

QUODETH

You are a citizen of Quodeth, known throughout Thule as the City of Merchants, the City of a Hundred Bridges, the City of the Peacock . . . and the City of Thieves.

Quodeth lies at the mouth of the Quosa River, a strategic waterway that serves as the most vital trade route in all of Thule. It is rich, decadent, and corrupt, a city of fantastic wealth and shocking poverty. Quodeth is also quite old, and is home to mysterious temples and countless astrologers, fortune-tellers, and self-proclaimed seers. Character narratives that are well-suited for a Quodethi include Atlantean noble, free blade, guardian of the Nine, initiate of mysteries, panjandrum, Quodethi thief (naturally), sacred slayer, and soothsayer.

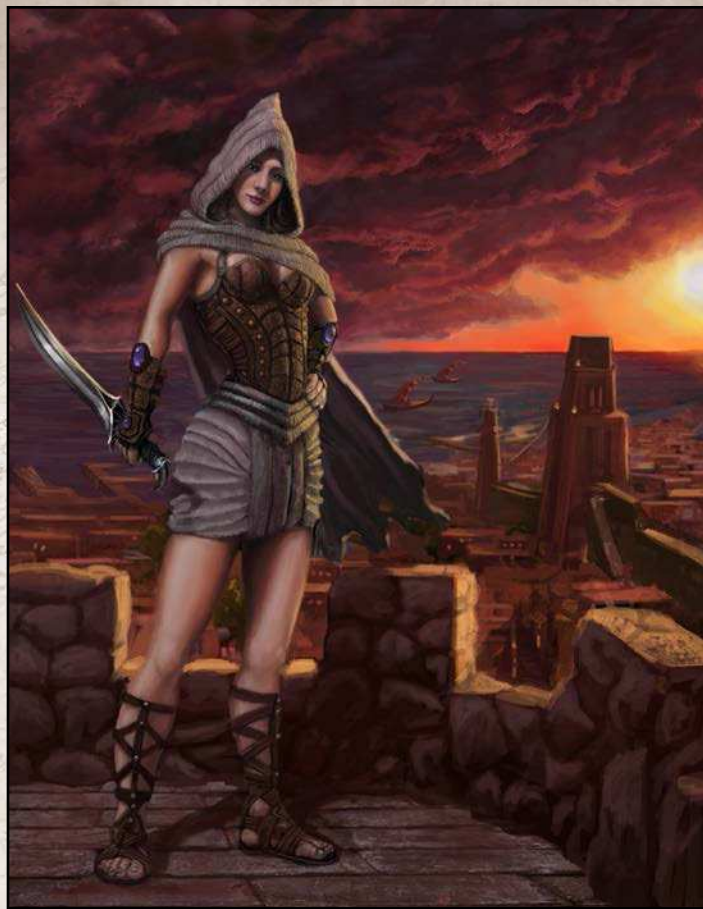
YOUR HOME

People from Quodeth (pronounced *kwoh-deth*) are known as Quodethi.

- Quodeth is the largest and richest of Thule's cities. It is located between the Kalayan Sea, the inland sea of Thule, and the Atlantean Ocean. A vast amount of trade flows through the city every day.
- Most Quodethi are humans of the Kalay ethnicity, but many of the noble houses still lay claim to Atlantean bloodlines. As a thriving center of trade, people from all over Thule visit Quodeth.
- The ruler of the city is the beautiful young queen Deyane Hazeda, a figurehead who is firmly guided by the Grand Vizier Ibland Posk and a royal council. However, the real power in Quodeth is in the hands of half a dozen powerful thieves' guilds.
- The Seven Knives are the strongest of Quodeth's thieves' guilds, numbering hundreds of toughs, cutpurses, assassins, and smugglers. Secret chapters of Seven Knives agents operate in most of Thule's major cities.
- The goddess Ishtar is regarded as Quodeth's special protector, but large temples dedicated to Mithra, Tarhun, and Set also stand within the city walls.

QUODETHI VALUES

Outsiders sometimes view Quodethi as a race of greedy, corrupt shopkeepers and thieves, devoid of honor and not to be trusted if there's a copper piece to be gained. It is true that the people of Quodeth value ambition and industriousness as the keys to building a good life for oneself, and that bribes flow like the waters of the River Quosa throughout the city—nothing important happens without someone's palm being greased. But Quodethi see wealth as a means to an end: Living the good life. Quodethi are sophisticated and unashamed about enjoying the pleasures in life, and those who can afford it are often hedonists of the first degree. Driven to seek success by any means, Quodeth's people are often highly superstitious and pay great attention to anything that might offer a glimpse of what fortune holds in the future. As a result, astrology and soothsaying are highly regarded professions in Quodeth.



MANNERISMS AND SAYINGS

Quodethi love flowery speech, exaggerated praise for others, and exaggerated humility when referring to themselves. For example, instead of saying, "I want . . ." a Quodethi might say something like, "Your humble servant begs . . ." and instead of saying, "I defeated the monster," a Quodethi would instead say, "Fortune smiled upon me, and delivered my foe into my hands."

Typical Quodethi sayings or turns of phrase include:

- "A rich man never wants for friends." By this, a Quodethi means that you should be wary of people who are drawn to you only by your success.
- "That canal has many bridges." Scores of canals crisscross Quodeth, and most are bridged by multiple streets. This simply means that there are many ways to solve any given problem.
- "Gold holds no quarrels." The common wisdom in Quodeth is that it's foolish to let a slight or wrong from the past stand in the way of making a deal today, although a Quodethi would certainly be on guard when dealing with someone who previously dealt in bad faith.



BEYOND QUODETH'S WALLS

Since Quodeth is a major trading power with interests in many distant lands, most educated Quodethi are fairly well informed about the far corners of Thule. However, your fellow citizens tend to assume that things that happen in other lands don't really matter to Quodeth.

- Atlantis sank beneath the waves 300 years ago, but Atlantean culture and noble families still hold sway in cities such as Katagia, Orech, and Quodeth itself.
- Many of Quodeth's merchants import ivory, furs, gemstones, and spices from barbaric lands elsewhere in Thule: the wind-swept tundra of the Lands of the Long Shadow, the savage shores of the Kalayan Sea, or the exotic jungles of distant Dhar Mesh.
- Ruins of pre-human civilizations can be found throughout Thule. The serpentmen ruled over much of the Kalayan Sea region. Primitive brutes such as cyclopes, minotaurs, and troglodytes lurk in the Zinandar Mountains of eastern Thule.
- Most of Thule is temperate, but the northern portions of the continent—the Lands of the Long Shadow—are slowly falling under the dominion of the glaciers.
- Corsairs and slavers plague the waters of the Kalayan Sea, and barbaric raiders harry the coasts of the Atlantean Ocean. Quodeth maintains a strong fleet to guard against these threats.

THREATS AND ENEMIES

Quodeth is relatively strong and secure. Few enemies are in position to directly threaten your homeland, but you worry about the threats you don't know about yet. Your natural enemies include rival cities, barbarians, and cults hidden within Quodeth's own walls.

- Rival Cities:** Katagia and Lomar are significant rivals to Quodeth. Each would like to sweep Quodeth's trade from the seas and make itself the dominant city of Thule. Lomar in particular is dangerous, since it has warred with (and destroyed) other rivals in recent years.
- Barbarians:** It seems that every few years some new chieftain or khan arises in the hinterlands and unites the tribes of Dhar Mesh or the Lands of the Long Shadow into a mighty horde. Some tribes such as the Hurgans or the Ammurs are friendly to Quodeth's traders, but every year it seems there are more savages and raiders, and their incursions grow ever bolder.
- Cults:** Quodeth's alleyways and buried ruins are riddled with cults worshiping terrible, inhuman gods. Most are madmen likely to bring about their own destruction by meddling with things not of this world, but what if one day the stars are right, and their prayers are heard?

KATAGIA

Your home city is Katagia, the Last Bastion of Atlantis. Here the learning and lore of the mightiest empire ever known are still held in high regard, but the Atlanteans are a race in decline. Whether some memory of the glory of Atlantis survives into the Age of Man or follows the sunken empire into darkness and ruin remains to be seen.

Katagia lies in western Thule, on the southern coast of the Nar Highlands. It is a strongly fortified city-state whose walls and towers were built by Atlanteans at the height of their empire. While much Atlantean learning is preserved in Katagia's vaults and scriptoriums, the city also recalls the old martial traditions of Atlantis with spectacular gladiatorial games. Good choices for Katagian character narratives include Atlantean noble, bearer of the Black Book, Katagian pit fighter (of course), myrmidon, and occult scientist.

YOUR HOME

Natives of Katagia (pronounced *kah-TAY-jee-ab*) are known as Katagians.

- Katagia was the capital of the Atlantean colonies on Thule. Even though Atlantis was swallowed by the sea three hundred years ago, Katagia remains the center of Atlantean culture and learning on the primeval continent.
- More people of Atlantean descent live in Katagia than in any other city of Thule, but there are large minorities of native Thulean races—especially Dhari and Kalays—present in the city.
- Katagian politics are complex and contentious. The Saursanists are closely aligned with the ruling house of Lord Protectors and believe Katagia can best preserve Atlantean advances by keeping itself apart from Thule. The Diluvials argue for founding a new monarchy and subjugating Thule to Atlantean dominion. The New Katagians want to shed the ways of Atlantis altogether.
- Gladiatorial games are Katagia's pride, but in recent years they have become bloodier and more brutal—a sign of civic decadence, perhaps.
- Occult studies are shunned in many other cities, but Katagians value knowledge of all kinds. Arcane students can pursue their interests here with few worries about the disapproval of the authorities, and the city's libraries and scriptoriums hold a vast wealth of ancient lore.

KATAGIAN VALUES

Atlanteans are the most literate of Thule's peoples, with long traditions of scholarship, scientific inquiry, philosophy, poetry, and drama. Most adults can read and write, and are familiar with the great epics of their culture. Katagians hold knowledge in the highest regard, and honor individuals who have achieved mastery of any skill or art. Katagia preserves many of the old noble lines of Atlantis and is more class-conscious than most other realms of Thule, but is also highly meritocratic at the same time. Common-born citizens of Katagia enjoy many rights and privileges before the law, one of the prouder legacies of ancient Atlantis. Not even the most powerful noble houses can trample on these rights.

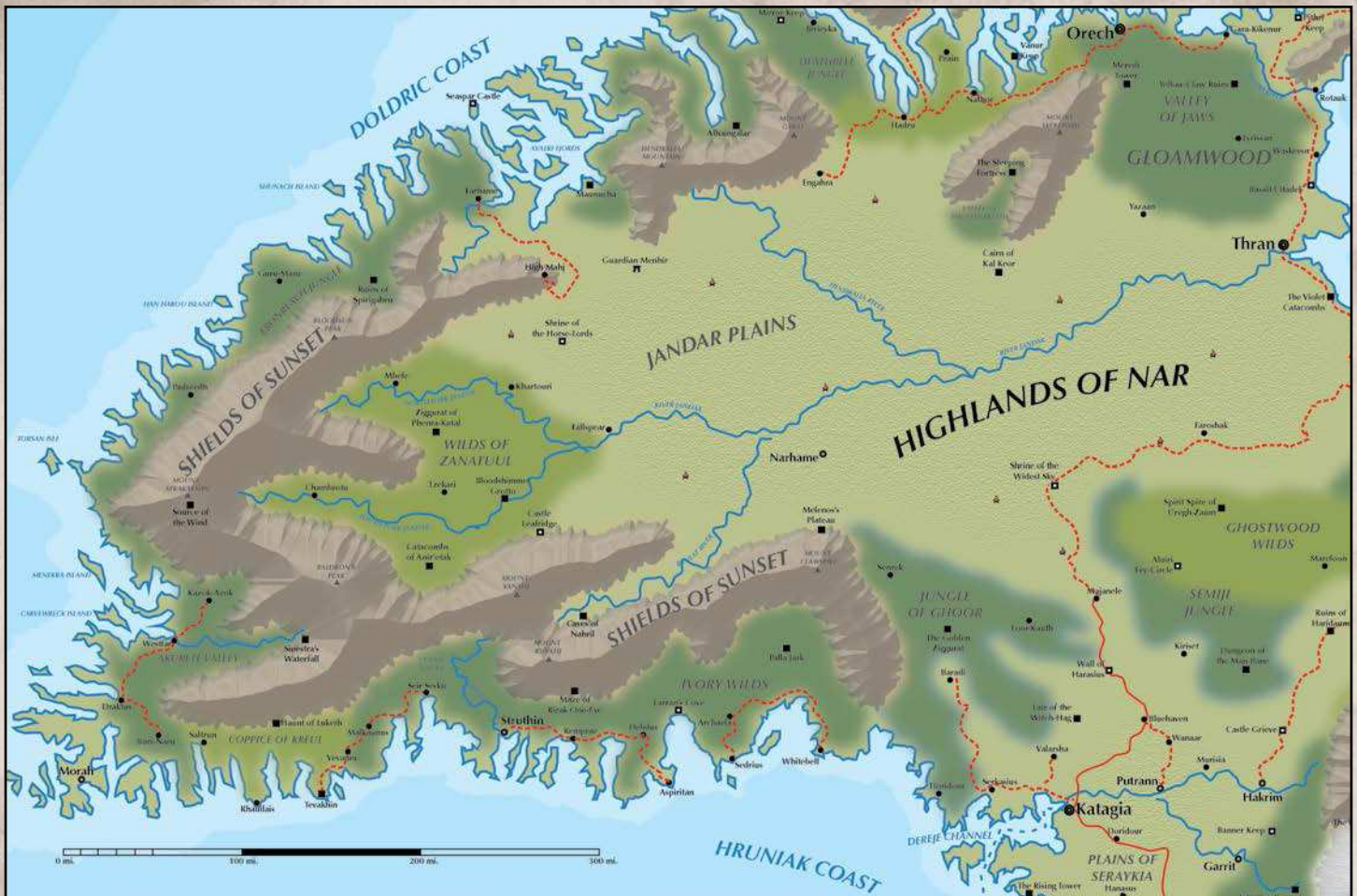


MANNERISMS AND SAYINGS

As you might expect, Atlantean manners and mores are the rule in Katagia. Katagians delight in debate and discourse, and think nothing of engaging in fierce arguments that might bring other people to blows. They are also fond of using famous characters or events from the city's epics to illustrate their points, which can be difficult for strangers who aren't familiar with those works.

Typical Katagian expressions include:

- "Build the house how you like, but save the roof for last." The Katagian love of learning means that they admire individuals who set out to master new skills. However, they also think the best way to master new skills is to pay attention to tried and true methods.
- "Pride crowns a thousand kings." Katagians believe that dignity and honor cannot be given or taken away; they are a choice. Do the best that you can do, and self-respect is an ample reward.
- "Stones speak to the wise." Educated people can infer things from signs or evidence that less-experienced people may not realize are important. The saying originally referred to the ruined walls and buildings of ancient times and what scholars could learn from them.



BEYOND KATAGIA

As the former capital of Atlantis's empire in Thule, Katagia retains links to many former Atlantean colonies. The average Katagian is well acquainted with the major cities of the continent and prospers from this ongoing trade. However, Katagians have a blind spot: They know little of Thule's barbaric interior and rarely venture far from the continent's coastal settlements.

- Atlantis sank beneath the waves 300 years ago, but Katagia was home to many Atlantean colonists and administrators who maintained Atlantean control of the city. Atlantean culture (and bloodlines) can also be found in Orech or Quodeth.
- East of Katagia lie the Claws of Imystrahl, a rugged coastline of islets and fjordlands with many old settlements and small city-states. The elven city of Imystrahl has fallen into decadence, and Katagia is well-positioned to bring the Claws under Atlantean dominion.
- The Nar Highlands lie north and west of Katagia. These plains are home to many strong and warlike barbarian tribes, including the Kal Keori and the Narthans. Great hordes have formed in Nar in the past, but none have come close to breaching Katagia's walls.
- The coastlands around Katagia are temperate, but the interior of Thule is filled with sweltering jungles and swamps, while the northern marches are slowly becoming consumed by glaciers. The ice is also advancing in the high vales of the nearby Starcrown Mountains.
- Katagia is one of the three great powers of Thule; the others are martial Lomar, and mercantile Quodeth. Neither of these rivals can match Katagia's learning and culture, of course.

THREATS AND ENEMIES

Katagia is one of the stronger cities in Thule, and massive fortifications protect its landward approaches. Unfortunately, the walls are needed—barbarian hordes and savage raiders from the highlands of Nar, the jungles of Dhar Mesh, or the distant shores of Hellumar pose a serious threat to Katagia.

The Black Circle: The sinister city of Thran is under the dominion of the Black Circle, a society of masked mages who harbor dreams of dominion over all of Thule. Katagia is one of the few realms in Thule that comes close to matching the Black Circle in magical might. Because of that, Katagia is the object of many Black Circle schemes, even though most Katagians have little concern about events in far-off Thran.

Atlantean Lore: Many dangerous artifacts and magical secrets survived the fall of Atlantis. Some of these have been preserved in the vaults of Katagia's noble houses. With every passing generation, more of these old devices or tomes are forgotten, including some that hold terrible power and should be guarded carefully.

Factional Strife: The various political factions vying for control of the city are growing more distrustful of one another and are more inclined to seek confrontation than compromise. The factions constantly vie for the support of important nobles or compete to place their supporters in powerful civic offices. Tactics such as blackmail, espionage, and assassination are beginning to appear.

IMYSTRAHL

Your home city is Imystrahl (pronounced ihm-iss-STRALL), the City of the Black Lotus. The elven realms that once wrested a continent from the cold talons of the serpentmen have long since fallen into ruin elsewhere in Thule, but Imystrahl still stands . . . for now. The last city of the elves is in steep decline, and sinks deeper into decadence and decrepitude with each passing year. It is doubtful that anyone—prince, mage, rebel, or hero—could now strike the spark needed to arouse Imystrahl from its fatal slumber.

The days of the great elven heroes are long past, but from time to time Imystrahl's failing houses give rise to individuals who are not content to dream away their lives. Some are atavisms who were simply born in the wrong age, while others possess ambition, curiosity, or interests too great for Imystrahl to contain. Character narratives suited for Imystrahlan characters include bearer of the Black Book, free blade, myrmidon, occult scientist, and star-lore adept.

YOUR HOME

About three-quarters of Imystrahl's people are elves. The rest are a mix of half-elves, who are free, and humans and others, most of whom are enslaved.

- Most of Imystrahl's elves are frequent users of the dream-inducing narcotic known as the Black Milk, an extract made from jungle flowers. Under the pernicious influence of the Black Milk, the city's leaders and nobles spend their days in drugged slumber, entranced by their visions.
- While the elves of the noble houses dream their dreams, much of the work of administering the city and staving off its decline falls on the half-elven castes. They are not as rich as the old elven houses, and therefore cannot afford to indulge themselves in the Black Milk.
- Imystrahl is among the oldest of Thule's cities, and traces its history back almost five thousand years ago. It was one of the strongest powers in Thule for some time, but was eclipsed by Atlantis a thousand years ago and has been in decline ever since.
- Careless summonings, ill-advised experiments, and reckless pacts down through the centuries have left many horrible monsters abroad in the city. Imystrahl is not a good city to wander or explore.
- Dangerous new cults have come to power in the last few years. The most prominent is the cult of Nyarlathotep, which established itself around forty years ago and is linked with the appearance of the Black Milk in the city.

IMYSTRAHLAN VALUES

Once upon a time Imystrahlans admired martial excellence, magical learning, and work of great skill in many different crafts and arts, but those days are gone. In this age, the city's denizens are given over to the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures and drug-induced dreams. Everyday existence is unbearable; a fatal ennui lies over the city, and the Imystrahlans seek meaning and purpose in ever-stranger sensations and experiences. Most Imystrahlans are jaded, cruel, and unbelievably narcissistic, but the best among them fight to preserve the rich traditions of elven culture against the degeneracy poisoning the realm.

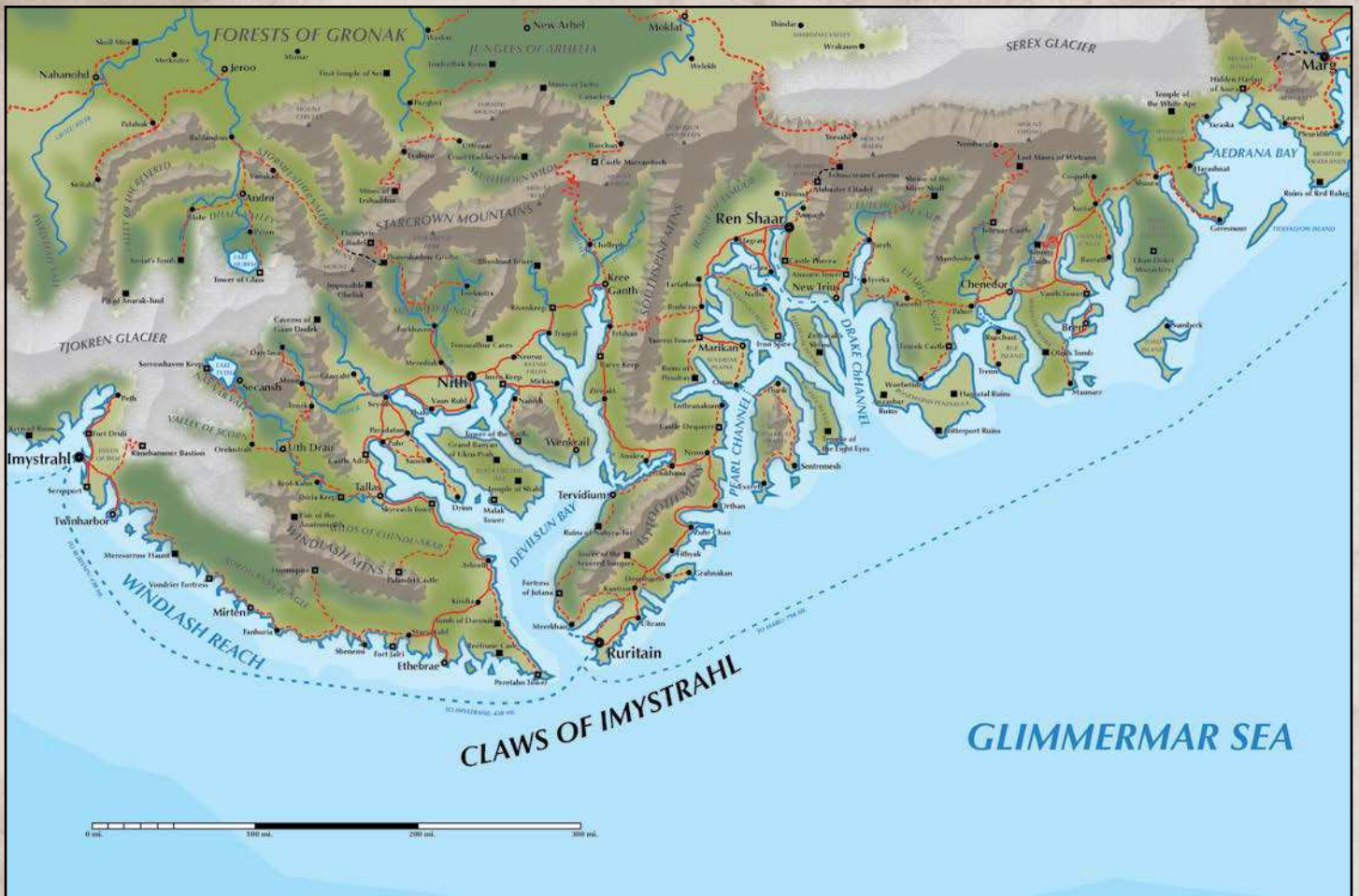


MANNERISMS AND SAYINGS

Most Imystrahlans have a languid, dreamy manner. Few things stir them to anger or wake their passions. They are maddeningly imprecise and meandering in conversation, rambling off into reflections or ruminations completely unrelated to the matter at hand.

Typical Imystrahlan expressions include:

- "Tomorrow will bring a tomorrow of its own." Worrying about the future is pointless; most troubles will work themselves out.
- "Each mile lessens the giant." Great troubles in other lands matter little to Imystrahl.
- "The stars shall reveal that in time." Fate is inescapable; each triumph or tragedy was ordained long ago by a person's choices and the workings of chance.



BEYOND IMYSTRAHL

Imystrahl is isolated from the rest of Thule by the sheer peaks of the Starcrown Mountains, a nearly impassable barrier. Its only link to the human realms of the continent is the sea. Long ago the city's war fleets commanded the southern coast of Thule, but that day is long past. Few Imystrahlans travel abroad in the current age.

- Imystrahl is located in the region of fjordlands and islets known as the Claws of Imystrahl, in south-central Thule. This is the oldest and most heavily settled part of the continent.
- Humans have overtaken elves to become the dominant race of Thule. The human cultures of Thule fall into two categories: Wicked city-states and bloodthirsty barbarian tribes.
- Major human powers near Imystrahl include Katagia, Marg, and Quodeth. Katagia is a remnant Atlantean colony in western Thule, while Quodeth is a mercantile city-state in eastern Thule. Marg, however, is a warlike city ruled by slave-lords, and it lies only two days' sail away.
- Most other elven realms have long since vanished, but there are rumors that some of the people of Sersidyen still linger in the Lands of the Long Shadow.
- Magic (especially arcane magic) is distrusted throughout Thule. Many humans are therefore fearful of elves and their familiarity with the arcane arts. No such primitive superstition lingers in Imystrahl, of course.

THREATS AND ENEMIES

Formidable natural features protect Imystrahl. To the north, the 10,000-foot Starcrown Mountains cut off the elven realm from the rest of Thule. To the south, the maze-like fjordlands known as the Claws of Imystrahl have scattered and frustrated many would-be invaders.

Internal Collapse: The pervasive lassitude of a citizenry addicted to the Black Milk and the shocking decay of social order brought about by the influence of sinister cults threaten to bring Imystrahl to complete ruin. Many people can stir themselves from their drugged dreams only through games of exquisite cruelty or unspeakable orgies of wickedness. It is far from clear that Imystrahl is worth saving.

Sea Raiders: While Imystrahl is all but immune to overland attack, barbarian sea-raiders are a source of concern. The ice-reavers of Nim or Ullath regularly bring large raiding fleets from the Sea of Mists to harry Thule's southern coasts, and sometimes attack Imystrahl's shores.

Marg and Katagia: As Imystrahl's defenses crumble, factions in the nearby cities of Katagia and Marg look on Imystrahl and consider whether the city of the elves is ready to be sacked. Control of Imystrahl by a vigorous human power would bring the entire region under the dominion of the city-state that succeeded in the attack.

DHAR MESH

Your homeland is Dhar Mesh, a vast region of forests, jungles, hills, and swamps that lies in the center of Thule at the western end of the Kalayan Sea. Even by the standards of Thule, this is a savage land. Huge expanses of jungle are virtually unexplored by civilized peoples. Dangerous beasts such as giant sloths, great vipers, and fearsome saber-tooth cats stalk the shadows of Dhar Mesh, along with the occasional survivor from millions of years past. The warlike Dhari tribes are no less deadly than the predators that roam their wild home; many are cannibals, headhunters, or devotees of hideous jungle gods.

Many of the tribes of Dhar Mesh are isolated or reclusive and have little contact with the rest of Thule, but others engage in trade with neighboring lands. Young men and women of the jungle tribes sometimes set out to see for themselves if the stories about civilized folk and cities are true, or are driven out into the wider world by misfortune or tragedy. Character narratives appropriate for Dhar Mesh include the beastfriend, Dhari hunter, free blade, jungle trader, sacred slayer, and tribal outcast.

YOUR HOME

The barbaric peoples of Dhar Mesh (pronounced *dar mesh*) are known as Dhari. There are few major cities in this region other than ancient Ikath and brooding Thran. Their people have little in common with the tribal Dhari.

- Major Dhari tribes in Dhar Mesh include the Bolotanga (a tribe noted for its reverence of the forest spirits) and the Kyr, vicious headhunters who are hated by all other people.
- Most of Dhar Mesh consists of trackless forest and jungle, but its eastern border is the vast Swamps of Phoor. These lands are home to many huge prehistoric beasts not found elsewhere in Thule.
- Ancient ruins from prehuman empires are common in Dhar Mesh. The rakshasas are gone now, but serpentmen still linger in some of their ancient places.
- The tribal peoples of Dhar Mesh have little to do with the gods of the city-dwellers. Instead, they revere the spirits of the forest, and follow the teachings of shamans and druids.

DHARI VALUES

Dhari have a highly developed code of personal honor. They believe that courage, honesty, and respect for the spirits of the forest are the measures of manhood (or womanhood). Even a tribe as wicked and depraved as the Kyr hold to a version of these values, although the Kyr tend to equate ferocity with courage and choose to venerate dark and savage spirits with bloody sacrificial rites. It's important to remember that honesty means that Dhari disdain lying—taking things from other people is fine, so long as one does so without speaking falsehoods or breaking promises.



MANNERISMS AND SAYINGS

Dhari are stoic, reserved, and taciturn, especially around strangers. Most Dhari warriors make a habit of never using two words where one word will do, and regard excessive talking as a sign of foolishness. Outsiders sometimes find them grim, humorless, or even sullen, but in truth Dhari have a lively sense of humor—it's just laconic in the extreme, and a small smile suffices where other people might fall into peals of laughter. Of course, Dhari can talk at great length when necessary, but they often couch important points in the form of long stories or parables. They do not interrupt each other, and they expect to not be interrupted.

Typical Dhari expressions include:

- “Better to catch the scent of the sloth than to let him catch yours.” The abominable sloth of the Dhari forests gives off a foul stench, but it is a powerful and notoriously ill-tempered beast which might be provoked into a killing rage simply by scenting a hunter. A wise hunter stays downwind of the beast and puts up with its stink. This phrase means that discomfort is acceptable when the stakes are high.
- “Anger is silent.” Dhari don't pay much attention to boasts or threats, only deeds. When faced with a challenge, Dhari don't complain or protest—they act.
- “Fletch your own arrows.” Dhari value self-reliance. This advice simply means that if you do something for yourself, you'll know whether it was done well or not.



BEYOND DHAR MESH

The tribes of Dhar Mesh are isolated and distrustful of outsiders. Few of your fellow Dhari leave your jungle homeland, and little is known of the outside world. The best sources of information about the rest of Thule are the tales of the jungle traders, merchants from the city-states who come to Dhar Mesh to trade.

- Ikath is the nearest city to Dhar Mesh, and lies on the shore of the Kalayan Sea. From Ikath, a traveler can sail to distant lands such as Droum, Lomar, or even distant Quodeth. The Ikathans are weak and decadent, but they are fair traders and usually respect Dhari ways.
- Thran lies at the north edge of Dhar Mesh. It is ruled by the Black Circle, a caste of hooded mages who dabble in all sorts of foul magic. Thranish soldiers and settlers are invading Dhari lands, and deadly skirmishes with local Dhari tribes are common.
- Many Dhari warriors travel to the more civilized parts of Thule to take service as mercenaries or bodyguards. Communities of semi-civilized Dhari expatriates can be found in most cities of the Inner Sea and the southern coasts.
- Corsairs and slavers from the Kalayan Sea often harry the shores of Dhar Mesh. Dhari captured by slavers are often carried off to distant cities such as Marg or Quodeth, and rarely find their way home.

THREATS AND ENEMIES

Dhar Mesh is the most savage wilderness in Thule. Impenetrable jungles, steaming swamps, and deadly beasts of a hundred different kinds make this a dangerous landscape indeed.

Beastmen: While some Dhari tribes nurse ancient feuds with other Dhari, these old wars are nothing compared to the enmity all Dhari hold for Thule's beastmen, and vice versa. Dhari loathe the wickedness and brutality of the beastmen, and the beastmen hate the Dhari for their cleverness and skill. When Dhari and beastmen meet, bloodshed is usually immediate.

Crimson Slavers: The Crimson Slavers of Marg frequently raid the eastern marches of Dhar Mesh. Dhari fiercely resist these raids, but their notions of honor mean that those who fall into the hands of slavers are broken in spirit and relatively docile in captivity. Accordingly, the Margish slavers regard Dhari slaves as especially valuable.

Plague Nomads: Some terrible evil lurks in the mountain vales beyond the Forest of Gronak. Tribal warriors infected with a terrible disease roam southern Dhar Mesh, driven to attack all in their path. Red, alien eyeballs are embedded in their oozing sores, and they seek to infect others who fall into their hands.

KAL-ZINAN

Your home is the city of Kal-Zinan, a dwarven stronghold in the eastern mountains of Thule. Your people are fearsome warriors, tough mercenaries, and master smiths who hold a secret of great power: The secret of ironworking. Since the destruction of Atlantis, the dwarves are the only people who can forge arms and armor from iron or steel. As you might expect, these weapons are highly prized throughout Thule, but dwarves do not sell their best work—iron is a gift that must be earned.

Guarded and reclusive, dwarves form few friendships with people of other races. Few venture alone into human lands—when dwarven mercenaries take service with human lords or dwarven smiths bring their wares to human markets, they travel in large companies and keep to themselves. As a result, wandering dwarven freebooters are scarce indeed in the primeval continent. Narratives suitable for a character from Kal-Zinan include the guardian of the Nine, myrmidon, sacred slayer, soothsayer, and tribal outcast.

YOUR HOME

The people of Kal-Zinan are dwarves. Few individuals of other races are permitted to reside in the City of the Iron Gate, although visitors are permitted to stay as long as they have business to transact.

- Kal-Zinan lies in the volcanic Zinandar Mountains. Its main connection to human lands is the Road of Smoking Waters, which passes through wide geyser fields outside the city gates.
- Dwarves prefer to take their wares abroad instead of receive foreign merchants at Kal-Zinan. Companies of coppersmiths, jewelers, and armorers regularly visit human cities and the more trustworthy barbarian tribes.
- Dwarves are pious folk and are careful to honor the gods. They regard Tarhun, Nergal, and Kishar as the special patrons of their race.
- Dwarven master-smiths do not sell iron weapons or armor to non-dwarves, but sometimes bestow them as gifts for great services. Sometimes a master-smith offers to make an iron weapon for a legendary hero who hasn't actually done any service at all for the dwarves, simply for the prestige of arming a famous warrior.

ZINANDAN VALUES

Hard work is the measure of any dwarf. Dwarves believe that anything worth doing is worth doing well, and anything done well has a value that can never be measured in coin alone. Masterful works in any craft are in fact too valuable to trade, and can only be given as gifts. Outsiders sometimes think that dwarves are stingy and hoarders of coin since they won't pay for good work and dislike paying too much for ordinary work, but in fact dwarves can be amazingly generous. They delight in giving princely gifts to friends and allies who will appreciate the work that went into the making of the gift.



MANNERISMS AND SAYINGS

Dwarves guard their words with care, and are famed for their iron self-control. People in other lands say that a beautiful song or an unbearable tragedy might “bring a tear to the eyes of a dwarf” not because dwarves are heartless, but because they rarely show what they feel inside.

Typical Zinandan sayings include:

- “A good smith knows the measure of his metal.” This is the dwarven version of the old saw that you can't make a good knife from bad steel. Dwarves see it a little differently, though—a clumsy smith can ruin perfectly good metal, while a good smith makes the most of what he's got.
- “A dwarf is as big as his heart.” As you might expect, dwarves place little importance on physical stature or even high rank—greatness comes from something deeper.
- “The iron remembers the anvil.” Every blow or injury suffered in life shapes a dwarf (or anyone else, for that matter). They may not be pleasant at the time, but the blows of life make a dwarf stronger and give him or her purpose.



BEYOND KAL-ZINAN

Dwarves from Kal-Zinan trade in nearby cities and lands such as Quodeth, Droum, and Ammurath. When they go abroad, they travel in large and well-armed companies of merchants or mercenaries. They are well acquainted with the lands of eastern Thule, but know less about the lands on the far shore of the Inner Sea.

- The southern portion of the Zinandar Mountains was once home to the ancient monster kingdom of Vhaug. The people of Quodeth and Hurhun defeated Vhaug long ago, but the ruins of minotaur holds and cyclopean keeps can still be found near Kal-Zinan.
- Quodeth is the leading mercantile power among the human cities, and the most important trading partner for Kal-Zinan. Lomar is the strongest military power in Thule, but Lomar's destruction of Hurhun—a close ally of the dwarven city—has not been forgotten by the dwarves.
- The Zinandar Mountains are temperate, but northeast portion of Thule is slowly being swallowed by advancing glaciers. The lands now threatened by the ice are known as the Lands of the Long Shadow.
- Kal-Zinan is on good terms with the Riders of Hurgan, the major barbarian tribe of eastern Thule.

THREATS AND ENEMIES

Kal-Zinan is a strong city, but it has few friends in Thule.

Cyclopes and Minotaurs: When the dwarves arrived in Thule, they seized the vales of the Zinandar Mountains for their home, battling crude kingdoms of cyclopes, minotaurs, and troglodytes for control of the mountains. Your people won, but tribes of these savages still lurk in the remote valleys and plot their revenge.

Marg and Lomar: Kal-Zinan has long maintained a strict neutrality in the affairs of other Thulean cities, happily selling arms and mercenaries to all who can pay. But Lomar sacked and destroyed the city of Hurhun, a longtime trading partner of Kal-Zinan, while Margish slavers often ambush dwarves traveling away from the safety of the city.

Golden Sea Brotherhood: The corsairs of the Golden Sea Brotherhood pose a serious threat to trade along the eastern shore of the Inner Sea. The corsairs cannot strike directly at Kal-Zinan, of course, but many caravans and galleys bound for the City of the Iron Gate have been sacked by the sea-reavers.

THE THOUSAND TEETH

Your homeland is the wild northern coasts and mountains of Thule. This cold and misty wilderness is known as the Thousand Teeth for the innumerable islets and seastacks that dot its shores, and is home to savage beasts and even more savage barbarians.

Of all the peoples of Thule, none are more likely to wander far from their homeland or take service in distant cities than the fierce tribesmen of the Thousand Teeth. The only natural resources abundant in the Thousand Teeth are fish, game, and bad weather, and those do not lend themselves to keeping restless warriors close to home. Blood feuds between rival tribes (or even family members) make it even more likely for a young warrior to leave. Most who set out for other lands find few reasons to come back. Narratives suited for a character from the Thousand Teeth include beastfriend, free blade, Golden Sea corsair, ice reaver, Katagian pit fighter, and tribal outcast.

YOUR HOME

Natives of the Thousand Teeth are barbarians, most of Nimothan descent. There are no large cities in this region, but many small villages and fortified halls where chieftains rule over a few score warriors.

- Generations ago, your people were driven from their original home—the great isle of Nimoth—by the approaching glaciers. The Nimothans have set about carving out a new home on the coasts of Thule.
- The closest thing to a city in this area is Nim, the City of Reavers. It's a sprawling, violent town where raiders go to sell their plunder and throw away fortunes on drink, women, and games of chance.
- Your people are known as tough fighters throughout Thule, and many of your friends and kinsmen have gone off at one time or another to sell their swords in the decadent cities of the south. Those who return come back rich with loot and wild tales of civilized ways.
- Most Nimothans aren't very pious, but you regard gods such as Tarhun or Nergal—deities of storm and battle—as the patrons of your people. They are strong gods for a strong people.

NIMOTHAN VALUES

Nimothans are brave (often recklessly so), impulsive, and expressive. They laugh loudly, boast extravagantly, love passionately, and in the face of loss, grieve terribly. They speak plainly and say what's on their minds, but that doesn't mean they are always truthful—Nimothans see life as a competition, and strive to win by any means necessary. If an adversary is slow-witted enough to fall for a bald-faced lie, that's his or her own fault. Nimothans are quick to fight and can fly into a rage with the slightest provocation, but they rarely hold grudges. However, they see little honor in drubbing weaker victims, especially if the weaker person shows the courage to stand up for themselves.



MANNERISMS AND SAYINGS

Nimothans are loud and direct in speech, and quick to act—if you want to start a brawl with a Nimothan, one insult is usually sufficient to provoke an all-out assault of fists, feet, and teeth. They enjoy wild boasts and bawdy times, but once they've sworn to something, they would rather die than be proved a liar.

Typical Nimothan expressions include:

- “My hair does not smell of smoke.” This Nimothan boast means that instead of lounging around the firepit in the chieftain's hall, he or she is out in the world doing things.
- “He owes me a tooth.” A Nimothan who believes he or she has been insulted or lied about sees one simple remedy—knocking out the offender's teeth.
- “No lamb for the lazy wolf.” Nimothans don't raid other folk because they are lazy—they raid because they are eager to test their strength against others, and their lands are hard.



BEYOND THE THOUSAND TEETH

Most of Thule's barbarians have little contact with the world outside of their homelands, isolated by vast stretches of dangerous wilderness and hostile tribes. However, the Nimothans of the Thousand Teeth frequently voyage to distant lands to trade, plunder, or simply explore, and are therefore surprisingly well-informed about lands beyond their own.

- The islands of Hellumar and Nimoth are falling into the grip of endless winter, as is the northern reaches of Thule. Only a few generations ago these were rich and fertile realms, but now they are desolate wastelands of snow and ice.
- Two great naval powers guard the coasts of southern Thule from Nimothan raiding fleets—Katagia in the west, and Quodeth in the east. These cities are rich and strong enough to keep even the mightiest barbarian hordes at bay.
- Many Nimothan warriors sell their swords to the city-states of southern Thule. Realms such as Droum, Ikath, Thran, Katagia, and Quodeth pay well for Nimothan fighters.
- The coastlands of the Thousand Teeth are cold and misty, but the interior of Thule consists of tropical forests and steaming swamps. The great jungle of Dhar Mesh—home to savage tribes every bit as fierce and warlike as the Nimothans—isolates the Thousand Teeth from the lands to the south.

THREATS AND ENEMIES

The people of the Thousand Teeth are divided into many tribes; vicious feuds between Nimothan tribes are commonplace. In addition to each other, the people of the Thousand Teeth count the following as enemies:

Kang, the Pale Death: The implacable glaciers of the north have already swallowed the homeland of the Nimothan people. Now the great glacier in northeast Thule—Kang, the Pale Death—is likewise on the march, advancing into the neighboring lands with each passing year. There is an active malevolence at work in the glacier's advance, but how can one fight a glacier?

Giants: Most people of the southern cities believe the giants of Thule are long gone, but you know otherwise. Hill giants and frost giants still linger in the remote parts of the Thousand Teeth, and they hate humans. Sometimes they gather in large bands to destroy human settlements too close to their lands.

Thran: The city of Thran is ruled by a cabal of wizards known as the Black Circle. Meddlers and opportunists, the wizards of the Black Circle are eager to bring the disorganized tribes of the Thousand Teeth under their dominion.