate name for Taldane, the most widespread language in the Inner Sea region.

Crown of the World The northernmost of Golarion's continents, which connects Avistan to Tian Xia. 7

Darklands The name for the immense area of caverns, vaults, and passages beneath the surface of Golarion. 7–8

Desna Chaotic good goddess of dreams, luck, stars, and travelers. Known as the Song of the Spheres. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 438

Draconic The ancient language of dragons.

Druma A nation in southern central Avistan. Known for its prominent trade and great wealth. 124–125

dwarf A stout folk who often live underground. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 34–37

Dwarven The language of dwarves.

Eagle Knights A state-funded military sworn to defend Andoran. Some branches work to end slavery in the Inner Sea region. 122–123

Earthfall A cataclysmic event in –5293 AR, in which a rain of meteorites fell upon Golarion and caused massive destruction.

elf A mysterious people with rich traditions of magic and scholarship. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 38–41

Elven The language of elves.

Erastil Lawful good god of family, farming, hunting, and trade. Known as Old Deadeye. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 438

Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye A secretive organization dedicated to working against the Night Heralds and Whispering Way. 45

Eye of Abendego An enormous hurricane nestled between Mediogalti Island, the Shackles, and the Sodden Lands. 63–64

Eye of the Arclords* (skill feat) 81

Fangwood Forest A large forest spanning the Gravelands and Nirmathas. 40

final blade* (magic item) 126

Firebrands A rebellious organization known for its members' daredevil acts and their work in fighting oppression.

Five Kings Mountains A region in southeastern Avistan considered the center of dwarven civilization in the Inner Sea. 125–126

Galt A nation in eastern Avistan. Known as a land of constant political upheaval and revolution. 126

Garund One of Golarion's continents. Its northern portion makes up the southern half of the Inner Sea region. 8

Garundi A common human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region spanning

the nations of northern Garund. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 430

Geb A nation in eastern Garund. A haven for undead. 76–77

Gholinom An algholththu city deep beneath the sea off the western coast of Rahaduum. 69

gillmen Amphibious humanoids who live among the seas of the Inner Sea region, said to have descended from the people of Azlant. They refer to themselves as azarketi and are also known as Low Azlanti.

gnome A small people who are skilled at magic and seek out new experiences. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 42–45

Gnomish The language of gnomes.

goblin A small people with a propensity toward flames and few inhibitions. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 46–49

Goblin The language of bugbears, goblins, and hobgoblins.

Godless Healing* (skill feat) 56

Golarion Main planet of the Lost Omens campaign setting. 6–9

Golden Legion epaulet* (magic item) 123–124

Gorum Chaotic neutral god of battle, strength, and weapons. Known as Our Lord in Iron. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 438

Gozreh Neutral god of nature, the sea, and weather. Known as the Wind and the Waves. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 438

Gravelands The region in central Avistan formerly known as Lastwall. A land where undead and other horrors roam. 40–41

Great Beyond The collective name for all of the planes of existence of the known multiverse. 9–10

Green Faith A philosophy that proclaims natural forces are worthy of attention and respect. 129, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 440

half-elf One of the prominent heritages in the Inner Sea region. They share common traits with elves and humans. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 55–56

half-orc One of the prominent heritages in the Inner Sea region. They share common traits with humans and orcs. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 55–56

halfling Small, cheerful people that are sometimes considered to be lucky. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 50–53

Halfling The language of halflings.

Hallit The language of the Kellid people of the far north.

Hellknight armiger* (archetype) 107

Hellknights A collection of knightly orders with a strict focus on maintaining order and upholding the law. 99–100

Hermea A nation located in the Steaming Sea off of Avistan's western coast. Ruled by the gold dragon Mengkare. 64–65

human Humans are a diverse array of people known for their adaptability. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 54–58

Infernal The common language of the denizens of Hell. It requires very precise enunciation.

Inner Sea region The collective name for the continent of Avistan and the northern portion of Garund that surround the Inner Sea.

Iomedae Lawful good goddess of honor, justice, rulership, and valor. Known as the Inheritor. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 438

Irim An aquatic elf city beneath the sea off the northern coast of Ravounel. 69

Irori Lawful neutral god of history, knowledge, and self-perfection. Known as the Master of Masters. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 438

Irrisen A nation in northwestern Avistan. Known for its constant winter and the rule of the winter witches. 110–112

Isger A nation in southern central Avistan. Known as a vassal of Chelax and home to several goblin clans. 100–102

Isle of Erran A small island off the northern coast of Starstone Isle. It is home to Absalom's navy. 21

Isle of Terror A small island in the center of Lake Encarthan that serves as the Whispering Tyrant's center of operations. It is racked with terrible storms and home to undead horrors. 41

Jaha A massive walled city located in the northern portion of the Mwangi Expanse. 92

Jalmeray An island nation off the eastern coast of Garund. A home for immigrants from the distant region of Vudra. 77–79

jellyfish lamp* (item) 68

Jotun The language of giants and related creatures.

Katapesh A nation on the northeastern coast of Garund. Known for its prominent markets. 51–52

Kelish The language of the Keleshite people from the east.

Keleshite A human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region common among the nations of the Golden Road. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 430

Kellid A human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region, originating among the mountains and steppes of northern Avistan. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 430

Kho The wreckage of a flying city located in the northeast Mwangi Expanse. 93

Kibwe A trade city located in the eastern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 86–87

Kienek-Li An underwater gillman settlement near Starstone Isle. 69

Knights of Lastwall The remaining knights of former Lastwall, who endeavor to put an end to the Whispering Tyrant. 41

Kortos The island that Aroden raised along with the *Starstone* and on which Absalom was built. Also known as Starstone Isle. 14

Kyonin A nation in central Avistan. Known as the center of elven culture in Avistan. 127–128

Lake Encarthan A large lake located in central Avistan. A common route for trade among the nations of the region. 41

Lake Ocota A large lake located in the central portion of the Mwangi Expanse. 87–89

Lake of Mists and Veils A large lake in northeastern Avistan. 28

Lamashtu Chaotic evil goddess of madness, monsters, and nightmares. Known as the Mother of Monsters. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439

Lands of the Linnorm Kings A region in northwestern Avistan. Known for its harsh environs and its fierce leaders. 112–113

Lastwall A destroyed nation that was founded to watch over Gallowspire, the former prison of the lich Tar-Baphon. 40–41

Lastwall sentry* (archetype) 47

Lion Blade* (archetype) 131

Lion Blades A secretive group of spies believed to work to defend Taldor and its interests from enemies. 129

living monolith* (archetype) 59

lizardfolk Reptilian humanoids who are extremely adaptable and patient. They are sometimes known as iruxi. 92

Magaambya Golarion's oldest academy dedicated to arcane learning, located in the city of Nantambu. 89

magic warrior* (archetype) 95

Mana Wastes A region located in eastern Garund known for its areas of dead and wild magic. 79–80

Mauxi One of the major Mwangi ethnic subgroups, located primarily in Thuvia and the Barrier Wall mountains.

Mediogalti Island A large island off the northwestern coast of Garund. Home of the Red Mantis Assassins. 65–66

Mendev A nation located in northeastern Avistan. Home of the crusades against the demons of the Sarkoris Scar. 28–29

Molthune A nation located in central Avistan. Known for its dominant military influence and war with Nirmathas. 42

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Mordant Spire A strange tower located in the Steaming Sea, known as the home of the secretive Mordant Spire elves. 66–67

Mualijae The collective term for the three elven peoples located within the Mwangi Expanse. 92–93

Mwangi A name that encompasses multiple ethnicities hailing from the Mwangi Expanse. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 430

Mwangi The name for a common trade dialect of the Mwangi people.

Mzali A temple-city located on the southern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 88–89

Nantambu A city-state located on the western edge of the Mwangi Jungle. 89–90

Necril The language of ghouls and other intelligent undead.

Nethys Neutral god of magic. Known as the All-Seeing Eye. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439

New Thassilon A relatively new nation located in northwest Avistan. The home of displaced Thassilonians. 113–115

Nex A nation located on the eastern coast of Garund. The home of the archmage Nex and a center for arcane study. 80–81

Nidal A nation located along the southwest coast of Avistan. Known as a realm watched over by Zon-Kuthon. 102–103

Nidalese A human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region that is common in Nidal and the surrounding areas. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 430

Night Heralds A group dedicated to contacting sinister forces from the dark places between the stars.

Nirmathas A nation located in central Avistan. Known for its vast wilderness and war with Molthune. 43

Noctacula Chaotic neutral goddess of artists, exile, and midnight. Known as the Redeemer Queen. 114

Norgorber Neutral evil god of greed, murder, poison, and secrets. Known as the Reaper of Reputation. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439

Numeria A nation located in northeast Avistan. Known for its unique technology salvaged from a fallen starship. 29–30

Oprak A nation location in central Avistan. Known as the home of hobgoblins, and a land won by force. 44

Orcish The language of orcs and half-orcs.

Osibu An idyllic city located in the southern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse. 93

Osiriani The most widespread language in northern Garund. It is derived from Ancient Osiriani.

Osirion A nation in northeastern Garund. Holds countless tombs and temples from the great empire of Ancient Osirion. 53–54

Pathfinder agent* (archetype) 23

Pathfinder Society A globe-trotting group dedicated to exploration and the reclamation of lost relics. 17

pesh* (alchemical item) 52

Pharasma Neutral goddess of birth, death, fate and prophecy. Known as the Lady of Graves. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439

Prophecies of Kalistrade A philosophy dedicated to achieving wealth through deliberate conduct. 124, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 440

Qadira A nation located in southeast Avistan. The westernmost satrap state of the great Padishah Empire of Kelesh. 54–55

Rahadoum A nation located in northwest Garund. Known for its prohibition of religious practice of any kind. 55–56

Ravounel A young nation located in southwest Avistan. Known for its uprising against Cheliah and continued push for individual freedoms. 104–105

Razmir Lawful evil god of law, luxury, obedience, and the nation of Razmiran. Known as the Living God. 31

Razmiran A nation located in central Avistan. Known as the home of Razmir and his church. 30–31

Realm of the Mammoth Lords A region located in northern Avistan. A land of wilderness and dangerous megafauna. 115–116

Red Mantis A group of efficient assassins who serve the mantis god Achaekek and reside on Mediogalti Island. 65–66

Red Mantis assassin* (archetype) 71

River Kingdoms A region in northeast Avistan known for dozens of small kingdoms each vying to stake their claim on the land. 31–32

Rovagug Chaotic evil god of destruction, disaster, and wrath. Known as the Rough Beast. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439

runescarred* (archetype) 119

Sarenrae Neutral good goddess of healing, honesty, redemption, and the sun. Known as the Dawnflower. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439

Sarkoris Scar A region located in northern Avistan. The previous site of the demonic Worldwound. 32–33

Sczarni A group of tight-knit criminal families located in Varisia.

Sellen River A major river that flows through the Broken Lands and Shining Kingdoms regions. 33

Senghor A city-state located in the southwestern portion of the Mwangi Expanse that serves as an important port. 90

Shackles A region located on the western coast of Garund. Known for its rampant piracy. 67–68

Shadowtongue A language common among creatures from the Shadow Plane as well as Nidalese people.

Shelyn Neutral good goddess of art, beauty, love, and music. Known as the Eternal Rose. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 440

Shoanti A human ethnicity common along the Storval Plateau, the frontiers of Varisia, and beyond. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 430

Skald The language of the Ulfen people.

snowball* (spell) 112

Sodden Lands A region on the northwest coast of Garund ravaged by the Eye of Abendego. 93

Starstone Isle Another name for Kortos. 14

student of perfection* (archetype) 83

sun orchid elixir* (alchemical item) 55

swim fins* (item) 69

Taldan A human ethnicity widespread throughout Avistan and along southern Avistan in particular. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 431

Taldor A nation located in southeast Avistan. This great empire in decline seeks to reclaim former glory. 128–129

Tanglebriar A large swamp in southern Kyonin known as the domain of the demon lord Treerazer. 128

Tar-Baphon A necromancer killed by Aroden who rose as the lich-king known as the Whispering Tyrant and threatened the Inner Sea region for centuries before being imprisoned. Recently broke free to terrorize the region once more. 14, 38

Thassilonian The language of the people of Thassilon, now returned to prominence in New Thassilon.

tattoo (trait) A tattoo is a type of item that is drawn or cut into a creature's skin and usually takes the form of images or symbols.

Thuvia A nation located in north-central Garund. Known for its production of the sun orchid elixir. 56–57

Tian A group of human ethnicities originally hailing from the nations of Tian Xia and common along major Avistani trade routes, including through the Crown of the World. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 431

Tian Xia One of Golarion's continents. Located far to the east of the Inner Sea region, past Casmaron. 9

Tien The common trade language of the various Tian peoples.

Torag Lawful good god of the forge, protection, and strategy. Known as the Father of Creation. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 440

Ulfen A human ethnicity common among the northern reaches of Avistan. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 431

Urgathoa Neutral evil goddess of disease, gluttony, and undeath. Known as the Pallid Princess. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 440

Usaro A city located in the central Mwangi Jungle. 90–91

Ustalav A nation located in northern central Avistan. Countless terrors roam the region. 45

Varisia A region located in northwestern Avistan. Known as a frontier land and home to ancient Thassilonian ruins. 116–117

Varisian A human ethnicity common throughout Avistan, particularly in and around Ustalav and Varisia. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 431

Varisian The language of the Varisian people.

Verduran Forest A large forest located in southeast Avistan, nestled between Andoran, Galt, and Taldor. 129

Vidrian A young nation located along the western coast of Garund that broke free of oppressive colonial rule. 91–92

Vudra A vast peninsula in southeastern Casmaron. It is home of the Vudrani people.

Vudrani A common human ethnicity from Vudra, common in Jalmeray and surrounding regions. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 431

Vudrani The language of the Vudrani people.

Whispering Tyrant Another name for the lich Tar-Baphon. 14, 38

Whispering Way A group of cultists dedicated to spreading undeath and serving the lich Tar-Baphon. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 441

Worldwound An enormous rift that opened in the region of Sarkoris, allowing for the demonic hordes of the Abyss to spill forth and destroy the region. It has since been closed, and the demon-blighted land is now known as the Sarkoris Scar. 26, 32

Zenj One of the major Mwangi ethnic subgroups living throughout the majority of the Mwangi Expanse.

Zon-Kuthon Lawful evil god of darkness, envy, loss, and pain. Known as the Midnight Lord. *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 440

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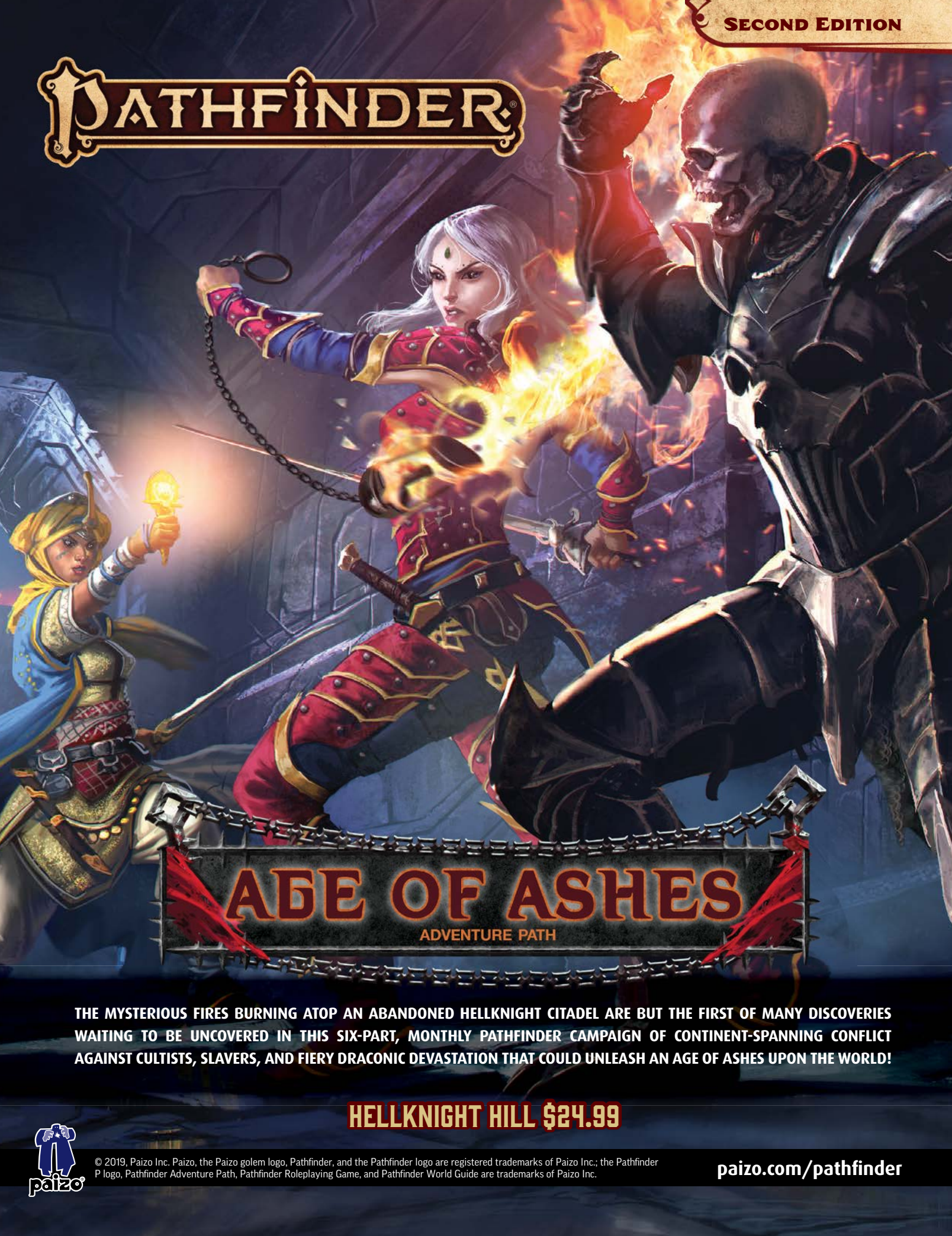
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