



TAL'DOREI

CAMPAIGN SETTING



BY MATTHEW MERCER
WITH JAMES HAECK



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WRITING AND DESIGN: MATTHEW MERCER WITH JAMES HAECK

ADDITIONAL CONTENT: JOSEPH CARRIKER AND STEVE KENSON

DEVELOPMENT: JOSEPH CARRIKER

EDITING: JENNIFER LAWRENCE AND EVAN SASS **PROOFREADING:** CAROLINE PITT

ART DIRECTION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN: HAL MANGOLD **COVER ART:** AARON RILEY **CARTOGRAPHY:** ANDY LAW

INTERIOR ART: CONCEPTOPOLIS, BIAGIO D'ALESSANDRIO, JOHN ANTHONY DI GIOVANNI, KENT DAVIS JR, STANISLAV DIKOLENKO, CLAUDIA IANNCIELLO, SVETOSLAV PETROV, AND ANDREY VASILCHENKO

PUBLISHER: CHRIS PRAMAS

GREEN RONIN STAFF: JOSEPH CARRIKER, CRYSTAL FRASIER, JAYM GATES, STEVE KENSON, NICOLE LINDROOS, HAL MANGOLD, JACK NORRIS, CHRIS PRAMAS, DONNA PRIOR, EVAN SASS, MALCOLM SHEPPARD, OWEN K.C. STEPHENS, DYLAN TEMPLAR, AND BARRY WILSON

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3815 S. Othello St.
Suite 100 #311
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Tal'Dorei, the first of (hopefully) a number of campaign guides and world books within my own crazy creation, Exandria. This world was born as a natural evolution of a homebrew one-shot game that spiraled into an ongoing campaign, and eventually the unexpected phenomenon of our live-play stream *Critical Role*. Never in a million years would I have ever anticipated the attention our little *D&D* game would acquire, let alone the extensive level of world building I would put into creating and fleshing out this realm from within my own imagination.

Exandria is a true labor of love, a gift for my players, and a gift to our community. When the opportunity arose to take my scrawlings and notes and put them down in a comprehensive tome for others to enjoy and manifest their own stories within, the wonderful and daunting idea immediately filled me with inspiration and determination to produce something I hoped would be worth your time and appreciation.

I have never written anything like this before. The process has been a delightfully challenging and rewarding experience throughout, and I have my talented allies in its creation to thank. I now stand at the end of my journey of putting this unique, personal, and colorful world onto paper from within my head, and I am extremely proud of what we've done... and I sincerely hope you feel the same.

Within these pages lie the tools to create, introduce, and run your own adventures within the continent of Tal'Dorei, either before, during, or after the adventures of Vox Machina. You will learn about the history of the realm, the figures who guide it, and the powers which may invoke and alter the paths of the next wave of heroes you summon within.

I offer you the necessary materials to create legends, and I hope you enjoy bringing them to life.





CHAPTER ONE

CAMPAIGNS IN TAL'DOREI

From the noble leaders of society who guide the political future of Emon, to the simple farmers who harvest their dinner, everyone has their own ideas about the origins of Tal'Dorei and the entire world. Many are jumbled misunderstandings of myths passed from father to daughter, or religious rewritings of historical texts that favor the teachings of a chosen divinity. Others remain focused on the few existing truths, digging beneath the layers of dust and decay that hide battles long past, texts long abandoned, and heroes long forgotten. The details are often debated, and while the common folk may live their entire lives with little care for the question of where we all came from, the question remains, consuming the curious, calling those hungry for purpose, and fueling the business of adventuring to delve into the dangerous shadows of ancient ruins.

THE HISTORY AND CALAMITY OF TAL'DOREI

The following information outlines what is known within scholarly circles and historical archives, kept by the monks of the Cobalt Soul or the historians of the Alabaster Lyceum. The learned student may begin their journey with seeds of this history to explore, while others uncover its truths as they wander along their path. Regardless, we all came from somewhere, and to learn from history is to write a better destiny.

THE MYTH OF EXANDRIA

Life ever seeks to understand its inception. Every civilization has its own interpretation of where its story began. Even within the world of Exandria, different cultures have creation myths that eventually converge with history, but there is no known definitive story. Even so, the ancient city of Vasselheim in Othanzia is largely considered the oldest surviving city, having endured a terrible war that wiped out most of civilization more than a thousand years ago. Vasselheim houses the earliest known temples to the gods, and the earliest known records of history that survived this catastrophe. Widely accepted as the true record of the world's origins, the myth of "The Founding" is the interpretation held and embraced within most of Tal'Dorei, as well as the vast lands of Exandria.

THE FOUNDING

Long ago, this world was one of tumultuous and chaotic forces. Naught but unbridled fires, and churning, saw-like rock made up its substance. Through the ashen skies of Creation Primordial, the gods came from beyond the ether, new and formless. Looking upon this roiling realm, they saw potential for great beauty, great strength, and the chance to learn their own place in creation.

Thus, divine hands formed the First Children, the elves, created with physical grace reflecting

the gods' own divinity, to walk the verdant lands and know the music of the blue skies. A second creation was wrought—the dwarves, a hearty people intent on taming the land, filled with the craft and invention of the divinity beyond the ashen void. A third people were given life: the humans, endowed with hearts of passion that burned as brightly as their spans of life were short, filled with the celebration and laughter of the hands creating them.

Other creations followed as the many races of Exandria were given form from the boundless inspiration the protean gods expressed. These Children of Creation walked the land, and as their knowledge grew they attempted to build. But the land was fierce and treacherous, and the children were largely dashed and consumed by the elements. Sorrow filled the hearts of the gods while these first races continued to struggle against a land that did not want them. The Children looked to their creators for guidance and protection. The gods gave to them gifts, lending their own power to their children to create and shape the world around them; these were the first divine magics.

Thus, the various peoples began to learn how to bend the angry earth to their will: to temper the fires that burst through, to tame the floods that threatened their abundance, and to foster seedling into fruit and beast into meal. Language became commonplace, culture was born, and governance replaced anarchy. The Protean Creators, the divinity beyond the ashen skies, saw progress and saw that it was good, yet fragile and in need of guardians.

So were born the First Protectors: The Dragons Metallic.

These Protectors watched over the fairer races. The realm grew quieter, the people expanded, and new races were given form and life. As culture grew, and the people further understood the world around them, they too looked up to their Creators and gave them worship, gave them form, gave them title, and purpose.

But this realm did not wish to be tamed. Quaking cliffs roared in defiance. Seas swelled and swallowed. Flames erupted from underneath the lands. Beneath the elements, unknown to the Creators beyond the ashen skies,

"...then, the vast empty heart of endless shadow befell the light of the Seeker. Cascading from the pits was the font of life. The first moon formed the endless oceans. The second sun brought the lush soil. The third wind carried breath of life. The fourth flame ignited the Heart of Exandria."

—The Fourth Astural Scroll

lived ancient beings who had already taken this world as their home: the Primordials. These great Elemental Titans that once dwelt deep within the land now rose from their unseen domain to sunder the land once more. The gods watched as their children—their joy—were largely dashed against the broken rock or fed to formless terrors unleashed in the wake of the destruction. Demonic entities spilled from the umbra of the Abyss to feast on the carnage, called forth by the violence and released to pick the carrion clean.

Some gods were so full of grief and anger they wished to abandon this world for another, trying to convince their divine kindred to join the Primordials in reclaiming the realm for chaos so they could move on to start anew. Others of the Creators wished to remain and subdue these native Primordials, to tame the land for the sake of their creation and joy. This caused a divide among the gods. Some left the family of the Creators to give into madness, joining their song and sword to that of chaos and destruction, taking and twisting their children in the image of their intent. Celestial sentinels locked into war with the chaotic forces of the Abyss fell to hate and tyranny, forging the Hells under a fallen angel now claiming lordship.

The remaining Creators, wishing to salvage their home, their creations, and their realized selves, were forced to take up arms and learn new methods of protection to defend the faithful among their creations. These gods are referred to as the Prime Deities. They organized their followers and taught them how to draw from the very powers of creation: to build, to change, and to destroy, all for themselves and without the aid of divine power. Creation learned to defend itself through practices such as alchemy or by autonomously bending the very fabrics of existence, though not on the scale of the gods' works.

This gift was the knowledge of the first arcane magics. With these newly granted capabilities, the good children drove away their traitorous kin, banished the Betrayer Gods to their own prison-like planes, and ultimately destroyed the Primordials while scattering the chaotic elements to their own planes of existence just outside of this one. Peace finally blanketed the world for the first time since creation, and the first real civilization took root and grew into a grand city called Vasselheim. The Cradle of Creation. The Dawn City.

Culture developed anew, the races ventured beyond to explore and discover their own lands, and great music filled the air to give name to this world once and for all: Exandria.

THE AGE OF ARCANUM

Over time, some of the peoples grew arrogant. Seeing their arcane gifts as proof the gods held no sway over their fate, some began to believe that, with enough understanding, they could become as powerful as the gods themselves. As such, many began to shun faith for their own pursuits. Though this hurt and surprised the Prime Deities, they understood the willfulness of their creation and endured out of love and hope for redemption.

Great kingdoms sprang up. Castles were built in a day, accelerated by the arcanists' newfound power. Even

though magic could be used to complete the most difficult tasks with hitherto unknown speed, magic-users strove always to innovate. As mages practiced and perfected their powers of creation, they soon unlocked the secrets of life itself, giving birth to wondrous, dangerous new forms of life and power.

The advent of the arcane seemed to be the key to a bountiful age of plenty, but also proved to threaten it, as prosperity soon gave way to greed. Petty squabbles erupted over resources and wealth among the elite, while the rumor of immortality through perfected arcanum began to drive the greatest mages wild with a lust for power unending. One mortal mage, her name either lost or struck from history, crafted now-forbidden rites to challenge the God of Death, felling him and taking his place among the pantheon, making her the first and only mortal to ascend. One powerful archmage, Vespín Chloras, was inspired by this display. Driven by his hunger, he sought the guidance and power of the banished gods, rending open the gates of their prisons and releasing the betrayers into the mortal world.

In their imprisonment, the gods of Hatred and Despair twisted their prison into their own image, spawning unthinkable horrors that lived only to transform peace into suffering, and righteousness into arrogance and greed. The Hells and the Abyss began to push their way into Creation. The Betrayer Gods and their hateful children, unbanished and allowed re-entry into the Creation that had exiled them, discovered the world unspoiled, save for the avarice of mortals. The urge to ruin was now replaced with the desire to dominate, and the Betrayer Gods turned their sights first to the Archmage Vespín who freed them, making him their first thrall. The Betrayer Gods sought out the remnants of their offspring, scattered across the world, and created with them a mighty and terrible new kingdom on the far end of the world—Ghor Dranas.

In this land of evil, where the twisted power of the lower planes seeped into this world, the lords of darkness tainted the minds of mortals, hungrily welcoming those who had forgotten their way home, and offering great promises and boons to hearts easily swayed. These poisonous seeds found fertile ground in the hearts of mortals obsessed with the unlimited power of the arcane. With a legion of the damned behind them, the Betrayer Gods soon made their presence known to the world with an assault on Vasselheim itself.

Though much of the city was reduced to rubble, Vasselheim weathered the initial assault, saved by the intervention of the gods. The Prime Deities descended to trade blows with their former brethren. The battle between divinity and mortalkind, heroes and demons raged ceaselessly for twenty days and nights until the dark forces, their surprise attack thwarted, were forced to retreat.

Evil was repulsed momentarily, but with the revelation of such a terrible foe, a dangerous arcane arms race began. Trust was shattered indefinitely: If mortals could fall under the sway of the Betrayer Gods, who was an ally? If ruin like this could be unleashed under the watchful eyes of divinity, how were they relevant?



Not trusting any but themselves, the self-interested and singular humans beat their instruments of celebration into instruments of incredible power: artifacts that could be wielded by singular heroes. The dwarves' fascination with rock and earth turned toward isolation as they burrowed further into the mountains, using their divine gifts to animate legions of autonomous golems to protect their ancestral halls. Elves used their understanding of creation's beauty and intricacies to weave spells of unimaginable destructive force, the likes of which Exandria had never seen before.

For the first time since the Primordials, the focus of magic was warfare. The gods themselves agreed to join their children on the field of battle, descending from the heavens to take up arms once more for the war now referred to as "The Calamity."

THE CALAMITY

No record remains of the terrible war that followed, but its effects are still felt today. The sheer magnitude of the energies unleashed in the ensuing battles of gods and mortals alike was enough to fray the boundaries holding back the elemental chaos, spilling unbridled destruction into the world. It completely rearranged the known flow of magical ley energy across Exandria. The dark kingdom of Ghor Dranas was brought to ruin, but the conflict devastated Exandria's peoples, reducing most cities to ash, inspiring in many a desire to flee from this plane of existence entirely. So great was the loss of life during the war that historians believe no more than a third of Exandria's

population survived, leaving the only remaining bastion of civilization: the Dawn City itself, Vasselheim.

The world entered a long, dark period of recovery, when history had to be recovered and purpose had to be restored. The Betrayer Gods were banished once more to their realms of deception and hate, but the threat of their return weighed heavily on the world. The Prime Deities felt that their involvement in mortal conflict was to blame for the cataclysmic damage inflicted upon Exandria. They knew that while the divine gateways were left open, the prison planes that held the banished Betrayers would remain imperfect and temporary.

Thus, in hopes of ensuring such ruin would not befall Exandria again, they left their children to fend for themselves within and beyond the walls of Vasselheim. The Prime Deities returned to their own realms, dragging both Betrayer and Abomination with them and sealing the pathways to the mortal realm behind them with the Divine Gate. Only in this way could they prevent their corrupted brethren from physically returning to the material plane. Sadly, for the Prime Deities, this action also carried with it a self-imposed sentence of exile. They would henceforth never be allowed to visit Creation.

The disappearance of the gods is known by many names: "The Second Spark" for those who study the arcane; "The Penance" for those who seek closeness to their gods; but the most common name for this time of warfare and separation is "The Divergence," and it marked the end of the Age of Arcanum.

Much time has passed since, and the world has been reborn once again. The gods still exhibit their influence and

guidance from beyond the Divine Gate, bestowing their knowledge and power to their most devout worshippers, but the path of mortals is now their own to make. New cities, kingdoms, and cultures have retaken the world, built over the ashes of the old. New songs fill the air, and the hope of a brighter future drives people day after day, while buried ruins and forgotten relics remind all people of a darker time of mistakes that should never be repeated.

THE HISTORY OF TAL'DOREI

Following the creation, and subsequent razing, of Exandria, a post-Divergence world was now left to rise from the ashes and begin a new era. While every region has had their own rebirth since the terrible destruction of the Calamity, the continent that now bears the name of this setting shall remain the focus. Let it begin with the founding of Gwessar.

GWESSAR

Not more than 800 years ago, what is now known as the continent of Tal'Dorei housed the germinating seeds of restored civilization. It was the hardy, dependable dwarves who best weathered the war between gods and mortals, and within the Cliffkeep Mountains, the dwarven clans built the subterranean city of Kraghammer. The proud clans were the first to reclaim the riches of the earth, and nestled in its safe embrace they founded expansive mines of rich metals and minerals, ensuring a prosperous foothold under the banner of the ruling Clan Jaggenstrike.

Far to the south of Kraghammer lived the elves. In the wake of the Calamity, the surviving found shelter in the otherworldly peace of the Feywild, returning a generation later, united under the guidance of an elven sorceress named Yenlara. The elves rallied to her both for her defiant strength and her compassion in the face of adversity. It was under Yenlara's wise rule that elven society once again began to reform. She led her people westward to the Verdant Expanse, an untamed forest born from the surging, post-Calamity energies left untouched by the Betrayers' evil. Calling themselves wood elves, Yenlara's people began to construct a new home for elven culture in these lands. This reborn home was given the name Syngorn.

The new elven society came to call this land Gwessar—in their tongue, the Fields of Joy—and they refer to the continent of Tal'Dorei by that name to this day.

The dwarves and elves are long-lived people, and when they struggled to rebuild their civilizations, there were those among them who still remembered the world that was. The humans were not so fortunate. Their histories, written by warmongers in fading ink on waterlogged parchment and vellum, did not survive the years. Yet humanity endured. Several centuries after the Jaggenstrike dwarves began this period of renewal, a clan of

humans braved the angry Ozmit Sea and sailed to what is now western Tal'Dorei from distant Issylra.

These people had the sea in their blood, and sailed from island to island for generations, but something called them to Tal'Dorei. The ruins of their first settlement still stands today: the port city of O'Noa. From O'Noa the seafarers expanded outward, until all the western shores fell under their banner. In the North, they found fertile fields unsalted by the nearby sea against an inlet unmarred by looming rocks and dangerous reefs, and they began to build. They did not know their city would become the heart of a great empire. They did not know the glory and sorrow that would surround their city of Emon.

THE IRON RULE OF DRASSIG

The rise of human colonies vexed the elves of Syngorn. Forests that had stood for centuries fell under the axes of creatures who lived only a scant few decades. These tensions did not rise to war, but the humans gnawed at peace like termites.

As the first human civilization on this part of the world after the Calamity, a handful of self-entitled noble houses arose in Emon and established law and structure, but those who designed the game stacked the deck in their favor. Corruption spread through the upper echelons of Emon, and power-hungry politicians seized each new and valuable resource that was discovered in their bountiful new kingdom. They turned their citizens against each other, forcing them to fight for scraps while they hoarded the lion's share.

Emon was a political war zone, and the greatest warrior of them all was a loudmouthed braggart and cunning oligarch named Warren Drassig. The chaos and mistrust in Emon allowed Drassig and his agents to seize power and transform the realm into the Kingdom of Drassig, with Warren himself as its supreme monarch. Drassig was quick to sever any remaining connections with the elves of Syngorn and make new alliances with the dwarves of Kraghammer, marrying Drassig's autocratic power with the dwarves' immense material wealth.

The elves were furious, but the ambassador from Syngorn to Emon, an idealistic grandson of the still-living Yenlara, hoped to resolve this diplomatically. Upon arrival, he was apprehended, tortured, and slain. This final act of treachery sent Syngorn into arms, and the continent erupted into a long and terrible war between Yenlara's kin and Drassig's bloodline known as the Scattered War.

THE SCATTERED WAR

The Scattered War lasted for thirty-two years and is colloquially known as the "Time of Shrouds." The war spanned throughout the Cliffkeep Mountains and into parts of the Verdant Expanse, with the human colonies spread throughout the soon-to-be-warring territories. The settlements, towns, and cities had no means of long-range communication, and could not warn each other; Drassig was able to attack each one with little resistance. He taught his soldiers to infiltrate their enemy, listening from

the shadows to uncover their weaknesses, determining the best point of attack and how best to destroy the morale of any obstinate insurgents. With the groundwork complete, one of Drassig's generals would strike at the weakened masses with swiftness and savagery. Drassig's shadow tactics were uncouth, but while viewed as highly irregular and dishonorable, proved extremely effective in preventing widespread uprising.

Cities crumbled beneath of the shadow of Drassig's rule. The lights within settlements of humans and wood elves alike were snuffed out, and this creeping brutality lasted more than nine years. King Warren Drassig eventually sent his troops to what was believed to be the nearly abandoned village of Torthil, rumored to be a haven for refugees. Warren led his men throughout the ghost town, and they scattered about to look for survivors. As they regrouped in the town square, Warren delivered an inspiring speech on the utility of fear and shadow in worthwhile victory. It was at the height of his arrogance that the first arrow struck, followed shortly by a volley that clouded the sky. It appeared that after nine years of darkness and slaughter, Yenlara's wood elves and the rebellious humans of the scattered colonies joined forces and formed an alliance on their own accord, outside the need for civil agreements or political treaties.

After Warren Drassig fell, his first successor and son, Neminar Dressig rose to power. Neminar shunned the brutal methods of his father, instead finding his interests in more sinister powers. He became known as "Neminar the Black Fingered", as his dabbling in necromancy left one arm withered and useless. However, his militarizing infernal magics and forbidden rites elevated the threat of Drassig's war machine. Neminar led his army back to the town of Torthil where his father was executed, to exact his hideous vengeance. In the town square, he piled high the corpses of the elven and human traitors to make pyres that lit the night. Torthil was burned to ash.

By far, the darkest days of the Scattered War were during Neminar's rule. He introduced tactics and magics to fuel his soldiers beyond human limits, leaving their bodies altered and mutated by foul, dark, necromantic magics. Their minds became warped and twisted to favor mindless bloodshed and domination. Drassig's forces became the perfect weapons of war, their ranks blessed by the unholy touch of the Betrayer God known as the Strife Emperor.

In the face of such terrible power and willful tyranny, the rebellion of men and elves continued to bolster their ranks with vengeful orphans and eager heroes. One such hero who came to be instrumental in the coming conflict was called Zan Tal'Dorei. A human who rose from the harried streets of Syngorn during such dark times, Zan quickly proved to be both a mighty warrior and an inspirational leader. Rallying the broken ranks of the resistance, Zan lured Neminar and his vanguard into the mysterious brush of the Verdant Expanse, a realm where fey magic was to work in Syngorn's favor.

Having unleashed their forces upon what they thought was the Syngornian outpost known as the Shifting Keep,



the illusionary magic of the locale left the army without a target, and vulnerable to ambush. The retribution of the forest merged with the weapons of Zan's warriors, striking with enough ferocity that Neminar and his blighted soldiers were crushed, signaling a shift in the tides of war. As word of Neminar's defeat and death spread, hope grew for all the oppressed peoples of the realm.

Even so, the last years of fighting were still ahead of them, for Warren's youngest son stood to take power, and was sworn to avenge his family and protect their seat of rule.

BATTLE OF THE UMBRA HILLS

King Trist Drassig, second-born son of the despotic Warren Drassig, took the throne, envisioning the end of the Scattered War, and tasting victory on his lips. Trist was neither as brilliant nor as charismatic as his grandfather; his armies were stretched thin and his people rose up. The rebels, led by the young warrior Zan Tal'Dorei, found themselves winning one minor victory after another. Soon, King Trist's army had its back to the imposing base of the Cliffkeep Mountains north of Westruun.

Riding the tide of certain victory, Zan and her rebels, allied with the Elves of Syngorn, pursued Drassig to a valley in the Umbra Hills, but fiends fought in the ranks of their enemy. The spawn of the Betrayers had returned to the world from beyond the mountains and spilled into the battlefield like a river of nightmares. The surrounding hills ran dark with blood and ichor, and the bodies of humans and demons alike littered the battlefield. Yet, against all odds, the hero Zan ended the Drassig bloodline, and with it, the infernal pact it had made. The grass and flowers of the now-named Umbra Hills grow black and burnt as an echo of this battle, their sap coursing with the searing blood of the demons that was spilled that day.

THE RISE OF TAL'DOREI

Society had all but collapsed during the war. The leaders of the Verdant Expanse assembled a council of trusted and proven minds, but the people were accustomed to a

singular leader, a king. The council nominated the war hero Zan Tal'Dorei to take the seat, and she humbly accepted, but rejected the title of King or Queen, instead wishing to be addressed as Sovereign if a title was required.

Despite Zan's protests, the council unanimously agreed the realm should be renamed "Tal'Dorei." With power divided amongst the Sovereign and the council, Emon's leaders cleared their realm of most corruption and brutality. The leading clans of Kraghammer claimed they had been manipulated, and spent many years making amends, but the trust between the kingdoms was long to heal.

THE ICELOST YEARS

Not two years into Sovereign Zan's reign, a cataclysm struck, testing the limits of the new council. An agent from the Frostfell, the elemental plane of ice, slipped through a secret tear between the worlds housed in the forested region now known as the Frostweald. This unknown agent watched as the realm was torn and distracted by the aftermath of war. Knowing the weakened state of the denizens, this agent returned to the Frostfell to inform its master, a cruel elemental behemoth of incredible power called Errevon the Rimelord. A short time later during a celestial solstice, the peace was suddenly sundered by a rift that opened deep within that same forest, blanketing much of the surrounding land in a terrible winter of ice and snow. An army of frost giants marched through the chasm, accompanied by sentient blizzards led by the Rimelord himself, conquering all the land they could cover in snow and death.

Many brave warriors fell beneath the weapons of the invading force, unprepared for such an onslaught so soon after a protracted war. The storm of ice widened over the course of a few years, consuming most of the mid-continent as Errevon claimed as his own all lands that fell beneath the ice. It built a great fortress of frost north of the rift and forced conquered folk to swear fealty in exchange for warmth and unfrozen water. This

"A king should not stand apart from the people. A ruler should know sacrifice, for how else is he to know those who harvest our grains and wheat, who tend to the cattle, and who raise our children? A ruler should know pain and sorrow, for war is bloody and cruel, and for a ruler to ask the people to fight, is to ask them to die for the kingdom. A ruler should know justice, but also reason, for not all crimes are committed with ill intent or malice, but rather with grieving and shame. I am no ruler of this land. I am the peasant in the fields. I am the painter at his easel. I am the young soldier donned in rusted armor. You will not find me sitting upon a gemmed throne answering the questions of those in need with disdain, but working beside your mothers and fathers, fighting beside your soldiers, and aiding those wounded in the name of this kingdom.

"Tal'Dorei is not just a name; it is a principle. Tal'Dorei is a principle that stands for honor, an everlasting honor that binds its people. A principle that is a beacon for the lost, the helpless, and the forgotten. Tal'Dorei is a principle that you should be proud of, a principle that you stand side-by-side with as the people of Tal'Dorei stand beside you. Tal'Dorei is not a name, it is to be proud, it is to have honor, it is to be loyal, and loving, and kind. Tal'Dorei is not a name; it is a people. And you are the people of Tal'Dorei! I wish not to be your King, but a Sovereign for the people, and if you let me, if you accept me as such, the Sovereign of Tal'Dorei! For the Honor of Tal'Dorei!"

—Acceptance speech of Sovereign Zan Tal'Dorei to her people



violent rule stood for several years before the Council of Tal'Dorei convinced Syngorn and Kraghammer to ally with them for the sake of the realm. They combined their resources to battle Errevon back to the rift from whence he came, cast him back into the Frostfell, and with the aid of the Ashari druids, sealed the rift once and for all. The snow began to melt, the fortress toppled into a basin, and the people took their freedom back from the oppressive cold. This victory is now remembered and celebrated annually as the Winter's Crest festival.

THE CINDER KING

After many generations of peaceful rule within the city of Emon, there spread word of a shadow in the South that threatened outlying townships skirting the edges of the Council's influence. Trade caravans that hail from the Rifemist Peninsula began to vanish, while the autonomous villages south of the Verdant Expanse sent for aid and armed protection against a "nightmare of fire and malice." Sovereign Odellan Tal'Dorei felt that the economic cost of sending a regiment that far south to outsider communities without confirmation of threat was a misuse of resources. It wasn't until two years later when reports of a powerful red dragon reached the ears of the Council of Tal'Dorei that the seriousness of the situation was considered.

By then, much of the vibrant fields covering the Mornset Countryside were turned to ash, and the Outerfolk of the region bent to slavery under this new and terrible threat. Calling himself Thordak the Cinder King, red dragon tyrant was thought slain nearly two centuries before over the Ozmit Sea by the vengeful military powers that protect the desert continent of Marquet. The beast claimed dominion over the southern lands, expanding his influence through fear and tyranny. With the martial forces of the capital city of Emon unleashed out of Fort Daxio, a terrible struggle erupted south of the Stormcrest Mountains, leaving many a good soldier reduced to bone and ember. It wasn't until a band of renowned adventurers entered the fray, led by the Emon-allied arcanist, Allura Vysoren, that a lasting victory over the Cinder King was won, sealing the unstoppable wyrm within the Elemental Plane of Fire forever. Or so they thought.

THE CHROMA CONCLAVE

Sixteen years after the sealing of Thordak, daily life in the region had long returned to the normal quarrels over trade pricing and kobold infestations. It was during those sixteen years that an old and unexpected ally of Thordak's, a green dragon called Raishan, established communication from between the planes and plotted the red dragon's return. Mysteriously diseased in her later life and seeking

answers to this riddle, Raishan received a promise from Thordak. Thordak would cure Raishan's malaise, should she discover how to break the red dragon's bindings, and aid in conquering all of Tal'Dorei. She formed a plan and amassed unlikely allies in three other chromatic dragons: Umbrasyll the Hope Devourer, Brimscythe the Iron Storm, and Vorugal the Frigid Doom.

After infiltrating the Pyrah Ashari for nearly five years, Raishan finally unlocked the seal between the planes that bound Thordak and set him free, allowing the entire circle of ancient dragons, now called the Chroma Conclave, to unleash an assault of catastrophic proportions on the great city of Emon, and the Tal'Dorei countryside. Nearly three centuries of Tal'Dorei rule in the realm ended under the rule of Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II, his life cut short when much of Emon was reduced to rubble.

The attack not only killed the Sovereign Uriel, but also scattered the Council of Tal'Dorei, throwing the realm into chaos. Thordak the Cinder King, now swollen with elemental energy, claimed all Tal'Dorei as the Conclave's domain. The remnants of the civilized lands were divided up and taken as trophies by the Conclave, while the capital Emon was ruled by the Cinder King himself, with Raishan secretly pulling the strings from the shadows to bend the momentum of these events in her favor.

One by one, the members of the Conclave fell to the might and cleverness of a band of misfit warriors known as Vox Machina. These heroes eventually gathered their allies and stormed the capital of Emon, slaying Thordak the Cinder King and freeing the people. Upon discovering the machinations of the real mastermind Raishan the Diseased Deceiver, with whom Vox Machina had held

a tenuous alliance, they gave chase and finally slew this last standing member of the Chroma Conclave, ending dragon reign over the land and restoring rule once more to the Council of Tal'Dorei.

TAL'DOREI REBORN

Only one year has passed since Vox Machina slew the Chroma Conclave, yet much of Tal'Dorei is already returning to prosperity. Major cities like Westruun and Emon are especially fortunate, for the vast amounts of wealth plundered from the dragons' ancient hoards have allowed them to hire legions of arcanists to magically restore much of what was lost. Tal'Dorei is on the road to recovery, but all is not well. The newly-formed Republic of Tal'Dorei finds itself increasingly indebted to the mages who facilitated Emon's rebirth, and there is worry that the fledgling Republic will crumble under the pressure.

Beyond Emon, the landscape of Tal'Dorei has been forever scarred by the presence of the Conclave, especially the Cinder King. His hellfire left marks on Tal'Dorei that will never heal—magical wounds that bleed fire and ooze chaotic magic. Smaller cities beyond the reach of the Council have begun to succumb to sinister influences. The Betrayer Gods sense weakness within the world. The lightless madness of the Chained Oblivion churns beneath Gatshadow. The lost blade of Graz'zt the Seductive calls from the Umbra Hills for a new master. Zehir the Dark Serpent raises armies south of Syngorn. The cults of the Whispered One spread like a poison through Tal'Dorei's remote frontiers. Tal'Dorei needs heroes—and this time, Vox Machina alone will not be enough.

RUNNING A TAL'DOREI CAMPAIGN

Tal'Dorei is not just its history—do not treat this book as an encyclopedia, or as shackles that bind you to the characters and environments presented within. As you flip through the pages to come, consider why you want to run an RPG campaign set in Tal'Dorei, and in the larger world of Exandria. What about *Critical Role* inspires you as a Game Master? Is it the bonds of family and love between its many characters, or are you searching this book for the secrets of its plot and the machinations of its vilest villains? Whatever the initial spark that led you here, hold tight to it as you read and search for ways to feed your personal flame of imagination. And when you are done? Create.

THE SECRETS OF TAL'DOREI

The world of Exandria is steeped in familiar and accessible fantasy themes, with all the elves, dwarves, and wizards you might expect from such an RPG. This is a world new gamers will find themselves right at home in. Tal'Dorei also holds secrets that will challenge your expectations, and you may enjoy putting your own twists on these great mysteries of the world. Each of these secrets can form the backbone of an entire campaign, or can serve as flavor to create the impression of a world that is larger than just the player characters' story.

ALL-POWERFUL, IMPRISONED GODS

Tal'Dorei was nearly destroyed when the gods fought one another in the Calamity. Now, the Betrayer Gods are sealed in otherworldly prison planes and the victorious Prime Deities have disappeared into self-exile. An unbreakable barrier stands between the mortal and immortal realms, and no deity dares breach it lest the Betrayers break from their eternal prison and wreak havoc once more. At best, a deity can only grant their clerics a small measure of their power to enact their will upon Exandria.

However, there are several cults that wish to circumvent this barrier and summon their dark patron onto the Material Plane. Others seek to unravel the forgotten rites of ascension, thought destroyed once the Matron of Ravens stepped into the pantheon. What would happen if a mortal were to



become an omnipotent deity on the other side of the Divine Gate? Would the gods of good be forced to break the Gate and unleash another Calamity upon the world?

DAWN OF A REPUBLIC

It was the dying decree of Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II that the continent-spanning Tal'Dorei Empire be reborn as the Republic of Tal'Dorei. No more would a Sovereign rule the myriad peoples of this land, but instead the wise Council of Tal'Dorei would enact the will of the people and protect them from the dangers of the world. But things don't always go according to plan. The nascent Republic of Tal'Dorei is suffering growing pains, and unless some politically-minded player characters can help, the realm may fall into anarchy and chaos.

While fantasy politics aren't every gamer's cup of tea, the ills of the fledgling republic can serve several purposes. Players looking for fantasy intrigue can meddle in the internal politics of the city of Emon and root out corruption within the Council, from the influence of the nefarious Clasp and Myriad syndicates, to the blackmail of a few shadowy mages within the Alabaster Lyceum. Game Masters can also use this political element to flavor their otherwise action-focused games. On a small scale, corrupt margraves may hire bandits to pillage their own villages, requiring the PCs to step in. On a large scale, the imminent collapse of the Republic of Tal'Dorei may force the PCs to stop a power-hungry Lyceum mage from taking control of the land.

A LAND THRICE-DESTROYED

First there was the Calamity, and the palaces of the gods were devoured by the earth. Then came the wars of Drassig, and his defeat at the hands of Zan Tal'Dorei. And then came Thordak. The Cinder King and the Chroma Conclave shook the very foundations of Tal'Dorei. Thordak "merely" turned Emon to slag, but out of fear, panic, and malice, the flames of destruction were spread across the continent by mortal hands. Today, at the dawning of the Republic of Tal'Dorei, the ruins of three civilizations lie buried beneath your feet, and some secrets long to be unearthed.

Every fantasy RPG has ruins for adventurers to explore. When your campaign inevitably sends the PCs in search of a lost artifact, consider your dungeon's role in the larger history of the world. How does the origin of this ruin affect its layout, its description, and its hazards? When Vox Machina delved into an ancient ruin in the Frostweald dedicated to the God of Knowledge, they faced off against deadly traps and had to guess the name of a devious sphinx to find their reward. Adventurers seeking a relic from a part of Emon destroyed during Thordak's occupation may have to fend off restless spirits of their own countrymen while dealing with lingering traces of the Conclave's power.

MOTHER OF INVENTION

Percival Fredrickstein von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III—Percy, to his friends—wanted to take the secrets of his inventions to his grave, especially the deadly power of

STORY HOOKS

This book is peppered with story hooks. Some are simple, just enough to inspire your next game session. Some are more complex, and the hook can cascade into an entire campaign's worth of gaming. You will also notice that these story hooks present a beginning, but no conclusion. Just as the goal of this entire book is meant to provide building blocks for you to create your own Tal'Dorei, these open-ended plot seeds are meant to give all fans of Critical Role a few familiar starting places to start creating their own narratives.

These plot hooks are tied to specific locations, and all have a level range. These level recommendations can be fudged, but have generally been chosen either because of the monsters involved, the lore-relevance of the location, or to determine how epic the adventure should be.

For low-level characters: levels 1 to 4

For mid-level characters: levels 5 to 10

For high-level characters: levels 11 to 16

For epic-level characters: levels 17 to 20

his firearms. Unfortunately, because of his now-deceased archenemy Anna Ripley, the secret of gunpowder has begun to spread across Tal'Dorei. Now, isolated groups of tinkerers both noble and unscrupulous are working to create new technologies. Some of these modern marvels will no doubt help the people of the world—but others, in the wrong hands, are sure to cause the deaths of thousands.

Renaissance technology, especially firearms, are not common in Tal'Dorei. If you want to keep your fantasy purely medieval, it is a simple matter to ignore the tinkerers and gunsmiths and budding industrialists scattered across Tal'Dorei. Otherwise, you are welcome to incorporate the rules for firearms that already exist in the *DMG*. If you or your players want to fully embrace the power of black powder like Percy and Viktor of *Critical Role*, the Gunslinger fighter archetype available on the DMs Guild (dmsguild.com) will help you achieve those ends.

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

The corners of Tal'Dorei's maps are not all filled in. North of the Cliffkeep Mountains are the trackless Neverfields and the northern edge of the map. South of the Verdant Expanse is the Rifenmist Peninsula, where vast jungles and the brutal Iron Authority prevent any explorer from filling in the southern tips of the map.

Never forget that you are the creator of your own version of Tal'Dorei. No one playing at your table, even if it's Matthew Mercer himself, can tell you that your vision of the world is inaccurate. Consider that everything in this book is written in pencil, especially these most distant reaches of Tal'Dorei.

THE PANTHEON OF EXANDRIA

When the Divergence transpired, the Divine Gate was established. A powerful barrier between the Material Plane and the divine realms, the Divine Gate both sealed away the Betrayer Gods and the Prime Deities to their respective domains in hopes of salvaging the new age and preventing another Calamity. Should the Divine Gate be destroyed by the unanimous effort of the Prime Deities, all powers will be unleashed and Armageddon will be imminent. Thus, the gods patiently watch their creations from beyond the veil, lending what small power and chosen minions they can send through the gate to aid their faithful in their goals and pursuits.

These provided gods and titles are recommended as the existing pantheon, but they are only a recommendation. You are welcome to tailor, alter, and completely change the gods in your Tal'Dorei campaign to fit your needs. The domains provided are those likely chosen by clerics and followers of that deity, but these are not your only options, and many other domains can be attributed to your preferred patron. Discuss with your GM how best to dress your domain choice to fit within the philosophies and commandments of your patron, and ask their approval.

THE PRIME DEITIES

The circle of Prime Deities involves the leaders and luminary creators that battled the Primordial Titans and instigated the Founding, forging the mortal races of Exandria. They represent a spectrum of light, protection, love, death, and all other facets of freedom and life in the world. While some gods may disagree and squabble over domains and intent, they exist in a subtle alliance to maintain the sanctity of life and their respective creations.

THE ARCHEART

Alignment: Chaotic Good • **Domains:** Light, Arcana

Guardian over the spheres of spring, beauty, and the arts, the Archeart is the patron of arcane magic and the fey. The Founding inspired them to wander the twisted lands, seeding them with the first arcane magics and raising the most ancient of forests. It was by the Archeart's hand that the first elves wandered from the Feywild, and for this reason they are considered the Mother and Father of all elves. Those who seek art in all their work, whether magic or mundane, often worship at the altar of the Archeart. They loathe the Spider Queen and her priestesses for leading the drow elves astray.

Most modern tapestries and tomes depict the Archeart as an elven being of impossible grace and beauty, androgynous and alluring, framed by long wavy golden hair. They have been the inspiration for many early elven art pieces, and it's not uncommon to find elements of their visage or symbol included in most elven architecture.

The Archeart's holy day is called Elvendawn, or Midsummer. It is celebrated on the twentieth day of the sixth month, and celebrates the elves' first emergence from the Feywild. In Syngorn, the elves build magical wards in certain spaces and open

small doorways into the Feywild and celebrate with uncharacteristic vigor with the wild fey.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE ARCHEART

- *Create, inspire, and find beauty in all that you do.*
- *Follow the echoes of lost magics, forgotten sites, and ancient art, for within these lie the Archeart's first works.*
- *Combat the followers of the Spider Queen wherever they may be.*

THE ALLHAMMER

Alignment: Lawful Good • **Domains:** Knowledge, War

The patron of craft and creation, the Allhammer is worshipped by smiths, artisans, and miners alike, granting inspiration where respect and prayer are given. He shaped the mountains from the chaos of the Founding, and stands as the patron protector of home and family. The devotion to the Allhammer is strongest in dwarven communities, and many of his temples mark the center of a mighty dwarven stronghold.

Many guild halls and workshops contain images of the Allhammer, a faceless, stout dwarf-like being of immense strength, hunched over a flaming heart clasped within his massive hands.

The Allhammer's holy day is Deep Solace, and is celebrated on the eighteenth day of the fifth month. Especially devout followers of the Allhammer spend the day in isolation, meditating on the meaning of family and how they may be better mothers, fathers, siblings, and children. Other dwarven communities in Kraghammer and abroad celebrate with a full day of feasting and drinking.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE ALLHAMMER

- *Remain stoic and tenacious in the face of catastrophe.*
- *Uphold and promote loyalty to family, loyalty to clan, and loyalty to your people.*
- *Legacy is paramount. To create something that lasts the ages is to change the world for the better.*

"We call to thee, O Font of Magic, O Source of Spring, O Beauty of the Wildwood. Uplift our eyes, O Ancient Glory, and let us espy the beauty around us, that we might samewise find that beauty reflected within us."

**-From the Hymn of Spring's Dawning,
faith of the Archeart**



THE ARCHEART



THE ALLHAMMER



THE CHANGEBRINGER



THE DAWNFATHER

THE CHANGEBRINGER

Alignment: Chaotic Good • **Domains:** Trickery, Nature

Also known as “She Who Makes the Path,” the Changebringer champions freedom, travel, trade, and adventure across the lands. Her will heralds open frontiers, and her call beckons her followers to discover that which awaits them beyond the known. This nature leads to few temples in direct civilization dedicated to the Changebringer, but they often can be found off the beaten path and near roads well traveled. Her worship is common among merchants, free spirits, and adventurers, with tavern cheers calling to her honor as a bringer of luck and fortune.

She is often depicted as a young woman of dark complexion and long, light brown hair that cascades to form the road left behind her. Most art shows her in constant motion, trailblazing and ever leading into the unknown.

The Changebringer’s holy day is New Dawn, and takes place the first day of the first month, when the old year gives way to the new. In Emon, the day of New Dawn is celebrated with a grand midnight feast that commonly features a short play that celebrates the changes of the past year.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHANGEBRINGER

- *Luck favors the bold. Your fate is your own to grasp, and to do so is to have the Changebringer behind you.*
- *Change is inevitable. The righteous can ensure that such change is for the better.*
- *Rise against tyranny. Fight for the freedom of yourself and others when you can, and inspire others to fight when you cannot.*

THE DAWNFATHER

Alignment: Neutral Good • **Domains:** Life, Light

The Dawnfather stands lord over sun and summer, his vigil encircling the ages as the keeper of time. Lord of agriculture and harbinger of the harvest, his followers commonly include farmers and most common folk, his priests welcome in lands all over. Supporter of the needy and destroyer of evil, the Dawnfather is often the patron

to Paladins and Rangers who follow a similar creed. The Dawnfather is also known for his defeat of the Chained Oblivion, and is revered by those who hunt aberrations.

Tapestries of old match early text describing the Dawnfather as a patronly figure in silver and gold armor, his head a beacon of light and fire so bright that a face could rarely be seen within. Many statues in holy places treat the head as a brazier, lit with each dawn and extinguished with the dusk.

The Dawnfather’s holy day is called Highsummer, and takes place on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. In Emon, the entire week is celebrated with gift-giving and feasting. Festivities begin on Highsummer day and end at midnight on the twenty-first, the day that Zan Tal’Dorei dethroned Trist Drassig at the Battle of the Umbra Hills. In Whitestone, the feast of Highsummer is instead a festival of lights around the Sun Tree; gift-giving is traditional, but the recent Briarwood occupation and the subsequent recovery means money is thin. Most folk choose to spend Highsummer with their family, recounting the small things they are thankful for.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE DAWNFATHER

- *Be ever vigilant for evil. People are quick to forget the lessons of the past.*
- *Help relieve the suffering of the innocent wherever it exists.*
- *Deliver the light of the Dawnfather where darkness dwells, with kindness, compassion, and mercy.*

THE EVERLIGHT

Alignment: Neutral Good • **Domains:** Life, Light

God of compassion and redemption, her message is one of understanding and optimism in even the darkest of places. She believes the corrupt can be redeemed, a mindset that led to a betrayal by the Lord of the Hells that left most of her following destroyed in the Calamity. Only recently has her faith been rediscovered, and her temples returned to prominence. The Everlight’s followers are often rural healers and community philosophers, becoming a voice of reason and empathy in angry and cynical times.


THE EVERLIGHT

THE KNOWING MISTRESS

THE LAWBEARER

THE MATRON OF RAVENS

Those who rise to bring her words back to the light unearth her image from ruined temples, or create new art to inspire others with her message. The Everlight is represented as a beautiful, strong woman of dark skin and light hair, rising on a pair of ivory angel wings.

The Everlight's holy day has been long forgotten, and her followers have yet to decide when her festival should be held, and what the festivities should be. The debate has gone on for years, and no great miracles have yet been performed to unify the squabbling clerics.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE EVERLIGHT

- *Lead with mercy, patience, and compassion. Inspire others to unite in fellowship.*
- *Aid those who are without guide. Heal those who are without hope.*
- *Those who are beyond redemption, who revel in slaughter and remorseless evil, must meet swift justice.*

THE KNOWING MISTRESS

Alignment: Neutral • **Domains:** Knowledge, Arcana

Revered by seers, sages, and teachers of all walks of life, the Knowing Mistress guided the growth of civilization throughout the Age of Arcanum like sunlight guides the branches of a tree. She was grievously wounded by the Chained Oblivion during the Calamity, and her followers are now hunted by agents of her ancient foes as she recovers in her weakened influence. Her devout now worship in private, spreading knowledge, philosophy, and lore anonymously through traceless channels.

Common representations show the Knowing Mistress as a graying, mature woman of welcoming, matronly smile, swathed in billowing robes and scarves that fan into books and scrolls.

The Knowing Mistress has no public holy day, for her public worship was shattered during the Calamity, and she has since fallen into half-remembered myth. Only in Emon has the Knowing Mistress's faith been resurrected—though her worship by the intellectuals of the city bears little resemblance to the knowledge-seekers of old.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE KNOWING MISTRESS

- *Unmask those who would destroy the Knowing Mistress. Learn their secrets and unveil them to the world.*
- *Uphold and teach the importance of reason, perception, and truth in guiding one's emotions and path.*
- *Condemn those who lie, even among your allies, for evil folk gain power when their followers obscure the truth. Never stoop to the level of liars.*

THE LAWBEARER

Alignment: Lawful Neutral • **Domain:** Knowledge

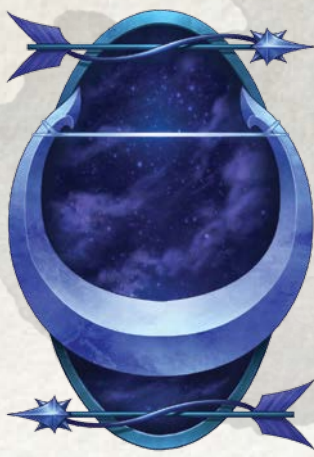
The driving inspiration behind many great inventions, the creation of vast cities, and the bringer of law and order within: the Lawbearer claims dominion over civilization. Judges and rulers pay respect and muse at her temples, which stand as central structures to many cities across Exandria. Peace and order through structure and law guides the will of her devout followers. The Lawbearer has a tempestuous romance with the Wildmother, a furious love that is only tempered when civilization and nature are in balance.

Shown in most texts and statues as a hooded, armored woman sitting atop a throne of pillars, her face is generally obscured or depicted without expression. The impartial but imposing nature of her stature and presence is nearly always paramount in any visual representation.

The Lawbearer's holy day is Civilization's Dawn, and is celebrated on the autumnal equinox, usually the twenty-second day of the ninth month. In Emon, each neighborhood celebrates by dancing around great bonfires in the square and giving gifts to celebrate their community.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE LAWBEARER

- *Embrace the company and aid of others. The efforts of the individual often pale against the capabilities of community.*
- *Strive to tame the wilds of the world in the name of civilization, and defend the points of light and order against the chaos of darkness.*
- *Uphold and revere the spirit of invention. Create new places and colonies, build where inspiration hits, and expand the laws of the Lawbearer.*



THE MOONWEAVER



THE PLATINUM DRAGON



THE STORMLORD



THE WILDMOTHER

THE MATRON OF RAVENS

Alignment: Lawful Neutral • **Domains:** Life, Death, Blood

Master over the skein of fate and the mistress of winter, the Matron of Ravens stands as the god of death. Her gaze follows and marks the end of each mortal life, watching over the transition between life and death and ensuring the natural transition is undefiled. Many funerals call to her blessing in hopes that she will protect the deceased from the terrible curse of undeath. Those who keep ancient lore believe the Matron of Ravens was once mortal herself, and is the only known mortal to have ascended. Her rise instantly obliterated the previous, now-forgotten god of death, and the other gods quickly and fearfully destroyed the secrets to the rites of ascension.

Few existing visual depictions of the Matron of Ravens herself exist, with many temples merely using the raven as a symbol of her blessing. Those that do depict her, however, reveal a tall, pale woman wrapped in dangling black linens, her onyx-black hair straight and never ending, her face obscured by a white, porcelain mask.

The Matron of Ravens's holy day is the Night of Ascension, celebrating her apotheosis. The actual date of the goddess's rise to divinity is unclear, but the Night of Ascension is nonetheless celebrated on the thirteenth day of the tenth month. Many people of Emon see this cheery celebration of the dead to be unnerving and macabre, but the Raven's followers believe the honored dead would rather be venerated with cheer, not misery.

The Matron of Ravens is also considered by some the winter patron to the holiday of Winter's Crest: the celebration in Tal'Dorei of freedom from Errevon the Rimelord, celebrated on the 20th day of the twelfth month. Most, however, see this holiday belonging to the people of the land, and recognize no pertaining divine worship.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE MATRON OF RAVENS

- *Death is the natural end of life. There is no pity for those who have fallen.*
- *The path of Fate is sacrosanct. Those who pridefully attempt to cast off their destiny must be punished.*

- *Undeath is an atrocity. Those who would pervert the transition of the soul must be brought down.*

THE MOONWEAVER

Alignment: Chaotic Good • **Domain:** Trickery

The Moonweaver sends her will as the goddess of moonlight and the autumn season, as well as the patron of illusions and misdirection. Widely worshipped within halfling and elven culture, she is largely considered to be the deity of love, protecting the trysts of lovers with shadows of her own making. Those who work in darkness and trickery often ask for her blessing.

Her depictions are as numerous as the myths and stories of her with meddling within simple unions. However, she is most often painted as a young girl of light blue skin and white hair, her body and limbs but wavy silk strands of silver moonlight that caress and create the edges of the shadows.

The Moonweaver has no holy day, but is celebrated by the elves on the night of the decade's largest full moon. Elven astronomers track the moon's phases and how it grows closer and farther to Exandria, and can predict these days with great accuracy. Many high and haughty elves use this festival as an excuse to be sly and mischievous; some younger elves use costumes and illusions to prank their peers.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE MOONWEAVER

- *Seize your own destiny by pursuing your passions.*
- *Let the shadows protect you from the burning light of fanatical good and the absolute darkness of evil.*
- *Walk unbridled and untethered, finding and forging new memories and experiences.*

THE PLATINUM DRAGON

Alignment: Lawful Good • **Domains:** Life, War

The pillar of justice, protection, nobility, and honor, the Platinum Dragon stands as a beacon to many paladins of order and good, and is revered by most metallic dragons as the first of their kind. The crest of the Platinum

I lift up your name, O First of Dragons, and pray to uphold your sacred charge.

Let me protect those around me, as your wings enfold us.

Let me seek for truth, as your eyes watch over us.

Let me strike against wickedness, as your talons defend us.

Let me resist temptation and falseness, as your heart guides us.

I lift up your name, O First of Dragons, and pray to uphold your sacred charge.

-The Sacred Charge, a morning ritual performed by many faithful of the Platinum Dragon

Dragon adorns many halls of high leadership and justice, his will expected present at all just judgments. To follow him is to look after those who cannot look after themselves.

This majestic being is often seen emblazoned on shields and armor, both functional and decorative, in the form of a brilliant silver dragon head in profile. Temples and art pieces present a massive, glittering dragon of vibrant platinum sheen and seemingly endless wingspan.

The Platinum Dragon's holy day is called Embertide, and is celebrated on the fifth day of the eleventh month. This is a day of remembrance, solemnity, and respect to those who have fallen in the defense of others.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE PLATINUM DRAGON

- *Stand as a paragon of honor and justice.*
- *Smite evil wherever it is found, yet show compassion to those who have strayed from righteousness.*
- *Defend the weak, bring freedom to those without, and protect the ideals of just order.*

THE STORMLORD

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral • **Domains:** Tempest, War

Where thunder cracks and conflict rises, prayers to the Stormlord are shouted into the maelstrom. The Stormlord's followers revel in all tests of strength, and his blessing finds those who prove themselves on the battlefield. He is worshipped by athletes and warriors across Exandria, and his will exalts those whose force of spirit and pension for victory call his attention. He brings tumultuous storms over land and sea, and those who wish for clearer skies offer their praises and prayers in hopes of appeasing his will.

Within his temples and carvings, the Stormlord is shown as a paragon warrior, often nude and physically the epitome of muscle and strength. Often with beard and short, curled hair, most depictions have the Stormlord in mid-wrestle with a terrible beast, and always in a stance of dominance.

The Stormlord's holy day is the Day of Challenging, and is celebrated on the seventh day of the second month. The Day of Challenging is one of the most raucous holidays in Emon, and thousands of spectators attend the annual Godsrawl held in the Temple of the Stormlord to root for their favored deity's champion, particularly the chosen of the Stormlord and the Platinum Dragon.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE STORMLORD

- *Bravery above all. There is no glory in cowardice.*
- *Strength is the path to greatness, but greatness is the responsible use of strength.*
- *The glory of the Stormlord lives through your glory on the battlefield.*

THE WILDMOTHER

Alignment: Neutral • **Domains:** Nature, Tempest

The realm of the Wildmother extends to wherever the seas shift and the land grows over. Keeper of the wilderness, she represents the wild creatures of nature, the rush of the angry rapids, and the heat-harried stillness of the desert. Elves take up her worship, as do hunters of natural lands, accepting her guidance to exist harmoniously within savage lands. Those seeking safe passage across dangerous waters give prayers to her to guide them. The druids of the Wildmother and clerics of her lover, the Lawbearer, work together to preserve the balance of nature and civilization. It is said that the two goddesses grow furious when this balance is upset, and this fury manifests in Tal'Dorei as devastating natural disasters.

Seen immortalized through wooden reliefs and carved idols in hidden, overgrown groves and rural shrines, the Wildmother often is depicted as a beautiful woman of green skin nearly swallowed by a wild, tangled wreath of hair, leaves, and vines that dwarf her lithe form.

The Wildmother's holy day is Wild's Grandeur, and is celebrated on the vernal equinox, usually the twentieth day of the third month. The people of the southern wilds celebrate the Wildmother's strength by going on a journey to a place of great natural beauty, like the top of a mountain waterfall, or the center of a desert. Wild's Grandeur is rarely celebrated in Emon, but some folk will plant trees in observance of the holiday.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE WILDMOTHER

- *Protect the untamed wildernesses of the realm from exploitation and destruction.*
- *Slay abominations and other dark mockeries of nature.*
- *Embrace and respect the savage nature of the world. Exist in harmony with it.*



THE BETRAYER GODS

Those known as the Betrayer Gods are the deities who strayed from the ideals of the Founding, taking to the destructive chaos of the Primordial Titans, or were taken by selfish impulses in the shadow of the early creations. Rarely do the Betrayer Gods work together, considering each other threats more than allies. This weakness allowed the Prime Deities to defeat and banish them, ending the Calamity.

THE CHAINED OBLIVION

Alignment: Chaotic Evil • **Domain:** Death, Trickery

It is darkness unending, less like a god and more like another world. Life and death do not exist within the Chained Oblivion, an engine of utter destruction and madness. Even the other Betrayer Gods treat this mad god with caution. In its endless imprisonment, it dreams the infinite depths of the Abyss into reality, along with all its demonic legions. The Prime Deities had thought it locked away during the Founding until it nearly returned to ruin the world during the conflicts of the Calamity.

Now, its chaotic mind has fallen into more frightful dreams, imagining nightmarish aberrations into existence deep beneath Exandria. The Chained Oblivion's demented cultists work without word from their twisted patron, awaiting the Epoch of Ends, when its freedom will be attained and all beings shall be consumed in deathlessness unending.

The few remaining followers of the Knowing Mistress are dedicated to ensuring the Oblivion is never again unchained. Their goddess leading the charge against the all-consuming destroyer god's re-emergence, and though her bravery allowed the other gods of good to shackle their enemy, the victory nearly cost her immortal life. Some say the Knowing Mistress can only be fully restored if the Chained Oblivion is destroyed for good.

Few attempts at depicting the image of the Chained Oblivion exist, and the existing texts speak of a creature of rolling, hungry ink and darkness; of a spreading cloud of lightless destruction born from a thousand ravenous mouths. Current references constrain the nightmare with chains of black and gold, barely keeping the dark at bay.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHAINED OBLIVION

- Offer and siphon power to the Chained Oblivion until his liberation comes.
- Uncover, restore, and exalt forgotten shrines and relics in his honor.
- Ruin and raze the realms to prepare for the Epoch of Ends.

THE CLOAKED SERPENT

Alignment: Chaotic Evil • **Domains:** Trickery, Blood

Wanderer in shadow and creator of snakes and serpent-kin, the Cloaked Serpent is the evil god of poisons, assassins, and darkness. Much of ancient serpent-kin worships him over all other deities, dragging screaming offerings to their temples in his honor. Most of the Cloaked Serpent's worshippers were

annihilated during the Calamity, and those who weren't are either suspended in self-induced stasis or hunted for sport by the servants of the Spider Queen and the Crawling King. But perhaps the Cloaked Serpent is merely biding his time, waiting for the proper moment to unleash his hidden armies upon the world once more.

The Cloaked Serpent loathes the Lawbearer and the Wildmother, for he despises life, order, and love above all things. His surviving worshippers relish in using poison and fire to undermine civilization and consume nature, hoping to throw the goddesses into fury and consequently cast Exandria into chaos.

Many forgotten temples were once built to the Cloaked Serpent, and within these chambers you would find his image engraved within much of the architecture. A human body with a half-dozen arms that houses a gargantuan serpent head, fanged and frilled in aggression. Strands of thick, dark hair that sprout from the scaled body swirl around to form layers of shadow, obscuring the entire form of the entity.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE CLOAKED SERPENT

- Keep your acts obfuscated and secret. The night is your greatest ally.
- Strike quickly and without reason. Blind the target with their own confusion.
- Kill slowly. Agonizingly. Or worse, make them enjoy it.

THE CRAWLING KING

Alignment: Neutral Evil • **Domains:** Death, Blood

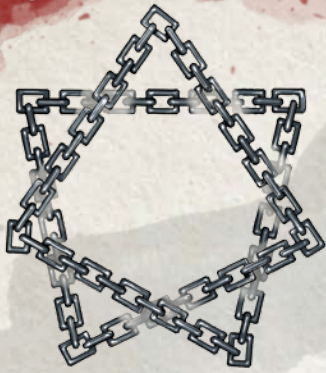
The dark god of the endless tunnels and caverns beneath Exandria, the Crawling King acts as patron to torturers, slavers, and jailers across the realm. His tears of pain and anger carved the pathways under the world, and his realm of imprisonment is a network of deadly caves and manacles where few return. Those who rob others of their freedom offer prayers to him in cellars and other subterranean domains, and other creatures who live in the darkness below worship him and seek his guidance.

The Dawnfather and the Everlight defeated the Crawling King during the Calamity by drawing their nemesis above ground. The Dawnfather pierced his body with 10,000 lances of sunlight, and the Everlight imprisoned him within her serene rays. The tears of suffering and rage the Crawling King shed burned through Exandria, and his faithful fled into these tunnels to escape their enemies' holy light.

The Crawling king is largely rendered as a swollen, malformed worm that slithers through the dark below, a screaming, hairless human head at the helm with three arms carving through the lightless rock.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE CRAWLING KING

- Seek and exalt places where no light touches.
- Revel in the pain you inflict upon others, and relish the pain you suffer yourself as an offering to the Crawling King.
- Imprison those who cannot resist you, and drag all life into the darkness.



**THE CHAINED
OBLIVION**



**THE CLOAKED
SERPENT**



**THE CRAWLING
KING**



**THE LORD OF
THE HELLS**

THE LORD OF THE HELLS

Alignment: Lawful Evil **Domains:** Trickery, Blood

The devil god of the Hells represents mastery of tyranny and domination. His words are honeyed and carefully crafted, soothing and corrupting the mortal heart. The Lord of the Hells holds his domain with an iron rule, and the punishments that await those that cross him are legendary: the basis of nightmare. Evil entities pay him tribute alongside his devils, while warlocks are drawn to his power.

A twisted image of the celestial blood that once bore him, the Lord of the Hells is revealed in many tomes and murals as a handsome humanoid of deep, red skin and long, black hair. Two curling horns rise from his brow, and his lips ever bear a knowing grin.

The enemies of The Lord of the Hells are numerous, even among the Betrayer Gods, many of whom only follow the archdevil for fear of his immense power. The Lord of the Hells's archnemesis is the Changebringer, whose mischief and cunning has vexed him throughout the eons. It was she who defeated him in the Calamity by tricking his fiendish armies into attacking one another. The Devil Lord's greatest triumph during the Calamity was fooling and betraying the Everlight and slaughtering all her followers in one fell stroke—a move that today has united the followers of the Everlight and the Changebringer in an unbreakable bond.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD OF THE HELLS

- *Assert dominance and power over others. Show your strength of will in the image of the Lord.*
- *Repay cruelty done unto you with further evil. If others show you kindness, exploit it.*
- *As you ascend to power, do not pity or show mercy to those you climb over to get there. Compassion is unwarranted for the weak.*

THE RUINER

Alignment: Chaotic Evil • **Domains:** Tempest, War

The Ruiner commands roving hordes of barbaric marauders across the lands to destroy, pillage, and slaughter for the joy of it. Orderless and without honor, the creeds of

the evil hordemaster push orcs and other evil, savage creatures to devour the world around them, giving in to the chaotic and selfish nature of the predator. The Ruiner's most devout servants in Tal'Dorei are the Ravagers, a lawless band of orcs and goblins who delight in slaughtering innocents across the Dividing Plains.

The Archeart shot out the Ruiner's right eye during the Calamity, and the god of slaughter longs for the day he can return the favor twofold. Those who serve the Ruiner are sometimes hypnotized by his hateful rage from across the Divine Gate and fall into a strange bloodlust, longing to slaughter elves and those who worship magic at the altar of the Archeart.

Primitive clay representations can be found in savage communities of his followers, showing the Ruiner as a hulking, bulbous behemoth of an orc. The missing eye has shifted as a minor fold, the prominent eye now central to the face like a nightmarish Cyclops.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE ONE-EYED RUINER

- *Ruin. Conquer. Kill.*
- *The weak exist to be crushed by the strong. Be the strong.*
- *There are no emotions but fury and joy. The rest are weakness.*

THE SPIDER QUEEN

Alignment: Chaotic Evil • **Domains:** Trickery, Knowledge

The evil god of deceit, shadows, and spiders, the Spider Queen weaves a complicated web of schemes and treachery through her worshipers, deceiving allies and enemies alike to gain power. The Spider Queen's worship is entwined with the society of dark elves, even as the drow fall ever deeper into the thrall of the Chained Oblivion's aberrant minions. It is said that the Spider Queen can see through the eyes of all spiders, and that she is truly all-knowing. The Spider Queen holds a searing grudge against the Stormlord, for with one throw of his mighty thunderspear he impaled her against a cliffside, leaving her drow armies leaderless during the Calamity. The Spider Queen and the Ruiner also share a burning hatred for the Archeart—she claims he drove her children below the earth himself—and she often manipulates the Ruiner's



**THE
RUINER**



**THE SPIDER
QUEEN**



**THE STRIFE
EMPEROR**



**THE SCALED
TYRANT**

followers into attacking her enemies so that the drow may remain safe. The only being the Spider Queen fears is the Chained Oblivion; she dreads its alien mind and is furious over what its madness is doing to her children.

Many icons and idols within dark elf society show the image of the Spider Queen, a darkly alluring woman of dark purple skin and silver hair, her abdomen swelling into the terrifying body of a monstrous spider.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE SPIDER QUEEN

- *It is better to be loved than feared, but you may certainly try to be both.*
- *Misdirection, slander, and shadowed steps have more function than direct conflict.*
- *Death to the elves who live under the sun. Death to all their allies!*

THE STRIFE EMPEROR

Alignment: Lawful Evil • **Domain:** War

Blood-drenched armies of brutal warriors oft crush their foes in the name of the Strife Emperor, the evil patron of war and conquest. To serve his will is to accept the call to conflict, seeking lesser people to break and subjugate. War-mongering nations and goblinoid tribes worship the Strife Emperor as they strike out at the world to bend it beneath them. The Strife Emperor twists all living things to his iron will, even forcing nature itself to bow to his whims.

A dark reflection of the honorable warrior, the Strife Emperor is often depicted as a brutish ogre-like man clad from head to toe in jagged black armor. Heads dangle from his belt, and the shadow that obscures his helmeted face does not hide his unblinking, piercing yellow eyes.

The Strife Emperor's greatest enemy is the Wildmother, the goddess who defeated him at Rifenmist during the Calamity. The Strife Emperor grew his armies by corrupting noble creatures into monsters and destroying the wilds to fuel his terrible engines of conflict, and the two deities clashed many times during the war before his defeat at Beynsfal Plateau. The emperor's massive iron armor still litters Beynsfal, and his massive helmet houses the capital city of a ruthless hobgoblin empire.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE STRIFE EMPEROR

- *Fear is your ally. Conquer yours, and draw it from your foes.*
- *Disorder and rebellion are to be punished severely.*
- *Combat is the greatest gift, and perfecting your skills to master it is the greatest pursuit.*

THE SCALED TYRANT

Alignment: Lawful Evil • **Domains:** Trickery, War

The evil queen of dragons is a fearsome god of greed, envy, and hoarded wealth. While chromatic dragons are her clearest worshipers, the Scaled Tyrant accepts the worship of all who love wealth over all things—except the queen of dragons herself, of course. All chromatic dragons have a reverence for their tyrannical queen, but many dragons of near-deific power and ambition chafe under her rule. Though the Scaled Tyrant was pleased by the chaos the Chroma Conclave spread across Exandria, the prideful Conclave never considered themselves subservient to the Dragon Queen.

The Scaled Tyrant's hatred for the Platinum Dragon is as old as the Founding, and her cults are ever hunted by his justice. Her worship has for centuries been limited to chromatic dragons by these zealous paladins, but sects of mortal dragon-worshipers have been appearing across Tal'Dorei ever since the Chroma Conclave's attack.

Most visual representations of the Scaled Tyrant exist as a warning within sanctuaries of the Platinum Dragon. She is often shown as a drake of frightful size, massive leathery wings birthing clouds of poisonous mist with every flight, while she shouts from five vicious dragon heads, each head depicting a different chromatic color of her evil children.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE SCALED TYRANT

- *Amass wealth, and spend little. The gold, and the power that comes with it, is sufficient reward.*
- *Do not forgive nor forget an indignity to yourself. Let no affront go unpunished.*
- *Take what you covet. Those without the strength to defend their dominion are not worthy to have a dominion.*

THE RACES OF TAL'DOREI

Over the past thousand years of civilization, eleven major peoples have left their mark on Tal'Dorei. Humans are the most populous, and their continent-spanning republic is viewed as a testament to their power and influence—though many nonhumans argue that their contributions should not be erased from the history of the Republic of Tal'Dorei. Dwarves, elves, and goliaths have lived on this continent since time immemorial, and while humans may have been the first people to publicly colonize and openly trade in Tal'Dorei, countless others have come before and more will follow in their footsteps. Today, people come from all reaches of the world to escape hardships in their home country, whether the iron rule of Wildemount, the religious imposition of Issylra, or the brutal heat of Marquet.

This section stands as a resource to help inspire you in deciding how your character's racial background fits within the existing realm of Tal'Dorei. The game statistics of each race are identical to those in the *PH*.

DWARVES

The stout and proud dwarves of Exandria build insular societies, and most every dwarf in Tal'Dorei hails from Kraghammer or is descended from those who did. The mountainous stronghold still stands as the central heart of dwarven society, and many of the most celebrated heroes (and villains) of dwarvenkind hail from these fire-warmed halls. Mountain and hill dwarves alike can be found in the many cities and locales of Tal'Dorei, but only hill dwarves make a habit of staying out long, let alone making aboveground settlements of their own. If drawn to more dangerous pursuits, many dwarves turn to mercenary work, wandering the southern end of the Bladeshimmer Shoreline to scavenge lost treasures, or even beyond the Stormcrest Mountains to mark a new life outside the politics of the realm within the Mornset Countryside.

MOUNTAIN DWARVES

More than any other trait, mountain dwarves are known for their stubbornness. As the saying goes, “the dwarves are as unmoving as the mountain they sit under.” Beyond the simple stereotypes of brusqueness, arrogance, and pigheadedness, mountain dwarves are complex people. As the majority culture in Kraghammer, mountain dwarves are shaped by a long history of suspicion. For centuries, new peoples and new ideas in Kraghammer meant danger. They spelled the death of monarchs and incursion by dark, subterranean agents. The only time dwarves proudly opened their arms to a new people, Warren Drassig led all Tal'Dorei into the greatest war since the Age of Arcanum. In the mind of a dwarf, this suspicion is perfectly justified—though people used

to the immigrant culture of Tal'Dorei may find this outlook distressingly xenophobic, and even cruel.

HILL DWARVES

Some dwarves felt confined within their subterranean halls, and sought to move their families into the open lands of the Dividing Plains. These people of the foothills abandoned their elders' teachings of caution and worry, and in exchange found new friends, new business opportunities, spiritual enlightenment, and even arcane knowledge within the human-majority cities of Emon, Kymal, and Westruun. Very few ever set foot within the Verdant Expanse, however, knowing the animosity that the elves of Syngorn hold for those born beneath the mountain. Even so, the rare expatriate dwarf has found kinship within elven homesteads, though they are never fully trusted by the Wardens.

DUERGAR

Fires flare from the darkness and hammers ring in the deep, alerting wary travelers of the underworld to the presence of the duergar. The lightless depths beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains are the tyrannical realm of the gray dwarves, driven by a burning hatred for their kin of the mountains. One question plagues the



dwarven historians of Kraghammer's House Thunderbrand about the dark dwarves: What drove them into the depths in the first place? The only time a duergar prince was captured in battle, he only managed to rasp "The six... we are the six," before succumbing to his wounds. The prevailing theory among dwarven historians is that there was once a sixth noble house of Kraghammer that fled or were cast out, but the dwarven archives—the library that contains the most comprehensive histories of the North anywhere in the world—give no mention of a sixth noble house breaking off from Kraghammer.

ELVES

The elves were the first people of this land. They were the fey descendants who first named their homeland Gwessar, centuries before humans gave it the name Tal'Dorei. The common origin of most elves lies within the wooded lands of the Verdant Expanse, and many elves—wood elves and high elves alike—still call the great forest their home. Though the city of Syngorn is a wondrous thing, many a young elf takes to the road to see what else the world has to offer. This curiosity is considered foolish, and those who leave the comfort of Syngorn for this reason rarely return to open arms. Thankfully, the cities of the Republic of Tal'Dorei are welcoming to such wanderers, and some elven families have called these places home for many long generations.

WOOD ELVES

Hunting across the many Syngornian outposts, most wood elves find their survival skills keenly matched for the wilds of the forest. Wood elves have a long history of dutifully protecting their homeland, and their people make up much of the Verdant Guard that patrols Syngorn and defends the forest around it. Of the elven races, wood elves are typically more venturesome than their kin and prone to bouts of wanderlust, making them ideal adventurers. For guardelves, this manifests as a longing to be stationed in more remote garrisons, such as the Emerald Outpost. This penchant for exploration has led to the spread of wood elf civilization far beyond the Verdant Expanse.

South of the Stormcrest Mountains lies the massive jungle of Rifemist, and within roost the nomadic Orroyen tribes, wandering wardens of the jungle primarily led by a bloodline of primal wood elves who embrace their animalistic nature. Rarely do these elves wander from their jungle home except to trade with the other denizens of the peninsula. But rumors speak of a rare few of these elves who leave their jungle home to see the wider world.

In the frigid north of the Cliffkeep Mountains, under the prismatic glow of the Moonweaver's Ribbons, are the Elvenpeaks. The city atop the spires is Lyrengorn, and the wood elves who make their home beneath Lyrengorn's pines are known best for riding through the wintry skies on wyvernback. Every year, a few people from across Tal'Dorei travel to the Elvenpeaks to watch their sky-swimmers shape the mysterious northern lights.



HIGH ELVES

Within the city of Syngorn itself, many high elves focus their crafts on culture and learning, weaving magics with grace and aplomb. It is understood that protection of their home is key to their continued prosperity, so many elves walk abroad to the Emerald Outpost to watch over relations with the neighboring civilizations. The high elves are so named for their innate magical knowledge; a blessing they attribute to their supreme deity, the Arheart. Many high elves become highly religious sorcerers, exploring their latent powers through their faith. Others still develop their arcane skill by seeking admission to the Alabaster Lyceum in Emon, where they can study the theory of magic in a controlled environment.

DROW

Few elves wish to be associated with their degenerate, subterranean cousins—while many humanoids call them dark elves, the elves of Syngorn instead call them drow. In times long past, the drow were a wise, beautiful people with long, silvery hair and skin of ash. But their society grew decadent and cruel, and their leaders fell to the alluring whispers of the Betrayer God known as the Spider Queen, and they allied with their venomous mistress against the Arheart and his elves in the Calamity. When the Spider Queen was defeated, the drow were driven from the surface world and forced to rebuild their empire in the deep tunnels below the earth. But another power existed in these dark places. The

whispers of Oblivion reached the ears of the drow nobility as their servitors struggled to stave away the aberrations that encircled their cities.

The dark elves are a people on the brink of destruction. Neighbors slaughter one another in the streets of their cities as they succumb to paranoia. When aberrations can take any form—or fool the mind into seeing any form—who can be trusted? Unable to stop their citizens from mass rioting, the drow elite have grown ever more authoritarian, commanding their royal guards to keep order by violently suppressing their people. Amid the chaos, the drow have begun undergoing stark physical changes. Some drow commoners have willingly offered themselves to the aberrations to end their suffering, transforming into white-eyed, shapeshifting doppelgangers. Some drow nobles have fallen entirely into devotion to the Spider Queen, and have willingly sought the Blood of the Spider Queen to become driders in her service.

Drow rarely come to the surface, for most are too proud to return defeated to the sun-drenched lands of the Archheart, even to escape the madness of the underworld. Nevertheless, some still choose this dishonorable path. If any ever sought refuge in Syngorn, they were killed by the Verdant Guard before they reached its gates. Most dark elf refugees live in secret in the cities of Emon, Kymal, and Westruun, hoping to live the rest of their lives in peace. A sizeable group of refugees made it to the elven enclave of Lyrengorn in the

northern Cliffkeep Mountains and live with the wood elves there in peace. Adventuring drow harbor a violent hatred of aberrations, and some leave the Spider Queen's faith to become paladins in service of the Dawnfather, trading their affinity to the dark for a hope in the light of the sun.



HALFLINGS

Halflings are the hillfolk of Tal'Dorei, and have lived as farmers in the Dividing Plains and the foothills of the Cliffkeeps for many generations—some since the end of the Calamity. After surviving such harrowing times, halflings began to wish for a simpler, happier life away from such dark deeds and higher purpose. Centuries have passed, and contentment and peace have become the core of halfling culture. Wanderlust nevertheless simmers beneath many a halfling's contented demeanor, and as the empire of Drassig pushed eastward, halfling communities found themselves swept up in the evolving new age.

When the Scattered War engulfed the continent, halfling society was fractured: the Stoutheart Clan supported fighting against Drassig, while the Lightfoot Clan preferred staying at home and waiting for this war to blow over. Halflings across the realm aligned themselves with one of the two clans—but in the end, even the Lightfoots supported Zan Tal'Dorei's rebellion against Trist Drassig. After the war, many halflings returned to their farms, but others began to assimilate with the human townships that now dotted the land. Adventuring halflings, regardless of their allegiance, found the need to seek their potential too strong to ignore. This has led to many an outstanding halfling hero striking out into the world and marking their place in the local history books as champions, leaders, and even notorious criminals.

The Mornset Countryside has become a new home for halflings who seek the older ways, though the price for this untethered life is proximity to dangerous wilds, and it's common for farmers here to be forced to take up arms and learn to defend their land fiercely.

LIGHTFOOT

The Lightfoot Clan dissolved into its many component families after the war, but the spirit of the Lightfoots still survives. They look out for number one first, and are more prone to running away from conflicts than meeting the oncoming storm with courage. Yet within the

Lightfoot spirit there is a contradiction; for all their love of the comforts of home, there is a certain unquenchable hunger to explore. Most adventuring halflings are Lightfoots who have given into this compulsion.

STOUT

The Stoutheart Clan also dissolved in the wake of the Scattered War, and its ideals and identity have not survived in the same way as the Lightfoots' have. Halflings who display the same brash personality as the Stouthearts of old are merely described as stout, and in certain communities, that is a very great

honor. Even stoutness that is all bluster—like a halfling shouting “Fight me!” at a creature more than three times its size—is respected if it can be molded into true courage.

Stout halflings tend to surprise humans who know of their kind from experiences with meek Lightfoot homebodies, and can be truly cunning diplomats when using this surprise to their advantage. Seeker Assum Emring, for instance, is proud to claim that his first meeting with Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II shocked the sovereign so greatly he was very nearly arrested—but was offered a position on the Sovereign's staff the very next day!

HUMANS

While dwarves, elves, and halflings laid early claim to these lands by surviving the Calamity, the humans who journeyed across the Ozmit Sea from Issylra quickly created the most widespread civilization on Tal'Dorei. Diverse in skills and quick to populate, their cities rose and spread to the eastern shores, eventually growing into their strong and just nation, though their missteps along the way have often been nothing short of catastrophic. Human adventurers can hail from anywhere in Tal'Dorei, though most call the lands connected by the Silvercut Roadway their home: the Bladeshimmer Shoreline, the Dividing Plains, and the Lucidian Coast.

Humans living along the Silvercut provide the infrastructure for trade across the continent, and as such are often involved in some form of craft, business, or production. Should they be more industrious with their pursuits, the capital city of Emon is a chaotic, multicultural hub of potential greatness. Due to the open trade routes between Issylra, Marquet, and Tal'Dorei, humans often relocate between the lands in search of their fortune, so there is quite a variety of cultural background among such large cities. Beyond the cities, dozens of human-made outposts lie on the fringe of the wilderness. Outlanders, explorers, and hermits take refuge here from the hectic day-to-day of city life, but still find danger enough in the wilderness to keep them on their toes.

DRAGONBORN

Dragonborn of Exandria have lived in near isolation for ages, keeping to the lands of Wildemount to guard their culture, their secrets, and their rites from the opportunistic human kingdoms that rule most of that land. Yet, following the rise of Tal'Dorei, the new sovereign extended the open hand of diplomacy to the small nation of Draconia, and dragonborn were transformed from a myth to a people one could see every day walking the streets of Emon. All dragonborn, draconian and ravenite alike, can be of any scale color.

DRAONIANS

The Draconian dragonborn stemmed from a bloodline that developed a tail at birth. Claiming stronger traits and

finer intelligence, they enslaved their tailless “ravenite” brethren, and kept them in servitude within Draconia and below, working the mines and caves of the Dreemoth Ravine. Untrusting of outsiders by nature, Draconian citizens held an aloof and elitist air throughout their interactions with the other races of the world, and attempts to build an alliance were stymied by pride and misunderstanding until the destruction of Draconia at the hand of the Chroma Conclave. Surviving draconians have since scattered across the world, many still in shock over the loss of their homeland and trying to acclimate to a world where they have no social standing.

RAVENITES

The Chroma Conclave's destruction of Draconia allowed the ravenites to break the bonds of abuse and slavery, allowing them to set out upon the path to self-determination. Many ravenites now venture into the world with eyes filled with wonder, wishing to see all there is to see beyond the rock and chains that marked much of their existence. Few ravenites can resist jeering at their old oppressors when they meet, and the draconians must decide how they will respond: with grace and the spirit of reconciliation, or with resentment and bile?



Should your character be born from the toil and history of the Ravenite clans, make these adjustments in place of the base Dragonborn traits. Age, Alignment, and Size remain the same as base dragonborn:

- **Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 1 and your Wisdom score increases by 1.
- **Damage Resistance.** You have resistance to non-magical slashing damage.
- **Speed.** Your base walking speed is 35 feet.

GNOMES

Gnomes and gnomish culture are relatively uncommon in Tal'Dorei. Although humans and rock gnomes both hail from Issylra, most gnomes never had the chance or desire to leave their homeland. Some did migrate over during the Age of Arcanum and endured the Calamity within the deep caverns of the Cliffkeep Mountains, rebuilding

their home for a time as the rock gnome village of Wittebak. Others traveled into the Dividing Plains and found a home among the eastward-bound pioneers. Their short stature has always proved a social hindrance in the lands of the tall folk. While gnomes fight for respect within human communities, they can prove themselves through deeds, or humor, among their taller neighbors.

ROCK GNOMES

Rock gnomes prize cleverness over all other traits, and their cultural desire to explain natural phenomena culminated in the gnomish city of Wittebak—the most technologically advanced city in Tal'Dorei. Yet it did not last. Wittebak was destroyed by giants centuries ago, and the rock gnomes fled across the Cliffkeep Mountains in search of sanctuary. Many refugees found homes in Kraghammer, and are striving to recreate the centuries of innovation lost in the destruction of Wittebak. Kymal has also become a center of rock gnome population, and many enjoy figuring out clever ways to rig its many gambling halls, or practice applying new pocket-picking techniques on their occasional wealthy patrons.

FOREST GNOMES

Forest gnomes are not native to Tal'Dorei, but unlike rock gnomes, they are believed to hail from the Feywild, much like the elves. A half-dozen small forest gnome communities exist within the Verdant Expanse, hidden from the prying eyes of elves and human explorers. Forest gnomes are more than happy to help their rock gnomish kin in their search to understand how nature works and how to manipulate it. Knowledge is not as important as wisdom in forest gnome culture, but they are keenly aware that the rock gnomes' science can protect the natural world in ways that they could not.

Not all forest gnomes are as close to their fey identity as those of the Verdant Expanse. Some more worldly clans have spread to other forests across Tal'Dorei. Most notably, the Trickfoot clan has made the the Bramblewood outside of Westruun their home for generations, along with several other families. These distant clans are more practical than their fey kin and less uptight than their distant, rocky cousins, giving them a curious personality perfect for the life of a traveling adventurer.

GOLIATHS

Most folk of giant blood ignore the political nonsense of the smaller folk. As the old goliath saying goes: "Only people with little strength like to talk." Goliaths are of giant ancestry—however distantly—and keep many of the old stone giant traditions. As goliaths keep no written history, it's unclear why they are so small compared to their massive stone giant cousins, but it is undeniable that the two races are somehow related.

Living in small, solitary villages along the Cliffkeep and Stormcrest mountain ranges, goliath communities maintain



an advanced hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Some have ventured down into the Dividing Plains to roam as nomadic raiders, taking what they wish from the unprotected few, but the sundering of the Herd of Storms (see the **Gazetteer of Tal'Dorei** chapter) sent many wandering without purpose—quite a few have turned to mercenary work along the Lucidian Coast to regain their sense of belonging.

Others are sought for their unrivaled might and find a home in bandit clans that ravage the Ruins of O'Noa or the outskirts of Stilben. A small number of goliaths have been taken under the wing of the wealthy elite and given advanced study within Emon; some out of charity, others for these nobles' own cruel amusement.

Most other people of Tal'Dorei meet goliaths not with animosity, but with curiosity. Many people of Westruun are still apprehensive about dealing with goliaths because of Kevdak and the Herd of Storms' brief occupation of their city, but they are doing their best to work through their instinctive fears.

HALF-ELVES

Humans adore half-elven children. To them, it is not only a great honor for a family to join their bloodline with that of an elf, but it is also a point of patriotic pride, demonstrating the strength of the bond between Syngorn and Tal'Dorei.

Yet for as long as the humans of Tal'Dorei have loved their mixed-race children, the elves of Syngorn have looked on them with contempt. They are called half-breeds, half-bloods, or "ill-born." They carry the shame of impurity and the mark of lessened potential by diluting their superior, magical elven blood with that of humanity. That a half-elf had no choice in the matter of their birth is irrelevant; they are reviled all the same.

Few half-elves find prominence in Syngorn. Many half-elven adventurers are wanderers not by choice, but because are driven out from the forest by their peers. These adventurers are often untrusting of others because of their trauma, especially if they were cast out at a young age.

Half-elf vagabonds typically find a home within the cities of Tal'Dorei, where acceptance and even praise for their nature is much more common. A surprising number make their home within the sunless depths of Kraghammer, finding kinship with the dwarves in their mutual dislike of elven society. Others still settle in the free lands of the Rifemist Peninsula, among wild folk who don't care what's in your blood, so long as you can heft a hatchet.

HALF-ORCS

Humans do not care for half-orc children. In their eyes, half-orcs are ugly, stupid, and destructive by nature—and ultimately no different from their bloodthirsty orc parent. Orcs have no love for their half-human progeny, either. To an orc, a half-orc is weak, their lust for slaughter dulled by the emotions and compassion of humanity.

Unloved by both parents, half-orcs must find ways to survive in a world that cares nothing for them. They are passionate, driven, and eager to prove themselves—and it is not uncommon for half-orcs to make trouble within the city slum or orcish chasm they call home. Living in such opposition, many half-orcs feel the urge to show their worth through action, and exemplary half-orc heroes have risen throughout history, renowned for their bravery and valor. The honor heaped upon half-orc heroes of the Scattered War and more recent conflicts has helped calm tensions in Tal'Dorei's larger and more accepting cities, but the outlying settlements still meet half-orcs with disrespect and even open violence. As such, most half-orcs beyond Emon are still found living on the outskirts of human colonies and villages.

Some half-orcs reject humanity, having seen its ugliest side. These half-orcs see both halves of their lineage as equally monstrous; one side is just better at hiding it. They wander the wilds with the primal herds of barbaric hunters, like the Rivermaw of the Dividing Plains, using their brawn to earn respect amongst their leaders. A tribe of rough-and-tumble warriors called the Icewalkers patrols where the northern edge of the Cliffkeep Mountains meet the Neverfields, hunting the beasts that dwell there. And some choose to live among the orcs, hardened and desensitized by their bestial family's abuse.



As the orcs did not walk upon Exandria until after the Calamity, half-orcs are youngest of the “civilized” mortal races. They have no civilizations of their own, and most are born of human and orc parents. Many half-orcs can go their entire lives meeting only two or three other half-orcs, and very few sire children together. Discussion of parentage is a deadly taboo and a source of great trauma among half-orcs—many were born from an orcish mother who captured a human man on a raid for pleasure. A rare few, however, are told stories by their human parent about being saved by an orc during a raid and fleeing into the mountains to hide. In stories like these, the compassionate orc rarely survives long enough to see the birth of their child.

GENASI

Exandria's lands are rife with elemental power. Primordial energy constantly flows into the world from elemental rifts across the land, and such powerful primal powers occasionally influence or alter the nature of their surroundings. This is also true of some who have spent years in proximity to such a source of power, and of those who travel the outer planes long enough to find the seed of elemental power take root within their blood. These planetouched folk now harbor the potential to give birth to genasi, people born with facets of

the element that altered their parents—though genasi of the same element can also give birth to genasi children.

Though genasi still bear features resembling their parents' race, they have clearly become something else entirely. Their facial features are augmented with elemental traces and subtle abilities manifest with adolescence, becoming alien and something new altogether. While such people are rare within Tal'Dorei, they are most common among the Ashari due to their elemental destiny. Those who risk living among common society often are met with stares, ridicule, or dubious curiosity.

Each of the four genasi elements have one race most commonly associated with them, though unusual combinations of parent races and genasi elements exist. The most common parents for air genasi are halflings; for earth genasi are dwarves; for fire genasi are tieflings; and for water genasi are humans.

TIEFLINGS

Those who bear the mark of Hell are first met with mistrust, then curiosity—and in the more rural areas of Tal'Dorei, fear. Countless scholars have delved through thousands of years of Issylran history in search of the origin of tieflings, to little avail. The most complete extant answer is that, during the Age of Arcanum, a cabal of power-hungry Issylran warlocks consorted with dark entities, and many these unions resulted in children neither wholly human nor fiend. These children denied their ash-blackened fate and traveled across the world in hopes of defining themselves through their deeds, not their nature.

The first tieflings to walk on Tal'Dorei sailed from Issylra during the Age of Arcanum, fleeing religious zealots who believed their very existence was an abomination.

Most tieflings in Tal'Dorei refused to fight during the Calamity—when a people have seen so much evil from all kinds of people and even the gods, a certain nihilism inevitably takes hold. In the centuries after the Divergence, tieflings who had grown weary of gods and demons rejoiced; in a way, the gods' imprisonment had freed them from their cursed past.

When Warren Drassig and his sons conquered the elven lands of Gwessar, the tieflings of the continent rose in near unanimous rebellion against the tyrant. They had seen his kind before, they knew his methods, and they knew others would suffer like they once did. The fear and apprehension that surrounded tieflings diminished some when the other people of Tal'Dorei fought alongside them, but the tension never fully faded. As such, most tieflings stick to the more studied and diverse cities like Emon and Westruun. Kymal and Stilben are not devoid of tieflings, and many there gleefully embrace their fiendish ancestry, finding their calling in foul deeds and shady business. The dwarves of Kraghammer generally keep tieflings at arm's length, while the denizens of Syngorn rarely leave a tiefling without watchful guard.



THE FACTIONS AND SOCIETIES OF TAL'DOREI

While the dominant cultures of the continent have carved structure and law from the rough clay left beyond the Divergence, these cultures each comprise several smaller factions. Whether councils of traditionally-minded politicians striving to maintain control in a world beset by chaos and danger, or a union of opportunists ever-vigilant to reap the benefits of an exploitable populace, these factions drive and manipulate the social and political direction of Tal'Dorei. The alliances and tensions that can rise between the following societies can guide your adventurers' destiny across the spectrum of heroism and villainy.

THE ARCANIA PANSOPHICAL

All Tal'Dorei's greatest mages fought at the Battle of the Umbra Hills. They saw the incursion of demons and devils firsthand, and were rightly terrified that the spawn of the Betrayer Gods could ever return to the world. It was clear that the Divergence did not wholly prevent supernatural evil from infringing upon the world, and the mages of Exandria must prevent future "surprises" of this nature. The mistakes of the Age of Arcanum must never be repeated. Considering this, Yurek Windkeeper, high enchanter of Syngorn and a well-respected arcanist, reached out to the realm's most trusted and capable mages, and together they formed a private society called the Arcana Pansophical.



GOALS

The chief priority of these powerful arcane specialists is to maintain the "Truth of Magic," a strict code enacted to never again allow the rampant misuse of magic seen in the Age of Arcanum. General members are referred to as "Guides," while the higher circle of members who deal in judgment and oversight are called "Makers." At least one member is established at each place of arcane learning.

Membership is largely kept secret unless out of necessity, though the existence of the order is relatively common knowledge. Anyone found to be practicing magic is logged and checked up on routinely, as misuse of magic is grounds for arrest, judgment by the Makers, and punishment outside of the local law. Even so, their reach and oversight are not without limits, and many dark and terrible dealings manage to go unseen by the Arcana Pansophical.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Arcana Pansophical is respected, if somewhat feared, in most human settlements. Syngorn and other elven communities see the Pansophical as allies, as the roots of the society began with Yurek within Syngorn itself. Kraghammer only respects members that are dwarves, and treat the rest with mistrust.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

ENCHANTER YUREK WINDKEEPER

Maker, Elf Wizard (Enchanter). Founder of the Arcana Pansophical, Yurek generally stays within Syngorn as the nexus of the order, acting as consultant to the Wardens of Syngorn.

ALCHEMIST OZ GRUUDE

Maker, Halfling Alchemist. A rather ornery halfling, Gruude's interests lie in refining the latent magical elements in the "dormant" world, traveling often to continue his research.

SEER GLORIA IOS

Maker, Human Wizard (Diviner). One of the great oracles of divination, her visions have sent her to Vasselheim, acting as a reaching arm of the organization.

MAGUS SEANOR WILES

Maker, Human Mage Tutor Extraordinaire. A humble-looking traveler, his specialty is finding fresh and emerging talent and helping them refine their arcane gifts.

PLANERIDER RYN

Maker, Tieffing Planar Studies Specialist. A keen student to Yurek who has grown into a master of planar travel and arcane ley line patterns, Ryn is still mid-study, often darting between realms to complete her research.

TINKERER QUASH DENTDRUGGLE

Guide, Gnome Construct Specialist. Obsessed with the development of autonomous and living arcane constructs, he is holed up in his laboratory within Kraghammer.

THE TRUTH OF MAGIC

The Pansophical's myriad rules on the use and misuse of magic are detailed at length in centuries of amendments to the full text of the Truth of Magic. Though the Truth's bizarre intricacies are left up to the GM, the Truth's preamble establishes three unbreakable edicts:

"In the eternal interest of the preservation of harmony within the realm of Exandria, we, the Arcana Pansophical, establish the Truth of Magic, and three edicts from which none shall stray. Those arcanists found in gross violation of the Truth will be punished by the full extent of this order—beyond the reach of any local law.

Though the study of Necromancy shall be restricted to none in the interest of magical understanding, the animation of the dead is a violation of the Truth.

The Arcane is a tool to be wielded for the good of the people. To use its power in the pursuit of wanton destruction or murder is a violation of the Truth.

Though the jurisdiction of the Pansophical supersedes the power of local laws, a mage who willfully breaks the laws of the land is in violation of the Truth."

ARCANIST ALLURA VYSOREN

Guide, Human Wizard (Abjurer). Member of the Tal'Dorei Council and retired adventurer, Allura has helped maintain the political significance of the Arcana Pansophical within Emon.

ELEMENTALIST DRAKE THUNDERBRAND

Guide, Dwarf Wizard (Evoker). Driven to bind the physical elements of the chaotic planes to his will, Drake is a prodigy of new incantations in the field.

REALMSEER ESKIL RYNDARIEN

Former Member, Human Archmage. A Maker for most of his life, he grew frustrated with the politics and limitations of the order and retired to Westruun to pursue his own interests.

THE ASHARI

While the boundaries between the planes are generally strong, there are some places across Exandria where the veil is thin and occasionally sundered entirely. There are places in the world where the elemental planes bleed into the Material Plane, scarring the land with their primordial power and threatening all surrounding life. During one Celestial Solstice—a time when the planar boundaries grow weakest—elemental rifts of untold proportions burst open across Exandria. Fires and earthquakes ravaged the



lands, and the people of the world struggled to combat the elemental monsters that poured forth from the rifts. The tide of elementals was eventually stemmed, but the world was gripped by fear—what would happen on the next solstice?

In the wake of the planar disturbance, a society of druidic masters called the Ashari made a covenant to divide and form four separate tribes to seal and watch over the sources of these unleashed energies. The Pyrah Ashari left for Issylra, and the Vesrah Ashari relocated to an island cluster in the Ozmit Sea. The Terrah and Zephrah Ashari remained within Tal'Dorei near their respective elemental rifts. A dozen generations later, the Ashari still hold watch over these tumultuous locations.

GOALS

Each Ashari Tribe is tasked with guarding a tear in the planes between one of the elemental planes and Exandria. Here, they strive to understand, master, and ultimately subdue the ever-escaping elemental forces. They attempt to bring balance to the surrounding lands and heal the rift over time, though recurring cosmic events tend to reopen these wounds.

The Pyrah Tribe oversees the Fire Elemental Rift in the valley caldera of the Sunderpeak Mountain range in Othanzia, on the continent of Issylra. The Vesrah Tribe watches over the Water Elemental Rift on the Islands of Anamn within the Ozmit Sea. On the southwest edge of the Cliffkeep Mountains, the Terrah Tribe stands vigilant over the Earth Elemental Rift, while in the windy Summit Peaks, the Zephrah Ashari keep the Air Elemental Rift, while also watching over the Frostweald.

Due to the isolated nature of each tribe, they find it necessary to maintain contact and influence with each other. Each is led by a single elemental master, a title that is passed on by blood or honor for generations. As every new generation comes of age, the young leader-to-be must take up an *Aramente*, or “noble odyssey.” They must set out and travel between all other Ashari tribes, meet with their leaders, and train until an understanding and respect is earned from the hosting tribe.

Upon returning, they ascend to the head of their tribe, while the elder retires. This journey often takes years, and should one such chosen Ashari not return within a reasonable period, a next-of-kin is chosen of the same family or an allied bloodline to take up the *Aramente*.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Ashari maintain peaceful, if sometimes tense, relationships between the tribes. Beyond this, much of life within the Ashari is hidden from outsiders' prying eyes. They've come to understand the necessity of good relations with nearby cities, so occasionally members will visit and trade with towns and people near their guarded fane. As such, they maintain positive (if limited) relations with the free cities of Emon and Syngorn.

The Ashari nurture a seed of disrespect and mistrust for Kraghammer, as the dwarves constantly disregard their warnings against reckless mining and because their arrogance during the last eruption of the Terrah Rift led to widespread quakes and the collapse of an entire mountain.

Though some Ashari worship the Wildmother, they generally take caution with anyone who is largely devoted to a non-nature aligned deity—particularly the Law-bearer, despite her relationship with the Wildmother.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

PA'TICE, HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN

Human Leader of Terrah. Elderly leader of the earth Ashari, Pa'tice still shows vigor and strength to resist his age, having led his people through many very tough challenges. His stubbornness is legendary, and it's said even death has been forced to wait until Pa'tice deems it his proper time.

KORRIN OF THE ZEPHRAH

Half-Elf Elder of Zephrab. His wife Vilya was lost while she took the *Aramente*, and when the previous Voice of the Tempest died of illness, Korrin was forced to act as Voice until his daughter Keyleth came of age and completed her *Aramente*. Gentle with those who show honor, and merciless to those who threaten his people.

KEYLETH, VOICE OF THE TEMPEST

Half-Elf Leader of Zephrab. Hero of Tal'Dorei and member of Vox Machina, Keyleth had completed her *Aramente* and taken leadership among her people following the destruction of the Chroma Conclave. Though a bit shy and awkward at times, she has grown to embrace the wisdom she's acquired through her travels and exhibit her quality as a leader.

THE BRAWLERS' LEAGUE

The brutal bloodsports of the Brawlers' League began, unsurprisingly, during the vicious Drassig Dynasty. In that cruel era, many of Emon's affluent and indolent social elite used their wealth to engage in entertainment



of a more “visceral” variety. The kingdom's poor were already fighting each other for scraps, so why not pay them to literally fight to the death for their amusement?

Some strong, charismatic ruffians used this opportunity to gain social power for themselves, and chief among them was a rough-and-tumble entrepreneur from Kraghammer named Bruel Sunderchin. Reaching out to his network of lowlifes and cutthroats, Sunderchin became ringleader of an annual gladiator tournament that caters expressly to Exandria's wealthiest elite.

Those who have become invested members of the League's events are anonymously delivered a golden coin stamped with their symbol in the weeks leading up to an event. These coins are required for entry into the events, and each of those who wish to join, whether as a patron or sponsor, requires a coin of their own.

GOALS

The Brawlers' League is always in search of hidden and well-guarded locations around Tal'Dorei (and sometimes other realms) to establish their annual event. A combatant or team is required to have a known and cleared sponsor or manager to enter the event. There are two tiers of bouts; one tier has teams of six battling via single elimination until a victor is declared. The other features single combatants fighting one-on-one, single elimination, until a victor is declared. Killing your opponents isn't encouraged, but isn't explicitly *discouraged*, either. Bets are placed in person at the event, or remotely (via arcane messages and *sending stones*) from all around Exandria.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Brawlers' League is extremely illegal in all major cities across Tal'Dorei. Should lawkeepers of any nation discover the location of the annual event, the venue would find itself swiftly strangled by the long arm of the law. As such, magical protections and sentinels are placed throughout the event to prevent any unapproved entry, or to wipe the memory of those who do infiltrate.

A common rumor states that numerous political figures who publicly decry the event secretly partake in the gambling, and the location of the event is concealed not only by magic, but also impenetrable layers of bureaucracy. Kraghammer has hosted the event several times, with most local guard and political clan houses turning a blind eye.

If there is a nest of Clasp working near an event, it's not uncommon for the Brawlers' League to hire them to get word out to the right folk, providing protection and allowing them to grant loans to poorer patrons.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

OBEN "BROADSTAFF" SUNDERCHIN

Dwarf Organizer and Head of Brawlers' League. Descendant of Bruel and inheritor of the League's top position, Oben secretly goes by the name Broadstaff and doesn't directly appear at events to avoid public connection with the League.

KRADIN GRIMTHORNE

Dwarf Fight Manager. A previously disgraced and ostracized fellow, Grimthorne is making a name for himself outside of Kraghammer as a finder and manager of fighting talent.

THE CHAMBER OF WHITESTONE

Generations ago, a team of intrepid explorers and fortune seekers sailed from Port Damali in Wildemount to Northeastern Tal'Dorei through the Shearing Channel, but wrecked upon the Alabaster Sierras' rocky cliffs. The expedition was led by a human family called de Rolo, and they bravely led the survivors to safety after the wreck. They took refuge in a valley within the Alabaster Sierras, and there they discovered the holy Sun Tree, a radiant tree blessed by the Dawnfather. A community grew around the sacred tree, and the respected and beloved de Rolos were exalted to lords of their settlement, which they called Whitestone.

The sovereign city-state of Whitestone enjoyed peace for many generations outside of larger scale politics, but this peace came to an abrupt halt when Lord Sylas and Lady Delilah Briarwood, opportunistic cultists of the Whispered One, invaded Whitestone and slaughtered



the de Rolos. Their reign ended six years later when the only surviving de Rolos, Percival and Cassandra, reclaimed the city with the aid of Vox Machina. With the tyrants dethroned, Percival established a council titled the Chamber of Whitestone to rule in his frequent absence, and the city strives to return to a time of prosperity.

GOALS

Under the watch of Lady Cassandra de Rolo, the chamber handles and surveys all political aspects of life in Whitestone. Its foremost goals are to undo the damage done by the Briarwoods, to repair its shattered infrastructure, and to restore trade with the rest of Tal'Dorei. Whitestone provided haven for refugees after the Chroma Conclave destroyed Emon, and the city has become a major player within the realm of Tal'Dorei. Its need to make alliances and rebuild its broken military has never been greater.

Current Chamber leadership is organized by areas of responsibility.

- The *Guardian of Woven Stone* is the title given to the central figure on the council, responsible for higher civil justice, community unification, and oversight of internal government.
- The *Steward of Sunblessed Gifts* is responsible for local farming and goods, overseeing distribution between citizens and exportation.
- The *Curator of Fortune's Bounty* is responsible for all major commerce, both local and regarding trade with allied/foreign entities.
- The *Keeper of Divine Virtue* is responsible for religious organization and spiritual guidance in the multiple faiths within the region, both as a religious leader, and protector of practices.
- The *Pale Lord of Wardship* is responsible for the enforcement of local law and organization of the Paleguard, acts as judge on smaller matters of civil justice, and oversees defense of the city during times of war.
- The *Sophist of Native Ingenuity* is responsible for the construction and infrastructure of the city and castle.
- The *Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt* is responsible for diplomatic relations, and rooting out indigenous dangers throughout the Parchwood to protect the citizens of Whitestone.

RELATIONSHIPS

Whitestone's previous solitary existence, despite its benefits, left it without allies in its time of need. The Chamber of Whitestone has developed a relationship with the Council of Tal'Dorei to better ensure their city's safety. These days, trade caravans are a common sight along the Silvercut Roadway, transporting goods between Whitestone and

Emon. Beyond this new agreement with Emon, however, Whitestone remains isolated from the rest of Tal'Dorei.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

LADY CASSANDRA JOHANNA VON MUSEL KLOSSOWSKI DE ROLO, GUARDIAN OF WOVEN STONE

Human Rogue/Fighter, Head of the Chamber of Whitestone. The youngest of the de Rolo siblings, Cassandra survived the terrible reign of the Briarwoods. Though she fell under their sway during the occupation, she has emerged stronger and determined to restore Whitestone and redeem her past actions.

LORD PERCIVAL FREDRICKSTEIN VON MUSEL KLOSSOWSKI DE ROLO III, SOPHIST OF NATIVE INGENUITY

Human Gunslinger, Member of the Chamber of Whitestone. The darkly intelligent savior of Whitestone and oldest surviving de Rolo, Percival is driven by love of family, love of friends, and the importance of legacy. As a member of Vox Machina, Percival is rarely in Whitestone.

LADY VEX'AHLIA, BARONESS OF THE THIRD HOUSE OF WHITESTONE AND GRAND MISTRESS OF THE GREY HUNT

Half-Elf Ranger/Rogue, Member of the Chamber of Whitestone. Vox Machina's charming ranger Vex'ahlia is a scoundrel first and foremost. Her involvement in Whitestone's politics is dubious at best, but the baroness has nonetheless taken to her title with great glee.

GROG STRONGJAW, GRAND POOBAH DE BOINK, IN CHARGE OF ALL THIS-AND-THAT

Grog is the noble, if simple, warrior of Vox Machina. No one really knows if Grog's noble title is a real title at all, or if Percy was just joking when he gave it to him. Grog likes it, and that's good enough for most people.

THE CLARET ORDERS

Hundreds of years ago, a fell power exerted its dark will over Wildemount, corrupting its outlying townships and spreading chaos among its people. Undeath washed over grave sites like a plague, shadowed beasts stalked the midnight woods, and the influence of fiends befouled even Wildemount's purest souls.

In the eleventh hour, a priest of the Matron of Ravens named Trencé Orman prayed for a way to protect his flock. The Matron's inspiration came in the form of long-hidden knowledge: the secrets to blood magic. Taking his gifts, Trencé trained his most trusted warriors in these techniques, giving a portion of their humanity in exchange for the power to defend their people. This marked the origin of the Claret Orders, and the first Blood Clerics and Blood Hunters.

The Claret Orders work in relative secrecy, as the nature of their abilities are largely misunderstood and often lead to persecution. Their numbers are small, as the price is great and the Orders only accept

those strong of heart with little to lose. Small sects of the Orders have ventured West to wander the lands of Tal'Dorei in recent years, keeping out of the public eye and remaining vigilant to the signs of familiar darkness undermining the region.

GOALS

The Creed of the Claret Orders asks its followers to commit their lives to the hunt of entities and creatures that threaten the sanctity of life and joy. While the sacrifice is great, the reward is the continued existence of purity and good in the world. The Orders strive to protect those who cannot protect themselves from the shadows, taking no credit for their deeds or reward for their services, beyond the means to live and travel. Some have strayed, focusing on building a fortune for themselves, but should word of such intent make it back to the heads of the Orders, and their actions begin to threaten the innocents they've sworn to protect, they may find themselves the hunted.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Claret Orders have no alliance or allegiance to any standing government or group. Solitary in action and discrete in display, they've not yet drawn the attention of many factions in Tal'Dorei. However, it is only a matter of time before curious eyes begin to seek answers to questions about these dark guardians and their true nature.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

CLARET DIRECTOR TERESA DULAMAR

Dwarf Blood Cleric of Ravens. Head of the Claret Orders in Tal'Dorei, she mostly stays within Kymal as an information nexus for her hunters who play sentinel to these newer lands. Collected and seemingly cold, she keeps her compassion hidden before the untrusted riffraff.

HUNTER JORICK LAMENSH

Human Blood Hunter. Right hand to Teresa Dulamar and capable member of the Order of the Profane Soul, his hatred for fiends and their making of pawns of good people is only matched by his skill with a blade.

"As blood flows through and invigorates the body, so faith flows through and invigorates the soul. Ever remember this: Thy blood and thy faith are one in the same. Spill not thy blood nor that of another heedlessly, but do not hesitate to spill either when the cause is just."

—From the Crimson Canon,
a holy text of the Claret Orders



THE CLASP

Built upon the ruins of the old Winksmen Thieves Guild founded under the rule of Drassig, the Clasp is a very well established secret organization consisting of thieves, fences, assassins, saboteurs, spies, and smugglers. Based largely in and under Emon through a network of subterranean tunnels, they run smaller outfits in Westruun, Stilben, and Kymal. Members are branded with the guild's symbol on their mid back, signifying allegiance and commitment. The Clasp operates like a business-minded crime family, celebrating loyalty and truth to one's word over most other merits. A member pays their debts, keeps their promises, and always seeks opportunities for the betterment of the Clasp.

Leaders of a Clasp sect are titled Spirelings, and they oversee assigned elements of the organization's functions. Spirelings hold equal power within a sect, and there is always an odd number acting within that location to break any disagreements over business ventures and actions.

GOALS

While the immediate assumption is that the Clasp is merely interested in profit at any cost (and that is a merit of the Clasp), they also wish to preserve the function and prosperity of civilization. It is well known that a thriving city is a profitable one, and an enemy of civilization is a foe of the Clasp. They largely consider themselves a necessary dark underbelly, willing to do the under-the-table deeds that the wealthy and powerful cannot commit with their own hands. The Clasp also understands that conflict breeds a healthy economy, and has occasionally kindled the flames of unrest to keep things tense and profitable. There is also virtue in a distracted administration being easy to manipulate.

Were it not for the branch of the Clasp in Emon, the Chroma Conclave's attack would likely have forever destroyed its culture. However, thanks to the Clasp's role as a "shadow civilization," the people of Emon could maintain their foothold at home, even under the watchful eye of Thordak the Cinder King.



RELATIONSHIPS

While some of the Clasp's activities are secretly state-sanctioned, it is highly illegal and extremely dangerous to be a member or be caught doing business directly with them. Most city guards have orders to arrest upon discovery, and raids are occasionally conducted with varying degrees of success. Having friends in the barracks makes for an easy escape.

The Clasp frowns upon dogmatic religion or cultish behavior, as these have conflicted with the organization's business in the past, and always ended messily.

Since the arrival of the Myriad within Tal'Dorei from Wildemount, the Clasp has been on extremely high alert, seeking information on them and any means of banishing this new competition. Their Stilben sect has already gotten into a few bloody altercations with the Myriad, and rumors of a coming turf war instill worry in the local mercantile.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

SPIRELING SHENN

Human Spireling of Secrets (Emon). A powerful illusionist, Shenn runs a far-reaching network of spies and informants. A shrewd businessman and careful dealmaker, he's eager to spread the influence of the Clasp beyond Tal'Dorei.

SPIRELING WARREN

Half-Orc Spireling of Blades (Emon). Deadly duelist turned assassin master of the Clasp, Warren handles all contracts that involve kidnapping, assassination, or intimidation.

SPIRELING ZILLOA

Half-Elf Spireling of Shadows (Emon). An accomplished burglar, Zilloa has risen to the head of all thieving, smuggling, and black market dealings within the Clasp of Emon. She has taken over following the killing of Modeth.

SPIRELING GHOLESH

Human Spireling of Shadows (Westruun). A mysterious man whose face is always hidden behind a leather mask resembling an ogre. He is known to relentlessly pursue his ambitions, and the other spirelings watch him closely.

SPIRELING OALAN

Dwarf Spireling of Blades (Westruun). Brash and prone to fits of violence when balked, Oalan is one of the more social and publically-visible members of the Clasp in Westruun. Her arrogance is only matched by her skill with a dagger.

SPIRELING FETCH

Halfling Spireling of Secrets (Westruun). Creepy and unkempt in appearance, his gaunt visage only distracts from his cunning and his keen manipulation skills.

*When night is come and darkness falls;
Locks help not, or do stone walls;
Slinking and hiding, like poison asp;
Close tight thy eyes, see not the Clasp.*

—Childhood rhyme in Clasp-infested towns

THE COUNCIL OF TAL'DOREI

When the new reign of Tal'Dorei was established roughly three centuries ago, Zan Tal'Dorei did not wish to be given unchecked or uncounseled rule over the realm. Though she was crowned by a small council, she expanded its ranks by selecting her trusted allies and even dissenting voices to form an assembly of scholars, generals, and philosophers to govern at her side. This Council of Tal'Dorei worked at their Sovereign's side to rebuild the realm following the end of Drasig's line, and were instrumental in the recovery and subsequent prosperity of Tal'Dorei.



Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II, the latest and last of the Tal'Dorei line, publically ended the monarchy and passed power over to the council, formally divesting his line of power. Tragically, this ceremony was interrupted by the arrival of the five dragons known as the Chroma Conclave, the subsequent destruction of Emon, and Uriel's death at the talons of the green dragon Raishan. In the chaos, the few surviving members of the newly-empowered Council were scattered, desperate to find safety from the Conclave. Upon the destruction of Thordak and the liberation of Emon, the remaining Council members reformed the realm as a republic under the same name, restoring a semblance of stability to Tal'Dorei once more.

GOALS

During Zan Tal'Dorei's reign, the Council of Tal'Dorei existed to aid and inform the Sovereign on how best to execute his or her duties. The council has evolved to now oversee all major functions of government under their banner throughout Tal'Dorei. Each council member is assigned a domain of responsibility, and they either inherit the existing infrastructure of subordinates, or restructure with the approval of the rest of the council. The domains are divided as such: Development, Arcana, Law, Commerce, Information, Defense, and if needed, War. The council members are responsible for these domains throughout the city of Emon, and work closely with community leaders within other cities to maintain order.

- The *Master of Development* works with the masonry guilds to approve and oversee all major construction and renovation within the city of Emon, as well as larger projects in Westruun and Kymal.

- The *Master of Arcana* keeps vigil over the lawful use of magics within Tal'Dorei, informs the council on matters beyond the mundane, and occasionally works with the Alabaster Lyceum's Headmaster.
- The *Master of Law* enforces Tal'Dorei's written law from within the Watchful Hall, serving as High Judge on grand matters of the court, approving any exalted amendments, and managing the smaller courts across the land.
- The *Master of Commerce* works with all major merchant guilds and trading networks within Emon and beyond. They are to maintain a healthy economy, further good trade relations, and watch over the treasury.
- The *Master of Information* oversees foreign diplomacy and maintains a well-developed network of spies and informants throughout the realm and beyond. They are to listen for whispers beyond the reach of the council's ears and stand ever vigilant for political dangers.
- The *Master of Defense* is head of the Emon Guard, working closely with the Master of Law to maintain order and peace within the city, and sometimes beyond. Leadership of military might is assigned to the Master of Defense in times of peace.
- The *Master of War* is a temporary position, only filled during times of severe strife and impending conflict. The rest of the council elects the Master of War, who takes charge of the military from the Master of Defense, and all warfare and strategic decisions begin with them. When peace is called, the position is dissolved until required again.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Council keeps cordial relations with the governments of cities and townships outside of Emon, though disagreements do arise. There is open trade between Kraghammer and Emon, and the council enjoys a relatively safe and easily-traveled route between the two cities. Syngorn keeps an alliance with the Council, though the limitations on that alliance are quite stringent and infuriate politicians of both Emon and Syngorn alike. Thanks to the actions of the adventurers known as Vox Machina, the Council has a new relationship with the previously solitary settlement of Whitestone, to the benefit both the Whitestone and Tal'Dorei.

The Clasp is generally considered a serious threat to the Council's rule, and much effort is put in by some members of the council to stamp it out when it rears its head. However, unbeknownst to the rest of the council, the Master of Information is usually quite involved with the Clasp, the position coming with the secret knowledge of their importance in maintaining rule where darker elements would loom.

The Tal'Dorei Council ever has interest in furthering relations and trade beyond the borders of their lands, though the Kingdom of Dwendal in Wildemount continues

to be elusive. Ank'Harel has been friendly and open when it comes to trade and commerce, but has shown no interest in any political relationships beyond that.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

GUARDIAN TOFOR BROTORAS

Dragonborn Master of Defense. Stern, honorable, and quick to anger, Tofor is proud to serve on the council. After losing many friends, and an arm, in the struggles against the Chroma Conclave, she took the vulnerability of the city to heart, swearing to never allow such a thing to happen again.

SEEKER ASSUM EMRING

Halfling Master of Information. What he may lack in social graces, Assum makes up in cleverness and incredible perception. He once ran with the Clasp before leaving and managing to erase almost all trace of his involvement.

ARCANIST ALLURA VYSOREN

Human Master of Arcana. Also a member of the Arcana Pansophical, Allura uses her resources to help improve society's opinion of magic practitioners. She is called upon to investigate supernatural abnormalities.

ARBITER BROM GOLDHAND

Human Master of Law. A stone-faced, flame-scarred cleric of the Knowing Mistress, Brom is as mysterious as he is proficient with law. Driven to keep the realm just and orderly, there are few who would dare challenge his judgment.

HEARTHMAKER THEADORN KRAZZ

Dwarf Master of Development. Old, gray, and rather ornery if he hasn't had a drink, Theadorn rose to prominence after years of assisting the council in larger construction jobs, when the Council position fell vacant. His predecessor, Lornak Syfe, was removed from office for illegal involvement with the Clasp.

COINMISTRESS HANNA WASSERAN

Gnome Master of Commerce. Formerly the guild master of the Onyx Banner, Hanna took the council's mantle in hopes of stamping out illegal activity throughout Emon's trade and shipping channels.

THE HOUSES OF KRAHAMMER



Established within the Cliffkeep Mountains following the Divergence, this subterranean fortress city is the pinnacle of dwarven society in Tal'Dorei. Five Great Houses rule Kraghammer; they have maintained power since the city was originally established. The ruling families are House Greyspine, House Zuurthom, House Bronzegrip, House Thunderbrand, and House Glorendar. These Great Houses elect an official as the "Ironkeeper" every 10 years to keep the alliances between houses just and healthy for the good of Kraghammer.

When some lesser family houses have attempted to overthrow one of the ruling five through the centuries, the other Great Houses put aside their differences to maintain the sanctity of the traditional rule. Even when tensions boil into bloodshed between the houses—typically every ten years, when the new Ironkeeper is elected—the Ironkeeper will call in the city guard, or Carvers, to end the violence and establish peace.

GOALS

Each ruling house has a specialty and holds responsibility over that domain within Kraghammer. House Greyspine maintains the largest mine under Kraghammer, as well as the Pools of Solace. House Zuurthom trains the chief architects of the city, and most masonry and building is organized through them. House Bronzegrip funds the smithing guilds and maintains the Bronzegrip Metalworks, Kraghammer's largest blast furnace and ore refinery. House Thunderbrand prides itself on training Kraghammer's foremost scholars and premiere arcanists. House Glorendar maintains the law and delivers punishment, though a recent scandal that uncovered corruption between House Glorendar and sects of the Carvers has seen them fall from grace, throwing Kraghammer's judicial system into chaos.

*Five the fingers grasp hammer or blade
Five Houses of Kraghammer rightly made
Greyspine delves 'neath dwarven halls
Zuurthom raises stony walls
Bronzegrip masters of metala wrought
Thunderbrand uncovers secrets sought
And Glorendar to judgments bear
In Kraghammer, dwarf-folk need never fear.*

—A child's learning rhyme,
from Kraghammer

RELATIONSHIPS

Kraghammer culture fosters distrust of most non-dwarves, especially among the dwarven elite. In this society, the only thing stronger than overt racism is greed. As such, Kraghammer is quick to set aside such prejudice if they sense profit. There is a healthy trade of metals, weapons, and armor with Emon and Westruun, and House Thunderbrand has a good standing with the Council of Tal'Dorei, allowing Kraghammer to utilize the Skyport there to expand their trade reach. Many members of House Thunderbrand also have ties to the Arcana Pansophical.

After the Scattered War, the Houses of Kraghammer refused to apologize or make reparations for allying with the Drassig regime. Instead, they have worked toward opening and strengthening trade and commercial alliances as a silent means of conciliation. The Wardens of Syngorn look down upon the dwarves' spineless gesture, and the two cultures have gone centuries without major contact.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

IRONKEEPER GRADIM GREYSPINE

Dwarf Ironkeeper of House Greyspine. Having held his position of Ironkeeper for 3 consecutive terms, he is beloved amongst the people of Kraghammer. A worldly war hero, he is known to be just to his people and tolerant of outsiders.

LORD NOSTOC GREYSPINE

Dwarf Overseer of House Greyspine. The grim overseer of Keenstone Quarry, Nostoc makes up for his unpleasant personality by being a formidable businessman.

ELEMENTALIST DRAKE THUNDERBRAND

Dwarf Evoker of House Thunderbrand. One of the eldest of his House, Drake is known for his surprising empathy and fierce temper. He is also a member of the Arcana Pansophical.

THE GOLDEN GRIN

During dark times, the need for distraction, inspiration, and solace grows ever necessary. It was Drassig's rule that drove a group of bards, dancers, and storytellers to come together and weave the fleeting joy from the local populace and give hope. This band took the name "The Golden Grin" as their secret faction and traveled across the realm to offer escapism and entertainment, all while planting the seeds of discontent, rebellion, and heroism.

Since the fall of Drassig, the Golden Grin has been ever present, if happily in the background, watching and guiding along society, and the power of the individual, however it can. Members, or "Grinners," have included spiritual leaders, artists, musicians, innkeepers, even the White Duke himself. Little is publicly known about the Golden Grin besides myths and rumors, and the members only perpetuate these misnomers.



GOALS

The Golden Grin (or simply the Grin) exists to enlighten and inspire, keeping ears and eyes out for the murmurs of tyranny and cruelty, seeking to stamp them out. The idea that each person is capable of great things permeates the mantras and beliefs of the Golden Grin, and many who join are less about acting to change fortune, and more about cultivating the downtrodden to rise and improve themselves.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Golden Grin claims no formal allies and nor will its members reveal themselves as such outside of extenuating circumstances. They approve and elevate groups that work with the people's best interests at heart. Some members do occasionally find their way into higher government, granting a higher vantage point and platform to disseminate the ideals behind their cause. While some may not agree with their rather anarchistic views, Grinners are generally regarded as good and just when revealed.

Enemies of the Golden Grin are those who oppress and abuse free expression and living. They also have a general mistrust of powers that tend to control or regulate the population too heavily, even with the seemingly best of intentions.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

THEONA BALMHAND

Gnome Cleric of the Lawbearer. A wandering healer hailing from Kymal, Theona lives on donations and perpetually travels from place to place, seeking to aid whomever she can, and learn whatever the people whisper.

DOCTOR DRANZEL

Half-Orc Traveling Bard. A jovial and rather lackadaisical performer, his disposition is exaggerated to distract from his identity as a spy for the Grin.

THE MYRIAD



Wildemount's greatest organized crime ring is now becoming known throughout Tal'Dorei, but came from humble beginnings. The Myriad began in the Dwendalian city of Yrrosa as a small shipping company specializing in exotic goods and services. They exploited and sold curiosities from the distant continents of Othanzia and Ank'Harel. Over time, as legal trading became more difficult, the Myriad's illegal occupations became their best money makers. Through years of establishing underworld contacts and tactical blackmail, the Myriad evolved into a powerful, well-veiled criminal faction.

In recent years, the Myriad's aspirations have begun to spread beyond the coasts of Wildemount, and their activities are spilling over into eastern Tal'Dorei—much to the Clasp's consternation. The Myriad are known for displays of opulence and social grace, and this misdirection enables them to seduce and manipulate the lives and will of whomever is deemed valuable to their plans.

The Myriad operates as a loose network of gang bosses running their own localized sects without direct oversight from the mysterious heads of the society. Tithes and information are expected to be delivered to the leadership at a steady rate from each satellite of the organization, and should the rate of return slow, quiet threats of enslavement or destruction soon follow.

GOALS

Keeping mainly to coastal cities and port towns within Tal'Dorei, the Myriad pursues the simple goals of financial excess and maintaining a ledger of favors owed to them by powerful diplomats and officials. Publically dealing in antiquities and exotic textiles, the Myriad runs an efficient black market of slaves, magical beasts, weapons, and illicit substances. Overt violence tends to draw unwanted attention, and the Myriad avoid it when possible, preferring to discredit, blackmail, or frame those who cross them. After all, wielding the secrets of your competitor only makes it

easier to eventually force them to work for you. Should such manipulation fail, however, kidnapping or assassination can be a quick and traceless final alternative.

RELATIONSHIPS

As newcomers to the criminal underside of Tal'Dorei, the Myriad find their reach is still limited, though they have managed to infiltrate Stilben and Kymal. No matter how small, their presence has already created bad blood between the Myriad and the Clasp. Though the Myriad prefers to avoid conflict, the Clasp is not above spilling blood to protect their territory.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

LUSTRAN ZETH

Human Textile Baron. Double agent whose interests have shifted away from the Clasp, he has risen to oversee the Tal'Dorei expansion of the Myriad. Lustran has taken a home in Stilben and enjoys his position as central mastermind of this sect of the Myriad.

THE REMNANTS

CULT OF THE WHISPERED ONE



In a time long past, an powerful archmage known as the Whispered One attempted to ascend to godhood by conducting the Ritual of Seeding from high atop the citadel of Thar Ampala in the realm of Shadow. The Whispered One surrounded himself with a cult of fanatical mages and empowered murderers to protect him during his ritual of apotheosis. Yet the cult was shattered, and the Whispered One defeated, at the hands of Yos Varda and the Army of the Just. Defeated, ruined, and their Whispered One destroyed, the cult seemingly vanished from the world.

Even in apparent death, this dark mage left instructions with his most devoted, allowing for the possibility of his defeat—and the promise of rebirth. The remains of the cult dubbed themselves the Remnants and began laying

the groundwork for the Whispered One's eventual return. With each passing generation, his will grows ever stronger.

GOALS

Following the instructions left behind, the Remnants seek to slowly infiltrate and indoctrinate elements of society to prepare for the next stage in the Whispered One's plot. Each separate sect of the cult is named as a part of his body, and acts independently to pursue their assigned tasks. These sub-factions are called the Eyes, the Voice, the Blood, the Hand, and the Heart. Each splinter cult is tasked with infiltrating and corrupting a respective societal core, and it's said that when the time for their dark master's return is nigh, they shall rejoin as one for the ritual.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Remnants are largely unknown, and wish to remain so. Those who are aware of their presence are either members, or have uncovered their insidious existence and seek to stamp it out wherever it may appear. Thus, there are rarely any alliances made by or with the Remnants.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

QUINTON PUCK

Human Jeweler, Master of the Eyes. While he runs a mid-dling jewelry business within Emon, Quinton is secretly the organizing leader of the Remnants sect The Eyes of the Whispered One within Emon.

IXRATTU KHAR

Vampire Tiefling Convict. This escapee from the Black Bastille prison in Emon is Tal'Dorei's most infamous mass murderer, having slaughtered and consumed hundreds of innocents on a deadly killing spree from Kymal to Emon. She is secretly lurking in the Cliffkeep Mountains, regaining her strength and gathering new followers for her sect of the Whispered One's cult.

WARDENS OF SYNGORN

The elven city of Syngorn was established in the Verdant Expanse by the sorceress Yenlara, the wood elves' first leader after the Divergence. Today, the city of Syngorn is safeguarded by the three offices of elders called "Wardens," united by the High Warden. These four keep the city and the surrounding lands safe from intrusion.

GOALS

Maintaining the prosperity and safety of Syngorn is of utmost importance, and the Wardens believe that the elven lives they have sworn to protect are worth more than any outsider's. The three offices of the Wardens are the Verdant Lord, the Voice of Memory, and the Guildrunner. The office of the Verdant Lord commands Syngorn's formidable military, which is maintained throughout the Verdant Expanse, ready to be called to Syngorn's defense at a moment's notice.



The Wardens also place a great deal of focus on maintaining and elevating their culture. The arts are respected on a very high level, and it's not uncommon for a Syngornian to rise in social status based on proven adeptness with a craft or performance art.

RELATIONSHIPS

As xenophobic as their society may be, the Wardens do understand the importance of alliances and trade, and have worked with the Tal'Dorei Council for over a hundred years to the betterment of both parties. The Wardens still hold a grudge against the Houses of Kraghammer based on their alliance with Drassig many centuries ago, and Kraghammer is likewise happy to ignore Syngorn's existence on a political level.

FIGURES OF INTEREST

HIGH WARDEN TIRELDA

Elf Warden of Syngorn. In her gray years, by elven standards, she is of the Yenlara bloodline and entrusted with the highest level of responsibility among the Wardens to maintain law, guide society, and preside over the other Wardens.

VERDANT LORD CELINDAR

Elf Warden of Syngorn. Head of the Verdant Guard of Syngorn, and an accomplished warrior himself, Celindar handles all military strategy and instruction within the forest's bounds.

QUESTRA, THE VOICE OF MEMORY

Elf Warden of Syngorn. Grand historian and beloved vocalist, Oestra is charged with the preservation of Syngornian culture. It's said her song can control moonlight, and bring light to the abyss.

GUILDRUNNER RAWNDEL

Elf Warden of Syngorn. One of the oldest living elves within Syngorn, Rawndel is more cunning and insightful than most, allowing him to be a very effective head of commerce, business, and the treasury.



CHAPTER TWO

GAZETTEER OF TAL'DOREI

These pages contain the known collection of information on the most prominent locales within and around the continent of Tal'Dorei, or *Gwessar* in the elvish tongue. Gathered through eyewitness accounts, local historians and cartographers, as well as aid from the Cobalt Reserve, these pages will aid in fleshing out the extensive countryside before you. You will be presented with information about the denizens and cultures of these respective locations, as well as points of interest and possible mysteries and plots that may be stewing beneath the surface.

You are welcome to utilize any of the elements presented within for use within your own campaign. You can also adjust and alter them as you see fit to work within the narrative you wish to present to your adventurers, or create and add as much to the existing information as you'd like! After all, not all that has been catalogued is guaranteed to be completely accurate. Boundless possibilities await eager travelers all across the grasslands and mountains, within cities and temples built upon ruined and forgotten dangers of ages past. Create, explore, confront, and conquer!

THE CALENDAR AND THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Not all campaigns concern themselves with the specifics of maintaining a tight calendar record. Many games avoid mention of world-centric days of the week, or hours in the day, preferring to use the common real-world terminology of a seven day week, thirty day month, and a twelve month year all named in the same fashion as our own world calendar is.

However, for the game master who wishes to put in that extra step to providing immersion within Exandria may look within this section for specifics about the Tal'Dorei calendar to implement within their own campaign.

The calendar year of Exandria runs a total of 328 days over the course of eleven months. These months are outlined below in the order of their arrival within the calendar year, as well as their number of days and notable holidays (many of which are outlined within the Pantheon of Exandria section of this book).

The names of the Months and Weekdays do vary between distant cultures, but the elvish-rooted calendar noted here is widely accepted and utilized throughout Tal'Dorei, as well as most civilized areas across the world. The four seasons (winter, spring, summer, and autumn) are represented and called as such.

The seven days of the Exandrian week follow the names **Miresen, Grissen, Whelsen, Conthsen, Folsen, Yulisen, and Da'leysen**. The days are a standard 24 hours in length.

HOLIDAYS

The coming of Spring is signified by the beginning days of Dualahei. The official start of the season is observed on the 13th and celebrated with a festival of barely ripened food, games, and music, called the Renewal Festival.

CALENDAR OF TAL'DOREI

MONTH	DAYS	HOLIDAYS
Horisal	29	New Dawn (1st) Hillsgold (27th)
Misuthar	30	Day of Challenging (7th)
Dualahei	30	Wild's Grandeur (20th) Renewal Festival (13th)
Thunsheer	31	Harvest's Rise (11th) Merryfrond's Day (31st)
Unndilar	28	Deep Solace (8th) Zenith (26th)
Brussendar	31	Elvendawn, or Midsummer (20th) Artisan's Faire (15th)
Sydenstar	32	Highsummer (7th) Morn of Largesse (14th)
Fessuran	29	Harvest's Close (3rd)
Quen'pillar	27	Civilization's Dawn (22nd) The Hazel Festival (10th)
Cuersaar	29	Night of Ascension (13th) Zan's Cup (21st)
Duscar	32	Barren Eve (2nd) Embertide (5th) Winter's Crest (20th)

Summer brings hotter days toward the middle of Unndilar. The noonday sun of the 26th day is called the Zenith, and is considered the first true moment of the summer. The colors change and winds cool as Autumn takes the lands in the early days of the month of Fessuran, marked by the Harvest's Close on the 3rd day. The chill of Winter arrives to bring longer nights and cleansing snow in the month of Duscar, marked by the 2nd day (referred to as the Barren Eve, a nighttime celebration and remembrance of those who fell in battle).

"I've wandered over many a shore and plain in my journeys, and my mind still finds itself drawn back to the younger landscapes of Tal'Dorei. Wearing history's deeper scars far from view, I find it one of the more vibrant realms in Exandria to witness. Mind you, any calm only causes my old bones to itch with mistrust. Even the ripest of fruits can carry a rotten core. Best you stick to the roads, friend."

—Norad Firth, Captain of the The Brazen Beast

THE LUCIDIAN COAST

The stormy Lucidian Ocean crashes furiously against the rocky coasts of eastern Tal'Dorei, chewing inlets into the coastline and waving vast banks of impenetrable fog across the waters. Most ships rightly avoid the more volatile northern waters, instead docking at southern ports like Stilben, or brave the Mooren River Run to Drynna. Yet even there, the Lucidian Coast is not without its dangers; vicious wildlife stalk the wilderness and flocks of harpies have harried the shores since time immemorial, drawing lost sailors to their doom upon the rocks.

DRYNNA

Town • Population: 2,230
(80% Human, 8% Gnome, 8% Halfling, 4% Elf)

Along the shore of Mooren Lake rests the sleepy lakeside town of Drynna. The community thrives on the bountiful wildlife around the lake, and is responsible for most of eastern Tal'Dorei's freshwater fish supply. The social guidance of the city revolves around what's called the Sunrise Lodge, or simply "the Lodge," a membership of community leaders who will meet and vote on important delegations and law-oriented decisions. The law enforcement is largely volunteer-run, and internally policed both by senior enforcers and the Lodge.

DRYNNA ADVENTURES

UNFRIENDLY WATERS

For mid-level characters: Recently, the town has suffered a number of losses, with fishing boats being attacked and their owners dragged under waters. Worse still, the supply of fish itself seems to be declining rapidly; without this supply of fish, towns across eastern Tal'Dorei will certainly starve. The PCs hear the call for mercenaries reaching as far as Westruun and Stilben. The culprit is a **hydra** within the lake that has gained intelligence by living for so long in the residuum-infused waters. It commands a tribe of lizardfolk from its aquatic home.

A MIND WASTED

For characters of any level: Last year, Rensten Woll, an elder member of the Sunrise Lodge, made a pact with the Moon Mistress, unbeknownst to his peers. Rensten's brother Kyle died in his sleep shortly thereafter, leaving his wife Lissana, whom Rensten covets, vulnerable. However, nightmares now haunt Rensten every evening, and a violent madness is beginning to take hold of him. The Lodge is beginning to notice, and word reaches the PCs through their political allies or simply through hearsay.

K'TAWL SWAMP

The sprawling swamplands of K'Tawl cover much of the southern Lucidian Coast, enveloping Stilben and the K'Tawl Bay. The marsh is thick with cypress and tupelo trees reaching up from muddy waters that range from one to ten or more feet deep in places. The hot, muggy air and thick, sludge-covered landscape is host to all manner

of terrible beasts, including venomous flying snakes and man-eating giant frogs.

Bands of frog-men occasionally harry the edges of Stilben from their deep-marsh encampments, while a vicious school of swamp-faring sahuagin keep the shoreline of K'Tawl for themselves. The edges of the marsh are often used by orc marauders to ambush caravans or messengers traveling to or from Stilben, so travel is rarely made without armed escort.

K'TAWL ADVENTURES

THEY SHAMBLE

For mid-level characters: People have been disappearing from the small swamp villages within the K'Tawl. The PCs, perhaps *en route* to Stilben, spend the night in the swamp town of Dunghill. After hearing tales of the disappearances, the PCs awaken the next morning to screams—as a half-digested human is carried off within the rotting orifice of a **shambling mound** of swamp vegetation.

MONOLITH OF THE HELLS

For high-level characters: Why have the Knifemouth orcs been found dead, their hearts exploded and their teeth plucked from their mouths? Why have the stagnant K'Tawl waters suddenly begun flowing towards dismal center of the swamp? A divine messenger of the Dawn-bringer visits the PCs, beaten and bloody, and dies before it can impart its request. On the angel's lips is a single dying phrase: K'Tawl's Heart.

MOOREN LAKE

North of the Summit Peaks is a crystalline lake fed by the snowmelt from the Alabaster Sierras by the Mooren River Run. Mooren Lake is a shining expanse of water surrounded both by bountiful wildlife and the frightful creatures attracted to such a thriving ecosystem, including tribes of lizardfolk, flocks of harpies, and several hydras that lurk in the deepest depths of the waters.

Centuries of whitestone runoff from the Alabaster Sierras has allowed deposits of residuum to collect at the bottom of the lake—and the residuum has formed into a thrumming organ of raw magical energy has begun to gain sentience. A pair of twin islands in the center of the lake are blanketed by an ever-present mist, and folk tales tell of a beautiful, ageless woman known only as the Moon Mistress who watches over the island shores. It's said that any mortal who seeks an audience is judged by her, being granted a boon of unveiled knowledge, a favor, or a swift and terrible end.



Religions: *Majority:* Changebringer, Wildmother, and Lawbearer; *Minority:* Any

Imports: Livestock, adventurers, lumber

Exports: Fish, ships, grain, iron, silver, gold, and trade goods from Wildemount

creatures leap from tree to tree, or patiently wait from within their dome-like tree root dens to snatch wary travelers. An organized group of gnoll marauders called the Moonsteeth keep their cavern hideout here, striking out at easy targets outside of Drynna and Mooren Lake.

Since the region is populated almost entirely by monsters and monstrous folk, most humanoids avoid it whenever possible. Those few who explore the deadly marsh do so only out of necessity, either because they need to unlock Rootgarden's many secrets, or because "civilization" is even more dangerous to them than the primal dangers found within.

ROOTGARDEN MARSH ADVENTURES

THE LEY-KNOT

For mid-level characters: Without warning, arcane magic stops functioning within a 100-mile radius of Rootgarden Marsh. As panic spreads across northeastern Tal'Dorei, the PCs or a patron of theirs discovers that a major ley line, the source of arcane power in this part of the world, has been twisted and tied into a knot at the center of the marsh. This knot has been tied by High Shaman Luneskon of the Moonsteeth gnolls. Her ambitions are small, but the method she used to tangle the ley lines must be erased from history—knowledge of its existence could bring disaster to all of Tal'Dorei.

DEATH'S GARDEN

For characters of any level: Rootgarden's strange ecology has produced many unique and powerful forms of plant life. During the course of a campaign, a group of PCs may need to create a unique potion requiring the essence of manawort, a sentient mushroom found only within Rootgarden. The manawort mushroom is fearful of being harvested, and has made close friends with a **black dragon**—its age dependent on the needs of the campaign—named Thardraxxus, who keeps the mushroom and its sporelings safe.

MOOREN LAKE ADVENTURES

RENEW THE MISTS

For mid-level characters: The Moon Mistress, a **night hag** who takes the guise of a water nymph, uses the fading mists to shroud her location from a blood hunter named Perron Brill, a woman dedicated to hunting the Mistress down out of vengeance. The mists require a blasphemous sacrifice to renew, and the Mistress is willing to reward those who would aid her in retrieving the necessary components. Perron Brill resides in nearby Drynna, and though she is no saint herself, more honorable PCs may think it best to help the hunter find her prey.

ROOTGARDEN MARSH

The shallows of Mooren Lake leak into the tender soil, spreading eastward to create the cold and desolate Rootgarden Marsh. Tall, thin trees lift five or more feet above the muck by stilt-like roots, their sparse placement resembling a field of scattered, wooden huts. The fresh water mingles with salt here, leaving only adapted vegetation. The smell of moss and rot fills the air, while strange, feral

STILBEN

Small City • Population: 9,015 (70% Human, 10% Elf, 10% Halfling, 5% Half-elf, 5% Other)

Stilben stinks to high heaven. Also known as the "Rotted Lot" by the countless sailors and merchants who pass through it, Stilben is the largest port city on this coast of Tal'Dorei, and is the focal point of all imports and exports

to the East. The city is nestled in the sticky depths of the K'Tawl Swamp, and the lingering stink of marsh water and sulfur mingles with the humidity and the ever-present buzz of insects to produce an air of misery around Stilben's outer districts. Pushed out of the cozy heart of Stilben, the city's poor and disenfranchised citizens—disparagingly nicknamed “muckdwellers”—struggle to eke out a living in the K'Tawl's murky waters.

Central Stilben houses most of the city's businesses, residences, and attractions. As a fairly sizable trade hub, those living in the heart of the city like to present a clean, “civilized” view of their city. The cross-continental Silvercut Roadway leads from Stilben all the way to Emon, and its robust trade of rare goods, textiles, and spices has given rise to a formidable merchant ruling class. Though Margrave Wendle Truss is Stilben's ruler in name, it is the guilds that hold true power. Their vast wealth and sizable “protection” force has forced the bombastic-yet-ineffectual Margrave to acquiesce to the will of guilds in order to maintain peace, as well as to preserve own station, within the city.

Order is kept by the the Waterwatch, Stilben's official constabulary, but corruption is becoming more and more common within their ranks. The Clasp has learned that a flash of coin forgives many faults, and the famous ring of criminals has been allowed to flourish within Stilben for decades, sometimes working with the guilds to protect mutual interests, such as smuggling contraband goods and narcotics along the Silvercut Roadway. The Clasp's foreign rivals, the Myriad, have recently established a lair within Stilben as well, and are undercutting the Clasp's operations. The Myriad is less scrupulous than the Clasp, and has introduced a growing slave trade between eastern Tal'Dorei and Wildemount.

STILBEN ADVENTURES

LOST BELOW

For low-level characters: A Stilben guild known as the Relic Seekers partnered with the Clasp to smuggle a hoard of stolen Syngornian artifacts through the heart of the K'Tawl Swamp to the port of Stilben. The Clasp smugglers were last seen paying off a bridge guard in western swamp, but two weeks have passed since their last

VOX MACHINA

The citizens of Stilben do not know that some of Exandria's greatest heroes, Vox Machina, first met in their humble city and went on their first adventure in the muck of the K'Tawl Swamp. Back then, even the exalted Vox Machina were just dime-a-dozen adventurers, quickly forgotten by Stilben's haughty elite. One dwarf named Heinrich Runescribe, a junior member of the Alabaster Lyceum's revered Lorekeeper Society, practically worships the heroes that defeated the Chroma Conclave, and has made it his mission to record all of their travels. He believes that Stilben is the place of their first adventure, but is still searching for evidence.

contact. They should have arrived by now. The PCs may be approached by one of several contacts: an agent of the Relic Seekers, a rival guild called the Bronzsmiths, or one of the Clasp, seeking to hire them as mercenaries to find the relics. Their first contact: a bridge guard the couriers bribed, a huge, half-mad tiefling named L'Arkhelle.

STRIFE IN THE SHADOWS

For mid-level characters: The Clasp doesn't like it when the Myriad edges in on their turf, like they have been in Stilben for the past five years. Their conflict has been secret and self-contained until now, but something is about to snap. Everyone can feel it. While staying in Stilben, the PCs are witness to a bloody skirmish between Clasp and Myriad on the streets in broad daylight. The party is caught up in the struggle and are marked as conspirators in the conflict by the now furious Waterwatch. The party now has to clear their name, when representatives of both factions begin to contact the party with generous offers of membership to aid in destroying the opposition.

REMNANT RISING

For high-level characters: When business is good, it's easy for even darker elements to pass undetected, and business in Stilben has been very good indeed. A sect of Remnants called the Punctured Eye has assassinated and “replaced” top guild leaders within Stilben. They believe a powerful artifact of the Whispered One sits deep in the vaults of one of Stilben's unwitting guilds, and are intent on recovering it by infiltrating, corrupting, and crushing the guilds one-by-one. The PCs are contacted by an ally—a Clasp agent, a friend in the Waterwatch, or a Silvercut trader—who has discovered the corpse of Artenn Gille, the human leader of the Relic Seekers guild, buried in the swamp, even though “Artenn” is alive and well.

SUMMIT PEAKS

The spire-like mountains of the Summit Peaks stand tall and odd, like rocky spikes reaching to the sky. The Summit Peaks stand out so aggressively against the surrounding fields and swamp that they are the guiding landmark of the eastern coast, a welcome sight to any ship's crew making their way to shore. The mountain valleys recess into swamp-like gorges, housing all manner of giantkin and creatures migrating from the K'Tawl. As the mountains rise higher, strong winds blow across the battered rock, leaving strangely smooth peaks that harbor griffin lairs, harpy dens, and convocations of giant eagles hunting the lower lands.

ZEPHRAH

Village • Population: 410
(75% Half-elf, 10% Human, 10% Halfling, 5% Tiefling)

High atop a mountain aerie within the Summit Peaks sits Zephrah, the tribal home of the Air Ashari people, keeping vigil over a gate into the Elemental Plane of Air.



The Ashari people worship and live by the balance of the natural world, and the people of Zephrah have adapted to life among the clouds. Subsisting on high-elevation vegetation and the occasional large avian hunt, most of the tribe consists of skilled hunters and climbers. Utilizing the proximity of powerful elemental magic, the druidic masters of the Air Ashari craft skysailing aids to ride the ever-present winds, allowing designated leaders and warriors to traverse the deadly peaks of the mountain range. The tribal leader of Zephrah is referred to as the Voice of the Tempest, and oversees all travel through the rift, all major druidic rituals, and visiting outsiders.

ZEPHRAH ADVENTURES

POACHED EGGS

For low-level characters: The local Ashari have noticed a terrible trend of poachers climbing the peaks to steal entire griffin nests full of eggs, leaving the parents slain. The efficiency, brutality, and growing rate of these attacks suggest the hunters are dangerous professionals, and the Ashari are seeking aid in finding and punishing those responsible before the locally endangered creatures are all dead or taken. The culprits, human poachers led by a **quasit** demon named Wapalmter, are fencing the stolen eggs on the Stilben black market.

A WELCOME OVERSTAYED

For mid-level characters: Shaktia, a domineering **djinni** soldier from the Plane of Air has recently discovered and come through the elemental rift into Zephrah. However, the djinni refuses to leave, instead choosing to ever

SKYSAIL

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These bat-like wings affixed to a pole are constructed out of either bone and leather or wood and cloth. While these wings are opened and the rung of the pole stepped into, you can use an action to cast *levitate* on yourself at will.

Additionally, you can use an action to cast *fly* on yourself for up to 1 minute (no concentration required). The fly spell ends if you lose physical contact with the skysail. You cannot use this ability again until you complete a long rest, or you (and the Skysail) are immersed in extremely powerful air elemental magic, such as the top of the Summit Peaks near the Rift of Air in Zephrah, or within the Elemental Plane of Air. When not in use, these wings can be easily folded together and worn beneath a cloak, and the pole used as a quarterstaff.

bother the people with pranks, debates, and temptation to serve the genie. The Voice of the Tempest has sent Ashari windrunners to Stilben, Drynna, and Westruun to seek outside aid to convince the elemental to return to his home... but when they learn what caused him to leave his home plane in the first place, they may find it hard to force him to go back.



RELIGIONS: Any (*Majority:* Dawnfather. *Minority:* Wildmother, Matron of Ravens)

IMPORTS: Industrial and precious metals, cloth, livestock, grain

EXPORTS: Granite, limestone, whitestone

THE ALABASTER SIERRAS

In the northeastern reaches of the continent, where the waters of the Lucidian Ocean break between the rocky shores of Tal'Dorei, a lush treeline fills the valleys between the chalk-white bluffs of the Alabaster Sierras. This cold, uncivilized territory lies beyond the direct reach of the Tal'Dorei Council, and falls under the sovereign rule of the Chamber of Whitestone. The region is framed by dangerously windy shoreside cliffs and dry, desolate mountains swarming with harpies, wyverns, and other hungry monstrosities. Beneath the peaks, the valley opens into the thickly wooded pine forest known as the Parchwood. This dense, temperate rainforest is beautiful and lush, but many shadowed threats loom in the dark of the wood.

The northern center of the valley marks a single clearing where the humble city of Whitestone stands as the source of rule and law in this land. Built around the ancient Sun Tree, the people here have been hardened through strife and exalted through freedom enough to know honor and appreciate loyalty like few other civilizations do.

MOOREN RIVER RUN

While many smaller streams and rivers run through the Parchwood Timberland, gathering rain and snow runoff from the nearby mountains, they nearly all empty into the massive Mooren River Run. A powerful river that tears through the heavy forests of the Alabaster Sierras, the Mooren River Run flows fiercely southward out of the woods and into Mooren Lake near the Lucidian Coast. Freshwater fish are in ready supply along the river's path,

and Whitestone maintains a well-guarded dock for their fishermen to feed their people. Due to the plentiful nature of the river, many denizens of the Parchwood wander its banks to reap its bounty, or the bounty from those who frequent it.

MOOREN RIVER RUN ADVENTURES

BEAR OF THE WHITE RIVER

For low-level characters: While traveling near Whitestone or through the Parchwood Timberland, the PCs find the corpse of a half-orc; a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals it was savaged by a large bear. This half-orc's clothing marks her as a shaman of the Rivermaw barbarians, a long way from her usual stomping grounds. Investigating the scene shows that bear tracks in the mud lead westward, toward the Mooren River Run. While following these tracks, they soon fade into the bare footprints of a humanoid.

"Aye, they'll tell ye to be careful of the bears that hunt along the shores of the Mooren River Run, but they'll not tell ye why. Let's just say that not every wild creature of the Run is what it appears to be, and what you don't know is best left alone."

—Auld Connaught, hunter and gamesman



PARCHWOOD TIMBERLANDS

Dark, dense, and often assailed by snow and cold winds, the Parchwood Timberlands consume most of the valleys within the Alabaster Sierras with pine trees and heavily overgrown pathways. The grim and forbidding interior of the Parchwood is home to many equally grim inhabitants, from spectral remains of unlucky travelers past, to wandering blights spawned by corrupt trees that consume the life around them. Howls can be heard in the darkest of nights, giving rumor to werewolf hunting parties that stalk the wood. A handful of nearby farmers swear they've encountered a community of territorial centaurs in the southern region of the Parchwood, though such tales are largely met with derision. It is common and well-imparted knowledge that if you intend to travel through thick fog of the Parchwood Timberlands, you stick to the roads, you bring some muscle, and you pray to whatever gods bring you comfort.

PARCHWOOD TIMBERLANDS ADVENTURES

LEGEND OF THE HEADLESS HORSE-MAN

For mid-level characters: The centaurs of the Parchwood are no myth, and many are succumbing to a curse of undeath. One among them, a headless stallion-lord named Ichabarr, now leads the Herd of the Damned across the

valleys of the Parchwood. Several small settlements outside Whitestone have told the Chamber that these skeletal monsters have been spirited away eligible young bachelors, and soon no men will be left in the Timberlands.

Skeletal centaurs can be represented by changing a **centaur's** type to undead, increasing its hit points to 90 (12d10 + 24), granting it resistance to piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, and adding an additional 3 (1d6) necrotic damage to all its attacks. This increases its challenge rating to 4 (1,100 XP). Ichabarr also can use the Ethereal Stride feature, as a **nightmare**.

THEY SEEK ONLY REST

For high-level characters: Those who travel the Parchwood sometimes hear thunder roll through the valley, accompanied by the cracking of timbers, but no storm follows. Not all of the undead giants created by the Briarwoods were defeated by Vox Machina; bereft of their masters, those that remain now run wild in the forests, destroying all they see. Their mindless actions are not without purpose, however: each giant is tormented by being denied the halls of their ancestors, and quietly weep for their lost afterlife as they roam.

Zombie giants can be represented by changing any giant's type to undead, decreasing its AC to 8, giving it resistance to bludgeoning damage from nonmagical attacks, and granting it immunity to poison damage and the poisoned condition. This does not affect its challenge rating. All giants wish to be interred in their civilization's ancestral home, as seen on page 124.

Among the fluted white bones, serenaded by siren's call,

I did bury my treasures, one and all.

*But deaf and blind must the finder be, lest a briny death be
the last ye see.*

—From a fragment of a treasure map

THE SALTED BLUFFS

The tumultuous waters of the Lucidian Ocean that encompass the northeast edge of Tal'Dorei end at the towering seaside cliffs called the Salted Bluffs. These cliffs mark the outside of the Alabaster Sierras, housing an endless series of cliffside caverns that drop off into the ocean, sometimes hundreds of feet up. The waters along the base are rocky and dangerous to traverse by boat, and only the most skilled of captains will even consider travel nearby. Due to their treacherous nature, many outlaws and seafaring pirates have taken to these bluffs to hide away their riches, or build a base of operations. However, a dense colony of harpies found the coastline perfect for their lifestyle and hunting techniques, often sweeping up unsuspecting creatures and dashing them against the cliffs and rocks, recovering the broken corpses to feed upon safely within their nests.

SALTED BLUFFS ADVENTURES

YE'D BEST START BELIEVIN' IN GHOST STORIES

For low-level characters: Pirates are one thing. Undead pirates are another. A group of swashbucklers have willingly turned themselves into the Chamber of Whitestone, begging for absolution from the Dawnfather for thieving. They refuse to return to their cove to retrieve their stolen treasure from the bones of not just their risen comrades, but the undead that first killed them. Perhaps a group of adventurers can save the day?

CROW'S NEST

For low-level characters: The Ashwing harpy tribe that roost among the Salted Bluffs have recently commandeered the galley owned by the group of penitent corsairs and starting raiding coastal villages. They are led by Captain Silvercomb, an arrogant, dashing, and well-spoken harpy grandmother. The other harpies are just pillaging for fun, but Silvercomb seems to be searching for something, and she always wears a pendant with a black feather around her neck. What could it be?

THE SHEARING CHANNEL

Where once was a land bridge between what are now known as Tal'Dorei and Wildemount, the catastrophic forces of the Calamity eroded it away, leaving jagged rock, winding rapids, gale-force winds, and broken cliffs. Numerous ships have been ruined against the tides of the channel, and sea creatures that thrive on wreckage have taken up residence beneath the waters. Considered by all

but the most desperate as impassable, the rumors of what secrets lay sunken or hidden within the channel only continue to spread and grow.

SHEARING CHANNEL ADVENTURES

SCION OF OBLIVION

For epic-level characters: The Chained Oblivion has no physical form, but some residue of its power was cast into the ocean when the Dawnfather pursued it from the Alabaster Sierras to Gatshadow. This seed of evil has had eons to gestate in the tempestuous womb of the sea—and now it rises. A **kraken**, mutated by the Oblivion's aberrant power, is haunting the Shearing Channel; the flesh and minds of sailors fuse to their ships, sea creatures hideously mutate into humanoid abominations, and the clouds above rain thick, ichorous black droplets. It seems to be building an army here for some larger attack. What is it planning?

WHITESTONE

Small City • Population: 4,230
(83% Human, 7% Halfling,
6% Dwarven, 4% Other Races)

Nearly two hundred years ago, the de Rolo family helmed an expedition from Wildemount to the shores of Tal'Dorei. When their vessel wrecked upon the stones of the Shearing Channel, the de Rolos and their remaining crew survived for weeks in the Alabaster Sierras despite the tempestuous weather and slaving beasts. After a time, they stumbled upon a glowing tree—the majestic Sun Tree, a blessing from the Dawnfather himself—and built their home around it.

Since then, the de Rolo's pioneering settlement has grown into a robust, if isolated, city. The cityscape varies from quaint homesteads to dingy hovels, and the majority of the populace sits somewhere in between. Limited in fertile farm land, locally grown produce is scarce, leading to the necessity to develop a good trade relationship with the rural communities of the Turst Fields.

Though the region's scarcity of vital resources made for a harrowing first few years, the de Rolo family stumbled upon a miraculous mineral they called whitestone. This geological marvel both gave their city its name and quickly became its most important and sought-after export. Before long, the de Rolo's sale of whitestone allowed them to quickly amass a significant fortune and construct a princely keep within their city.

SCARS OF THE BRIARWOODS

Lady Delilah and Lord Silas Briarwood are no more, but the evil they committed still lingers. The six years they ruled Whitestone sapped life and hope from its people. Though homes have been rebuilt and the Briarwoods' undead monstrosities have been eradicated, the trauma of the vampires' reign of terror will linger for generations. Some people of Whitestone were so deeply affected that they turned to necromancy themselves, and have fled into



the Alabaster Sierras to learn the secrets of the Briarwoods' foul magic and emulate their takeover of Whitestone. There are even whispers of escaped vampiric spawn from the Briarwoods' rule that wander the outskirts of the city, seeking to spread their influence and their curse.

AN ENCHANTING EXPORT

During the conflicts of the Calamity, a climactic battle between the stalwart Dawnfather and the engine of mad destruction known as Chained Oblivion came to a dramatic and explosive conclusion in the Alabaster Sierras. The unstable arcane forces unleashed in their battle created the valley that now houses the Parchwood, thrusting the surrounding mountains upward and infusing them with incredible amounts of residuum—the residue of arcane energy.

The sheer amount of leftover arcane power within the so-called whitestone of the mountains is incredibly receptive to enchantment. Anyone enchanting a piece

of whitestone, or an item infused with whitestone dust, reduces the time required to enchant the item by 75%. Some alchemists in Emon have discovered that dissolving whitestone with specific acids can leave behind pure residuum, which can substitute for expensive spell components when such materials are not readily available.

If a spell has a component cost that consumes the component, its caster can substitute the required component for an amount of residuum of an equal value. One pound of pure residuum is worth approximately 500 gp in most Tal'Dorei markets, though difficult to come by the further from Whitestone or Emon one travels.

This same residuum, if heated into a green glass-like state, can expedite localized enchantment rituals. Enchantment Altars using this residuum glass as a primary construction component are extremely expensive to produce and generally only found at places of higher arcane learning or homesteads of powerful archmages.



Any attempts to enchant a magical item atop such an altar decreases the time required to enchant the item by 50%.

GOVERNMENT

For many years, the de Rolo family ruled Whitestone with dignity and justice—though perhaps their reign is viewed now with some nostalgia. The line of de Rolos was broken when a pair of vampires from Wildemount known as the Briarwoods slaughtered the family, took over Whitestone, and plunged the city into despair.

Six years later, Vox Machina returned with Percival, the only known de Rolo heir, and discovered that his sister Cassandra also still lived. The heroes defeated the Briarwoods and expunged their evil from Whitestone, and the de Rolo siblings founded a new system of governance: the Chamber of Whitestone.

This council consists of members appointed by the Guardian of Woven Stone, who is to remain a member of the de Rolo bloodline as long as it exists, or the rest of the Chamber unanimously agrees there are no suitable de Rolos to accept the position. The Chamber and its members are described in detail on page 32. Order within Whitestone is enforced by the trained sentries called the Paleguard who answer to the Pale Lord of Wardship.

CRIME

The community of Whitestone has seen much hardship in recent years, from the iron rule of the Briarwoods to the threat of the Chroma Conclave, and much of the populace has been more concerned with survival and

rebuilding their community than the pursuit of fast profit. However, unsavory criminals have begun to slip in under the pretense of aiding the reconstruction efforts in hopes of lining their pockets with relief money. The Clasp has some surveillance in Whitestone, but the Myriad is beginning to make a full-scale underworld infiltration.

GEOGRAPHY

The city was originally constructed around the discovery of the Sun Tree, and expanded outward over a few generations. Castle Whitestone was built against the Northern face of the city atop of small hill to overlook the city and the surrounding forest. The southwest and southeast ends of Whitestone have cleared enough farmland into the Parchwood to sustain the citizens of the city, but the dense forest is thick and looming, completely encompassing the exterior of the city walls. The cemetery is kept separate from the city's main walls, instead held outside the eastern section via dirt road.

DAWNFATHER SQUARE

Dawnfather Square is the central district of Whitestone. The square surrounds a small hill, and the golden glow of the revered Sun Tree that sits atop it can be seen throughout the city. Many of Whitestone's original settlers already worshiped the Dawnfather, and discovering the Sun Tree was seen as a sign. Today, Dawnfather Square is filled with quaint, bustling shops and small townhomes built as the city expands and wealth returns to the people of Whitestone.



LANDMARKS

CASTLE WHITESTONE

Castle Whitestone was erected not long after the city's founding, and has long been the royal seat of the de Rolos, though it has recently been home to dark masters. Now the home of the Chamber of Whitestone, the castle stands as a symbol of justice for the people of Whitestone once more. The castle's interior has a certain stark regality to it. While the hunting trophies and tapestries that decorate its walls are clear signs of the de Rolos' wealth, there is a solemn, beautiful hollowness to its corridors. Cassandra de Rolo says that something of her brother's melancholy seeped into its whitestone walls, and the castle will always carry the edge of his sorrow—and the Briarwoods' evil.

THE CORRUPTED ZIGURAT

During the violent throes of the Calamity, before Whitestone existed, the god known as the Chained Oblivion broke free from its prison beneath Gatshadow and rampaged across Tal'Dorei. Seeing the mad god's devastation, the Knowing Mistress baited it towards her central temple in the Alabaster Sierras and confronted him. She was nearly destroyed in the encounter, and her temple sank deep beneath the earth in her sorrow. This temple was left abandoned for centuries until it was rediscovered by the Briarwoods and excavated. With dark knowledge gifted to them by the strange entity known as the Whispered One, the Briarwoods twisted the uncovered temple into an engine of dark magic, preparing a blasphemous ritual of the Whispered One's own design. Though the Briarwoods were defeated, the corruption lingers still, all traces of the Knowing Mistress faded and forgotten.

THE SUN TREE

After the Chained Oblivion nearly consumed the Knowing Mistress during the Calamity, a furious and vengeful Dawnfather pursued the fleeing Oblivion across the mountaintops and over the sea to the peak of Gatshadow, where the mad god was eventually defeated and imprisoned once again. The land wept with pain as the two wrathful gods laid waste to Tal'Dorei.

After his victory, the Dawnfather returned to Whitestone and placed a single seed into the ground where the Knowing Mistress was nearly destroyed. The god wept and from the seed grew a symbol of protection—a massive tree that became a beacon of light within the dark forest that surrounded it. While the extent of the tree's divine power remains a mystery, it stands as an emblem of unity and hope both within the city of Whitestone, and upon its official crest.

THE GREYFIELD

The Greyfield has become the local name for the eastern graveyard on the outskirts of the city that harbors generations of Whitestone's buried dead, watched over and respectfully maintained by the priests of the city.

GALDRIC THE WOLF

Given purpose and power as the companion to Purvon Kol, champion of the Matron of Ravens during the wars of the Calamity, Galdric was sealed within a relic of the goddess and interred with his master in a tomb under the Marrowglade Loch in Othanzia. Since a new champion had been named in Vaxil'dan of Vox Machina, and Purvan's vestments recovered, Galdric was released from his slumber and bestowed with the charge of guarding the Parchwood surrounding Whitestone. This large and cunning wolf now stalks the woods as the city's silent protector, the people crafting new legends about their bestial sentinel. On moonlit nights, some say you can see Galdric wander through the Greyfield to the Matron of Ravens' shrine for communion.

A number of mausoleums house the passed noble families, though the last generation of lost de Rolos were not recovered following the rule of the Briarwoods. Elements of necromantic desecration still linger within the Greyfield, and the Paleguard are ever vigilant at night to quell any unresting dead that occasionally claw their way to the surface.

THE ILLUSORY BARRIER

Haphazardly constructed during the time of the Chroma Conclave to avoid detection by their roving wyvern armies, 5 whitestone obelisks mark the perimeter of the city and castle grounds. These obelisks form a dome-like illusion between them when powered by an arcane spellcaster, hiding the city under the guise of continued, undeveloped Parchwood, and shielding everything within from arcane detection.

For each spell slot that is siphoned into an obelisk, 2 hours of illusion is powered per spell level sacrificed, and the cover of the illusion barrier is incomplete unless all 5 obelisks are powered simultaneously. This siphoning is a very taxing experience, and for every 30 spell levels sacrificed within a 24 hour period, the arcane caster suffers 1 point of exhaustion.

WHITESTONE ADVENTURES

THE GREYFIELD STIRS

For mid-level characters: Members of the Paleguard have found fresh blood splashed upon the stones and grave-markers of the Greyfield for three consecutive nights, with no indication where it came from, or why. The incidents have stopped, for the moment, but there are concerns in need of investigation: How is the blood appearing in the Greyfield without anyone seeing or hearing the perpetrator? Who or what is causing it, and why? Will it happen again, and is it building toward some purpose?



THE DIVIDING PLAINS

Tal'Dorei's vast heartland, framed by the Stormcrest and Cliffkeep Mountains, contains miles and miles of rolling hills, tallgrass prairies, sky-blue rivers, and fertile farmlands. Within these plains, the hardworking people of the realm tend to their fields and businesses while the armed protectors of civilization battle back the wild beasts and wandering bandits looking to prey on these points of enduring society. The Silvercut Roadway meanders across the endless plains, connecting the coasts and bringing caravans between with fresh trade and intrigue to the industrious pioneers of central Tal'Dorei.

A caravanner's life is though not without danger, though. Warbands of Ravagers, a chaotic horde of orcs and goblinoids rove the grasslands, slaughtering and pillaging indiscriminately. Packs of nomad gnolls also steal from humanoid caravans, though diplomats have recently begun to broker a peace between humans and gnolls to unite against the greater threat of the Ravagers. Beyond the grassy plains, owlbears and other arcane monstrosities stalk the wooded regions. Tribes of wild centaurs also gallop across the open plains, delivering the Archangeart's justice as they see fit.

THE BRAMBLEWOOD

Surrounding the base of the southernmost stretch of the Cliffkeep Mountains is the dark and tangled forest known as the Bramblewood. Named for the indigenous trees that brandish jagged thorns across their bark, the Bramblewoods' impenetrable canopy and thick, gnarled roots only add to its ominous appearance. Streams of snowmelt from the Cliffkeeps trickles down to form streams that spiderweb across the forest and into the plains beyond.

Without the plentiful game and timber the Bramblewood provides, the nearby city of Westruun would likely not exist. A trading city with nothing to trade rarely lasts long in this part of Tal'Dorei. In recent years, it has become difficult to exploit the forest's resources; the feral creatures that call the Bramblewood home have grown territorial, and people have started to go missing within it. For those brave enough to venture into the Bramblewood, a pair of well-tread paths have resisted its overgrowth; one leads to the iron-rich Murdoon Mines at the base of the Cliffkeeps, while the other winds upward to Gatshadow's storm-wreathed peak.



BRAMBLEWOOD ADVENTURES

HAUNTED ROAD

For low-level characters: Local folklore speaks of a spectral young woman sometimes appearing along the road through the forest, sobbing and leading men deeper into the Bramblewood to never be seen again. While these tales are generally considered childish ghost stories, a mining crew was recently found dead near the fabled spot, unwounded and with looks of terror stretched across their lifeless faces. Depending on character level, the spirit may be a **specter** or a **banshee**.

NATURE'S ANGER

For low-level characters: A sacred grove sits in the heart of the western Bramblewood, tended to by three solitary **druids** who claim to keep the spirits of the forest at peace. However, loggers have made claims of the trees themselves uprooting (**animated trees**) to slaughter them, and blame the druids for the attacks. The PCs are asked to join a mob of angry workers to bringing the druids to justice—but the trio urges them to stay away, claiming a corrupting force has newly made the woods its home. Are they just trying to avoid justice, or is there truly a supernatural evil at work in the Bramblewood?

FORAMERE BASIN

This great lake was once the ice fortress of Errevon the Rimelord, the elemental behemoth that nearly toppled the fledgling realm of Tal'Dorei. It was here that the

combined forces of Kraghammer, Syngorn, Tal'Dorei, and the Ashari hurled the Rimelord back into the Frostfell and brought an end to the Icelost Years. The massive lake left behind by Errevon's melted citadel is now the largest source of fresh water in central Tal'Dorei.

Foramere Basin's shores are peppered with tiny huts and fishing communities, many of which trade back-and-forth with Kymal or Westruun. Fed by the running waters of the Tundrun and Byhills Rivers, the waters eventually spill into the Owlset Bay via the Foramere Waterway. Some of these fishing villages are home to the descendants of the warriors that warred against the Rimelord's tyranny, many of them dwarves and even elves. The bad blood between Syngorn and Kraghammer has no bearing on the relationships of elves and dwarves in Foramere. Some Syngornian elves and exiled half-elves find refuge here, discontent with their nation's prejudice and shortsightedness.

FORAMERE BASIN ADVENTURES

A NIGHTMARE BEFORE WINTER'S CREST

For mid-level characters: The festival of Winter's Crest celebrates the anniversary of the Rimelord's defeat and the fall of Foramere Citadel. The PCs, far from home on the holiday, are not only witness to the fishing communities who gather on the banks of the basin gather to celebrate Winter's Crest, but the grim sight of Foramere's waters surging upward from the basin. The water has begun to freeze into towers of ice—someone or something is recreating the domain of Errevon the Rimelord and will not stop until all of Tal'Dorei is buried in ice.

IRONSEAT RIDGE

The gnolls say the the crooked, angular mountain that juts out of the plains and foothills was once the throne of a titan. From a distance, Ironseat Ridge *does* resemble a crooked chair. Whether or not the gnolls' and common hillsfolks' beliefs are right hardly matters; the legend of Ironseat Ridge permeates the folklore of the plains.

The mountains beneath Ironseat itself have been hollowed out over the centuries, and countless abandoned mine shafts snake through the stone, like the veins of a dead titan. When the winds grow strong, you can occasionally hear a terrible, growling moan from the air pressing through the empty channels. People from Kymal rarely venture close enough to the mountains to hear the noise, but sometimes on clear, silent nights, the monstrous sound echoes through the busy streets.

IRONSEAT RIDGE ADVENTURES

THE BEAST BELOW

For characters of any level: It is one of those still nights where the howls of the Ironseat echo across the plains. The next time the PCs are in town, whether it is Kymal or any small plains village, they learn of disappearances—explorers that went into the caves, never to return—and the hefty reward their grieving families are offering for their return. What is making that awful wailing in the caves? Werewolves? Kidnappers using the echoing caverns?

IVYHEART THICKET

Clustered at the western side of the Ironseat Ridge, this thicket contains the ruins of an ancient civilization that still remains under study by the Alabaster Lyceum. Found among the scattered relics and rubble of forgotten villages are references to the Founding, the first age of the world. The excavation pushes onward under the watch of the Lyceum, with the promise of discovery looming, and a lack of understanding of what may be found beneath.

The western edge of these ruins were mysteriously attacked by Thordak the Cinder King when he blazed across Tal'Dorei before his initial attack on Emon. In his wake he left a fiery scar the Alabaster Lyceum calls the Blazing Foundry. Whether this attack was calculated or just a release of the Cinder King's raw power is still unknown.

KYMAL

Small City • Population: 7,991
(73% Human, 14% Dwarven, 13% Other)

Glitzy. Gilded. Grimy.

The city of Kymal stands as the grumbling ghost of a gold rush mining center now become a haven for gamblers and criminals; a city of gold built atop a mountain of mud. Over two centuries before, the discovery of rich gold veins within the Ironseat Ridge sent a rush of eager folk to its

base. Kymal began life as their base camp, and over the next century grew into a lively, booming city. Gold and minerals came out of Kymal, and creature comforts came in. Troupes of players and musicians, merchants peddling food, liquor, and illicit goods arrived in force. Sex workers quickly followed, and those who would abuse them and enslave them were close behind.

Unfortunately, the veins began to produce less and less, and in desperation, the mountain was ravaged by hungry interests unwilling to accept the signs. Within ten years, the mining industry in Kymal had died, poverty and hunger becoming commonplace. Since then, the populace has shifted to survival through farming, fishing within the Foramere Basin, and trying to build interest as a trade center like Westruun, without much luck. The community had remained stagnant for decades when an entrepreneur from Ank'Harel named Calis Krishtan opened a small casino called "The Maiden's Wish." This gave the economy a vibrant boost, interest in the city grew, and people returned to Kymal as it rebranded as a haven for luck and quick currency.

Now expanded over the past two generations, Kymal has now recovered somewhat due to this growing presence of sanctioned games of luck, even going so far as to name Calis' son, Jaktur Krishtan, heir to the Maiden's Wish, as the Margrave of Kymal. While larger-scale gambling is not illegal within Tal'Dorei, it is generally considered uncouth on a social level, and the council within Emon is happy to keep the bulk of that element away from the capital city. This type of industry does draw the attention of opportunists, however, and many competitive gambling joints, loan sharks, and criminal interests have sprung up in recent years.

GOVERNMENT

Jaktur Krishtan is a businessman and celebrity-turned-politician, unusual within Tal'Dorei. His extravagant lifestyle is not unusual among Tal'Dorei's leaders, but his flamboyant, showy behavior certainly is—and the people of Kymal love him for it. Instead of leading personally, Jaktur delegates most of his duties to his advisors, leaving him free to do what he likes best: being a fabulously wealthy public icon, making nightly appearances at the Maiden's Wish, throwing magnificent galas, and organizing street fairs. Jaktur's majordomo, an austere tiefling woman named Prudence, wearily manages the day-to-day minutiae of running Kymal.

CRIME

Kymal is no longer the den of crime it once was, but there is still scum beneath its glitzy surface. Small-time cutpurses lurk in the shadows, waiting to make off with the small fortunes won by the casinos' luckiest patrons. Though not as significant as their Emon headquarters, the Clasp has a substantial presence in Kymal, and often utilizes petty criminals as freelance operatives when they need a job done quickly. Most covertly, the hostility between the Clasp and their rivals, the Myriad, manifests as a quiet proxy war, using these common thieves as fodder. The Clasp and Myriad both own casinos in town, the Wishing Well and the Dragon's Hoard, respectively.



DAINGEROUS CONTRABAND

There are a number of difficult-to-produce substances that have gained popularity for their mind-altering properties, and while the creation and possession of these substances is considered highly illegal within civilized Tal'Dorei, they have found private popularity within various levels of society across Exandria.

OLOORE ROOT

Oloore Root began as a druidic ceremonial tool for vision quests and communion with nature, but has become sought after by high society for its psychedelic properties. Drinking of the tea brewed from the root leads to heavy hallucinations, and sometimes grants insight to the world around them.

The imbiber must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 14) or become *poisoned* for 1d4 hours. Upon a success, the imbiber gains advantage on any Wisdom ability checks for 1 hour. On a saving throw of 19 or 20, the imbiber gains supernatural distance seeing, as though they had cast a *scrying* spell. They may Concentrate on this for up to 1 minute. (Valued at around 100 gp per dose.)

ZEAL

Zeal is distilled from the blood of captured or slain quaggoth deep from beneath the surface of Exandria. When brewed properly, a thick, purple-colored liquid that tastes of ash remains.

Drinking zeal or applying liberally to exposed skin (requiring an action) forces the user to make a Constitution saving throw (DC 12) or become *paralyzed* for 1d4 rounds as every muscle seizes up. With a success, the user deals an additional 3 damage to any target it hits with a melee attack for 2d6 rounds. The user suffers 1 point of exhaustion after the effect ends, regardless of saving throw success. (valued at around 150 gp per dose)

SUUDE

Suude is a dangerous, granular substance refined from magic residuum. Initially developed during the Age of Arcanum by archmages as an incense burned to enhance long spell ritual casting, the secret was discovered and spread among the spellcasting riffraff of Exandria. The varying forms of refinement are dangerous, and can produce one of three different types of suude.

When burned and the fumes inhaled (requiring an action), the imbiber must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 10) or become *unconscious* for 2d4 rounds. With a success, the user gains 1 Sorcery Point and access to one Metamagic option (as per the Sorcerer class *Font of Magic* and *Metamagic* features) for 1 hour based on the type of suude used. If more than one dose of suude is used within 1 hour of another, the DC of the Constitution saving throw is increased by 3 per additional dose. If three or more doses are used within 1 hour of each other, failing the Constitution saving throw drops the user to 0 hit points. Brown suude grants the Extended Spell option, Blue suude grants the Twinned Spell option, and Red suude grants the Distant Spell option. (valued at around 80 gp per dose)

GEOGRAPHY

Kymal is built on the rocky foothills of the Ironseat Ridge. Exploring beyond the glamorous city leads one to nothing but a desolate expanse of boulders and scrub-brush. Truly intrepid explorers may find the sealed entrances to the dried-up Kymal Gold Mines, but those who venture inside will find more than just empty caves.

THE RUINS OF TORTHIL

While traveling south of Kymal along the Wildwood Byway, just outside of the Ivyheart Thicket, travelers can spot a mile-wide cluster of broken stone, salted earth, and a single obsidian monument to the death of Warren Drassig, one of the most infamous and terrible figures in Tal'Dorei history. This scarred patch of land marks the ruins of the village of Torthil, which played an important role in the Scattered War, and harbored the ambush that led to the death of King Warren Drassig. Destroyed out of vengeance by Warren's son Neminar, the now long-weathered

wreckage and broken foundations of the town harbor only ghosts and unsavory creatures drawn to places of such dark history.

SHADEBARROW

No one who has visited the Shadebarrow has ever come back alive...nor do they come back entirely dead. The Shadebarrow was once a monolithic henge used as a ritual site for the hierophant druids known as the Dawn Circle, but their shrine became their tomb during the iron rule of Drassig. After Trist Drassig's death, the trade unions of Westruun laid claim to the unowned land, and from there the Dawn Circle's abandoned and treasureless burial tunnels were purchased from the unions at great cost by an eccentric Westruunian baron named Sevil Howthess. His obsession with its history led him to be interred there upon his passing, having the tomb outfitted with protections and, supposedly, the remnants of his fortune.

The exact location of the Shadebarrow has been forgotten by all but the Baron Howthess's few surviving

grandchildren, and they deny any involvement with the forgotten crypt. Despite this, treasure hunters and historians still seek out—and occasionally find—the infamous Shadebarrow. If they ever return to civilization, it is as a wailing spirit, cursed to eternally torment whoever they thought of in their final moments, or as a shambling corpse focused only on murdering their loved ones.

SHADEBARROW ADVENTURES

FORSAKEN MONOLITH

For low-level characters: While traveling across the Dividing Plains, the PCs accidentally find the Shadebarrow. The ancient druidic henges stand regally atop the grassy hill, and all seems peaceful—until the **specters** of dead explorers rise from the ground. They wail one name incessantly, “Howthess... Howthess!”

CATACOMBS OF THE LOST

For mid-level characters: The grandchildren of the eccentric Baron Howthess are posing as commoners in an obscure corner of the world like Stilben or the Shalesteps, far from their eternal shame—the Shadebarrow. When the PCs meet them, they seem like a simple family haunted by a restless spirit, but they soon discover why their grandfather’s **ghost** cannot let his descendants live in peace.

CLUTCH OF THE DEMON LORD

For epic-level characters: The Demon Prince of Undeath is one of the foul princes of the Abyss and a mighty servant of the Betrayer Gods. The cruelty shown at the Dawn Circle so long ago drew his loathsome gaze, and for centuries he has bided his time, waiting for a mortal to disturb this nest of hate and undeath. Now the PCs are drawn to this site by the hordes of undead spilling from its deepest sanctum, but what use will mortal weapons be against a prince of the Abyss?

SILVERCUT ROADWAY

Named for the shimmer of endless fields of wind-swept, sun-lit grasses that accompany the way, the Silvercut Roadway connects the heart of Tal’Dorei—Emon—to its distant extremities, affording traders and travelers some measure of safety against the wilds. Parts of the Roadway are older than the rule of the Sovereigns, established to connect Emon to Westruun after the discovery of immense silver veins near Westruun during the rule of Drassig. It now runs from the Bladeshimmer Shoreline to the Lucidian Coast, connecting most major hubs of civilization across the country. Travel by caravan is common, and escort by armed guard or mercenary is recommended, as the essential use of the roadway has also made it a prime target for outlaws, savages, and roaming beasts.

SILVERCUT CROSSROADS

Marked by the crossing point between the Silvercut Roadway and the Wildwood Byway, the Silvercut Crossroads

is a strange and solemn stop along those paths. During the rule of Drassig, many innocents and war heroes were executed by hanging at a massive gallows that once stood at the crossroads, with bodies hung from signs as a warning to dissenters. The gallows were destroyed with the rise of Zan Tal’Dorei, while a large, unmarked grave site was left behind, set now with a stone monument in memory of those who were wrongfully killed. Most choose not to camp too closely to the site for this reason, and rumors of unrest from the dead are used to spook curious travelers.

SILVERCUT ROADWAY ADVENTURES

THE ROAD WARRIORS

For low-level characters: While traveling across the Silvercut, the PCs come across the smoking wreckage of a massive wagon train, and investigation shows that it has been ransacked after a fierce battle. A team of mercenaries called the Road Warriors spring upon the PCs, blaming them for the attack. The evidence suggests that orcs and goblins—the Ravagers—were responsible, and the PCs can easily clear their names. But is it really that simple?

SHARD OF THE SHADEBARROW

For mid-level characters: A **wraith** calling herself the spirit of Archdruid Avandros has animated an army of **ghouls** and **ghasts** from the graveyard. The undead have taken over the Silvercut Crossroads, and must be dealt with before a national trade crisis emerges. But what is the spirit of an archdruid of the Dawn Circle doing in this mass grave? Sneaking into the graveyard reveals a human skull with sinister amethyst growths protruding from the bone, and Avandros’s spirit is desperate to protect it.

THRONE OF THE ARCHEART

In the foothills of the Ironseat Ridge is a small rise known as the Throne of the Arheart: a gathering place for the many nomadic centaur tribes that ride across the Dividing Plains. The centaurs were first born when the Arheart showed mercy to a tribe of elven horseriders who gave their lives serving their god during the Calamity. For centuries, the centaurs have all returned to the Throne of the Arheart each decade to gather in a Herdsmeet to discuss the state of the tribes, and pay homage to their deity on the very hill where the first centaurs were created. This event causes great chaos in the eastern plains; the massive migration of the centaur herds disrupts trade and stirs up the Ravagers and more savage gnoll tribes.

THRONE OF THE ARCHEART ADVENTURES

FIST OF THE RUINER

For mid-level characters: The orcs call this rise the Fist of the Ruiner, for they too were created here in the image of their god. Legend tells that orcs and centaurs were both created at this rise in the aftermath of a battle between the Arheart and the Ruiner. Orcs have laid



siege to every Herdsmeet since they first learned of the gathering, and centaurs have begun hiring humanoid mercenaries to defend the herds as they discuss tribal politics.

TORIAN FOREST

Cradling the southwestern edge of the Cliffkeep Mountain range, the Torian Forest supplies much of Emon's timber and Kraghammer's firewood. Though its locals proudly proclaim the Torian to be the "most welcoming" and "least haunted" of Tal'Dorei's forests, it isn't without its dangers. Many deadly creatures occasionally wander down from the mountains and await unsuspecting loggers, while the deeper areas of the Torian make home to a sect of displaced fey who hold no trust for human and dwarf kind alike. The northern end of the wood becomes marsh-like and is mostly avoided, the fens there home to the wild folks of the Rivermaw tribe.

THE RIVERMAW TRIBE

Born from the wild peoples of the Dividing Plains, free folk who shunned the constraints of society, the Rivermaw wanders as a tribe nearly three hundred strong that calls the trees of the Torian Forest home. Living as hunters and scavengers, they revere the natural world and the gifts it bears to the respectful and patient. While members of the Rivermaw tribe do not seek conflict, the dangers of the natural world ever encroach upon their

"During the light of a full moon, it is said that the veil that holds back the Feywild weakens and spreads throughout the Forest. People have witnessed strange figurines dancing in the shadows, and large creatures scouring the forest line, looking for food. When the sun rises, sometimes you can find giant hoof prints covered in grass and moss; but by the afternoon, they are completely filled with wildflowers."

- Elder Keinla, the oldest dwarf in Kraghammer

camp, and many train as warriors to defend their families and elders. It wasn't until their conquering by the Herd of Storms, helmed by the tyrannical Kevdak, that a more violent and savage way of life was forced upon them for a number of years. Once Kevdak was slain, the remaining members of both the Rivermaw and the Herd of Storms agreed to recant the life of brutality and become the renewed Rivermaw Tribe under the tenuous alliance of Ivon the Ironwilled and Zantroar, son of Kevdak.

TURST FIELDS

Small Town • Population: 1,390
(40% Human, 38% Halfling, 15% Gnoll, 8% Other)

To the northwest of Drynna, not far from the Dawnmist Pines, the farming community of Turst Fields toils over extremely fertile land fed by the Mooren River Run.

Providing much of Tal'Dorei and Whitestone's grown food and produce, the community must import most all other commodities outside of wood, making it an eager stop for trade caravans, and an easy target for swindling. As such, nearly 150 Shields from Westruun are semi-permanently stationed here to keep the peace and prevent unlawful activity, dragging any apprehended criminals back to Westruun for judgment. Even so, the influence of darker interests still creeps up from time to time.

Turst Fields is also one of the few communities in Tal'Dorei that counts gnolls among not only its allies, but its citizens. Without the Dustpaw gnolls, Turst would not have survived its first summer., not with the bloodthirsty Ravagers running rampant across the plains. Today, the humans and halflings of Turst Fields have not only been accepted by the Dustpaws, but many have adopted the gnolls' language and animistic spirituality. This alliance isn't as accepted by the larger populace of Tal'Dorei, however, and racial relations do become pressed when dealing with visiting political and foreign interests.

TURST FIELDS ADVENTURES

A BAD INFLUENCE

For low-level characters: A massive shipment of illegal suude from Stilben has caused a surge of addiction in Turst, leading to strife within the community. To make matters worse, a young woman named Shela had an adverse reaction to a recently arrived batch of suude, causing her to enter a psychotic rage, tearing four people apart before she was killed. Unbeknownst to its users, the latest shipment was laced with lycanthrope bile, and many users within the city may not be aware they are already infected—and the ones responsible are watching closely to see the fruits of their labor.

GNOLL RECOURSE

For mid-level characters: A hobgoblin calling herself Grud the Great has taken control of an arm of the Ravagers. Her highly-organized regiment of hobgoblins has whipped the local goblins and orcs into shape, and they now march on Turst. The army is too large to be stopped by just the PCs, but perhaps helping the somewhat friendly Dustpaw gnolls secure an alliance with the standoffish Whitesnout, Priest-Eater, and Riverwalker tribes will be enough.

THE SIX BLADES WAR

For high-level characters: The recent promise of profit in Turst, if only its criminal elements can be organized and yoked to pull in the same direction, has proven too great a temptation. A new criminal gang calling itself the Six Blades is making a bid for control of all illicit activity in and around the community, and is violently making an example of anyone—criminal or Shield—who gets in their way. Efforts to stamp out the gang have proven ineffective, and its members are unusually dedicated—even fanatical. The gang's leadership is shadowy, and unknown beyond the name "Hexen." In fact, the mysterious Hexen is a **marlith** demon with ambitions to sow chaos and suffering far beyond Turst Fields, if given the opportunity.

WESTRUUN

Large City • Population: 26,205
(65% Human, 10% Gnome, 7% Tiefling,
5% Half-Orc, 1% Gnoll, 12% Other)

The city of Westruun is the center of Tal'Dorei, a crossroads of culture along the Silvercut Roadway that welcomes adventurers, traders, and vagabonds of all kinds. Despite its name, Westruun is more east than west, and was in fact named after Palest Westruun, the trader and philosopher who founded the city. Though Westruun suffered greatly beneath the iron talons of the Chroma Conclave, the dragon's destruction and the razing of the Herd of Storms has allowed the city to reclaim its place of importance as an economic and political power within Tal'Dorei.

GOVERNMENT

Westruun is ruled by Margrave Brandon Zimmersset, appointed after the fall of the Conclave in the wake of the previous margrave's execution at the hands of the Herd of Storms, a now-defunct tribe of barbaric nomads. A margrave is a military official appointed by the Council of Tal'Dorei, and is a position held for life, or until the council deems them unfit to govern. Westruun's standing margrave has executive power over the region's military forces and holds power to establish and dissolve trading guilds, the lifeblood of Westruun. The city's margrave commands a standing military of about 800 trained soldiers known as the Shields of the Plain, or simply "Shields." Despite Westruun's importance, its military is often spread too thin to properly mount an offensive against the guerrilla Ravagers.

REVOLUTION

Since Margrave Zimmersset is a military leader, Westruun is technically under martial law, as are all Tal'Dorei cities ruled by a margrave. This form of government is a relic of the totalitarian rule of King Warren Drassig, and some of Westruun's citizens chafe under their absolute rule. Any thoughts of dissent against the previous margrave, however, were snuffed out when the Chroma Conclave attacked. The black dragon Umbrasyl made short work of the Shields and shattered the margrave's rule before retreating to Gatshadow, leaving Westruun open for invasion by Kevdak's goliath herd. Umbrasyl and Kevdak were both slain by Grog Strongjaw and Vox Machina, freeing Westruun from tyranny.

In the peace that followed the fall of the Conclave, the newly-appointed Margrave Zimmersset made plans to return Westruun to its former glory. Some idealistic young students and traders take umbrage with this proposal—when was Westruun last "glorious" under a margrave's rule? Word of Emon's new, elected council has reached them along the trade roads, and word of revolution brews in Westruun, with secret meetings occurring in smoky corners of the Puddlemuck Tavern and in study chambers of the Westhall Academy.



CRIME

A well-rooted faction of the Clasp has controlled and efficiently run their shadowy trades for decades right under the Shields' noses. Their network of fences runs from coast to coast, Stilben to Emon, and they are known to deal with humanoids, orcs, and gnolls alike if it means a profit. Their hideout is secreted away behind the storefront of the Wayward Pony, a popular inn owned entirely by Clasp agents.

GEOGRAPHY

Miles of farmland and fields surround Westruun's towering walls—except to the west, where the city is bordered by the Bramblewood and dwarfed by the mist-shrouded peak of Gatshadow. The city's interior is divided into six wards.

THE SCHOLAR WARD

The Scholar Ward is Westruun's northwestern ward, and is home to the Cobalt Reserve, Tal'Dorei's largest library and repository of information. This vast archive is defended and maintained by a live-in monastery of Knowing Mother-worshipping monks known as the Cobalt Soul. Across the way lies the comparably small College of the Savvy, a school for the arts founded by the renowned bard and champion of intuition referred to only as the White Duke. Beyond the Reserve, the Scholar Ward also holds Tal'Dorei's newest (and the Dividing Plains' only) general university, the Westhall Academy.

THE TEMPLE WARD

The Temple Ward is a small, southern ward where all people are afforded free worship within various sanctuaries. Though the most important gods of the Dividing Plains are the Lawbearer, the Wildmother, and the Platinum Dragon—and they certainly have the Temple Ward's largest shrines—the residents of the Temple Ward welcome all faiths. Westruun's smallest temple is the Ruiner's "Empty Socket," maintained by the handful of orcs in Westruun, and its largest is the Lawbearer's "First Bastion," an opulent temple supported by a steady influx of gold from by the local government. The First Bastion was a secret home for refugees during Kevdak's occupation, and many Westruun survivors have turned to the faith of the Lawbearer after being protected by her grace.

THE OPAL WARD

The Opal Ward is the center of the city and the heart of its law and governance. The ward has no residential housing, but is home to Margrave's Keep, the Hall of Reason, and the public square. Margrave's Keep, a squat mansion that houses the Margrave, is buttressed against military barracks and housing for Margrave Zimmerset and his family. The Hall of Reason is a beautiful courthouse in High Elven style, and bears a marble statue of Bahamut, God of Justice, before its steps. The public square is a

PLAINSCOW

Native to Dividing Plains is the hulking plainscow, an exceptionally sturdy beast of burden and used by the people of central Tal'Dorei for centuries. Though herds of wild plainscows still roam the prairies, domesticated plainscows are now used as mounts, pack animals, and sometimes even livestock. Plainscows are unusually empathetic for beasts, and often bond with a rider for life. Plainscows stand 6 feet tall, weigh about two tons, and live for 70 years. They can be bought in Westruun for 200 gp and have a carrying capacity of 1,500 pounds.

PLAINSCOW

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 42 (5d10 + 15)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Skills Insight +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the plainscow moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the plainscow can make another attack with its hooves as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

forum for public gatherings and bears a fountain depicting Palest Westruun, the founder of the city, atop an onyx horse.

THE RESIDENTIAL WARD

The Residential Ward fills the northeastern section of Westruun, and is the city's most densely-populated—some would say overpopulated—ward, housing over two-thirds of its population. There are no major locations in this ward, though countless petty criminals make their homes here, and the Shields are stretched too thin to properly deal with them. Unlike in the Temple Ward, free expression of religion is frowned upon here, even within the privacy of one's own home. Though the Lawbearer, the Wildmother, and the Platinum Dragon are all benevolent deities, many of their Westruunian followers are not particularly tolerant of other faiths.



THE MARKET WARD

The Market Ward is Westruun's southwestern ward and contains the majority of the city's businesses, trade stands, and production warehouses. It is currently in fashion for store owners to live in a second story above their shops, though less scrupulous businessfolk have turned their residences into gambling dens, black markets, and illegal brothels. The most significant building in this ward is the World Market, a marble-walled auction house where hundreds of vendors hawk rare and unusual items from across Tal'Dorei.

THE UNDERWALK WARD

The Underwalk Ward is the city's newest ward, an extension of the residential sprawl built from repurposed sections of the sewer system. The Underwalk was initially built during the invasion of the Chroma Conclave in hopes of keeping the populace hidden, but it has now been largely abandoned except for those either too poor to return even to the Residential Ward, or by those humans and monsters who would prefer to go unseen. Every day, new and unsettling rumors of many-headed monstrosities prowling the Underwalk's shadowed roads spread to the surface, keeping even Westruun's bravest mercenaries from exploring the den of sorrow and evil beneath the city. The most well-known entrance to this subterranean labyrinth is a single inauspicious manhole in the Opal Ward, topped with a metal cover emblazoned with the crest of Westruun.

LANDMARKS

THE SURVIVORS' LEGACY

The names of all those in Westruun who survived the reign of Kevdak and Umbrasyl are carved on a wall in the first chamber of the Underwalk. This memorial was created by Percival de Rolo when the people of Westruun first hid here from the wrath of the Chroma Conclave after Umbrasyl's death, but it has been expanded in the years since, now including the names of all who perished in the struggle as well.

The Survivors' Legacy is a symbol of hope, warding away the sorrow and evil of the Underwalk beneath, and to this day common folk make trips here to honor their lost loved ones. Some of the more generous folk give aid to the homeless living here as well, and some more adventurous travelers make prayers to the Dawnfather and the Matron of Ravens here before delving into the Underwalk's deeper reaches.

Once per week, a character related to one of the people named on the Survivor's Legacy can pray there and gain advantage on death saving throws for the next 24 hours.

YUMINOR OBSERVATORY

Westruun is a fairly flat city, and one tower on the edge of the Scholar Ward looms high above the nearby Westhall Academy. It looks forever skyward, the arcanists inside constantly charting the movements of heavens. A quasi-religious order of diviners and astromancers named the Scions of Yuminor study here, supported by the Academy's headmistress Estella Ladimar, herself a blood

descendant of the heroic wizard Atz Yuminor. The observatory is open to all, and the diviners here will gladly give a star reading for 10 gp, once per day. Receiving this reading allows you to roll 1d20. Note the result, you can exchange it for any d20 roll made by a creature you can see. This divination fades after 24 hours. The Scions of Yuminor are so affable, how could anything sinister be lurking behind their star charts and telescopes?

THE BLACK KING

Palest Westruun was not a king, but his new statue in the Opal Ward is often called the Black King, a subtle jab at the city's previous "Black King," the tyrannical dragon Umbrasyl. The High Priest of the Lawbearer blessed both the Black King and Westruun itself when the statue was unveiled on a recent anniversary of Westruun's reclamation, saying "*May the Lawbearer grant us all strength of spirit when chaos next threatens our peaceful civilization. When that time comes, may the Black King unsheath his sword to rally our people and lead Westruun to victory.*"

When the safety of all of Westruun is threatened, the Black King will animate and defend its people, becoming a **stone golem** with a mounted movement speed of 60 feet and Charisma and Intelligence scores of 18 (+4).

WESTRUUN ADVENTURES

BURROWING THIEVES

For low-level characters: Over the past week, over four dozen plainscows—exceptional livestock and beasts of burden—disappeared from the Westruun's agricultural outer ring, leaving nothing but a series of five foot holes in the ground, and traces of acid scarring. Farmers and caravanners alike are frightened and confused; these recurring attacks threaten to destroy Westruun's agriculture and cripple commerce. Jeremiah Sook, head of the regional Farmers' Guild, is willing to pay a hefty bounty for the culprits.

AN ASSISTANT'S PLIGHT

For mid-level characters: Just outside Westruun is Slaterock Tower, the abode of renowned archmage Realmseer Eskil Ryndarien. Normally, none are invited to the tower, but the PCs, wherever they may be, receive a missive from the Realmseer's assistant, Jekt. The letter claims the Realmseer has gone missing within the tower, and the building itself now bars his entry. Upon arrival, and confirmation of Jekt's request, the tower seems to constantly shift its interior structure, almost acting like a sentient entity. Dangerous room after deadly challenge are thrown at the party as they traverse the labyrinthine paths of the tower, only to find that the protections of the tower, as well as the Realmseer himself, are actually trying to keep something far more dangerous imprisoned within.

THE STUFF OF NIGHTMARES

For mid-level characters: Reports of missing children rise once again within Westruun, with a seemingly unrelated scourge of nightmares plaguing people old and young alike. Mystic expertise is sought to acquire information

*May the Lawbearer grant us all strength
of spirit when chaos next threatens our peaceful civilization.
When that time comes, may the Black King
unsheathe his sword
to rally our people and lead Westruun to victory.*

—The Blessing of the Black King

regarding either issue, but the sadistic **oni** secretly responsible for both is deft at erasing its tracks. Nyx and Vryll, a pair of twin tieflings with only a single horn each, have also recently opened a dream-reading stall, and their business is booming. Are they responsible, or is their exploitative business just a red herring?

DOWN BELOW

For high-level characters: A massive sinkhole has emerged beneath the temple of Erathis, taking a portion of the temple into the darkness of the Underwalk Ward. With the depth seemingly bottomless, and initial investigators going missing, the Head Cleric Umentu seeks the assistance of brave and able-bodied mercenaries to seek answers. Only one thing is certain when descending into the unknown below—the terror only grows as the light from above fades.

COUNTER-ESPIONAGE

For characters of any level: Margrave Brandon Zimmerset is nearing the climax of a three-year investigation on the Clasp headquarters within Westruun. He has detailed information on the daily routines of the three Clasp leaders within Westruun, Spirelings Gholesh, Oalan, and Fetch, and is hoping to crush them here once and for all. However, a respected nobleman and secret Clasp plant named Winston Destwiler has been feeding the margrave misinformation, and the Clasp is ready to retaliate; already a brutal ambush and assassination plot has been set into motion. Depending on the PCs' allegiances, they may hear about this plot either from friendly Clasp or Westruunian sources.

WILDWOOD BYWAY

Known as the oldest road in Tal'Dorei, this path linked the adolescent cities of Kraghammer and Syngorn before the landfall of man in the recent age. During the reign of Drassig, the Silvercut Roadway intersected with this ancient road, and after the relationship between Syngorn and Kraghammer eroded following the Scattered War, Tal'Dorei interests began to utilize the byway more than most. Syngornian elves sometimes refer to this path north of the crossroads as the "Traitor's Stair", in reference to the dwarven stronghold it leads to. While travel in the open isn't any more dangerous than Silvercut, it is common knowledge that both wooded ends of this path are fraught with their own threats.

THE CLIFFKEEP MOUNTAINS

Spanning the northern reaches of Tal'Dorei, the Cliffkeep Mountains are an impenetrable barrier between the known realm and what lies beyond in the distant north. The Cliffkeepers' southern foothills are dotted with forests and pockets of civilization, standing resolute against the unwelcoming topography. Deep within the earth itself, the dwarven stronghold of Kraghammer flourishes and expands, just a few scant leagues above ancient caverns that plunge into a domain of unknowable horrors.

The Cliffkeepers are the largest mountain range in all of Tal'Dorei, home to myriad peoples: scattered tribes of kobolds scavenge in the wake of hungry ettins, roving clans of frost giants, and mobs of trolls ravage those who camp too high into the old paths. Wild wyverns can be heard screeching into the valleys, and some scattered goliath herds even tame wyverns for mounts.

Near the earth elemental rift and the Ashari village of Terrah, the mountains themselves seem to rise up in defense as earth elementals spring from the living stones. Northward brings higher peaks and colder winds, as snow and ice take the lands to become the frozen waste that is the Neverfields. These challenges keep the common folk at bay, the secrets and spoils held within these crags calling only to the very brave, very clever, or very stupid.

THE EMBERHOLD

A passage from the Keenstone Quarry in Kraghammer leads below the earth. Deep. Deeper. Until the light of day is entirely gone, and then deeper still. Across chasms miles-deep and full of magma, beneath great hanging gardens of glowing malachite, lies the Emberhold. It stares imperiously over the underground kingdom of the dark dwarves, the ash-skinned duergar.

Millennia beneath the ground have made these dwarves paranoid and cruel creatures. Their eyes are wide and white, nearly-sightless, and over all things they seek the destruction of their cousins in Kraghammer above, who have no love for their vicious, subterranean neighbors.

Untold dozens of duergar villages span the glassy lava-plains that the Emberhold is built upon, with mighty warbands constantly coming and going, sometimes returning with just a few bloody survivors, other times returning with a dozen slaves in chains, and other times returning not at all. No one in Tal'Dorei knows why the duergar so hate the world above them; no captured dark dwarves ever tell. When posed the question, wise Ironkeeper Gradim Greyspine merely shakes his braided head and sorrowfully replies, *"It's been so long, I doubt even they know."*

The Emberhold itself is a fortress built of black stone and obsidian, framed by rivers of molten rock, and surrounded by a massive city of ramshackle dwellings and towers that mark their domain. Vox Machina's assault of the Emberhold recently cost the duergar their king and queen, though rumors of a lost princess of Ember are beginning to circulate through the realm.

Ironically, the very heroes that slaughtered their king and queen also freed them from K'Varn, an aberrant tyrant that dominated their people for generations. Despite rumors of a lost heir, surviving members of the Emberhold court have rebuilt their hierarchy from the bloodline of Thangrul, a lesser war-duke, and resumed their unending war with the other creatures that share these caverns.

EMBERHOLD ADVENTURES

THE LOST HEIR

For mid-level characters: King Murghol of the Emberhold was killed in combat by Scanlan Shorthalt, gnome bard of

Vox Machina, and his wife, Queen Ulara, was slain by the aberrant tyrant K'Varn. All of the Emberhold knows that the King and Queen had a young daughter—only six years old at the time of their death—but none seem interested in seeking out the missing heir to the Emberhold. Thangrul, a war-duke poised to be crowned as the new king of the duergar, grows particularly fiery whenever anyone mentions the name around him.

FORT DAXIO

Nestled within the Othendin Pass, Fort Daxio is a massive stronghold and series of military structures under the rule of the Tal'Dorei Council that trains and holds the bulk of the mobile army of Emon. The fortress was constructed following the Scattered War as an answer to both the opportunistic assaults of the giant clans from the Cliffkeep mountains, and as a hidden reserve of military might against Errevon during the Icelost Years.

Currently helmed by Warmaster Mikael Daxio, a decorated soldier and long-time friend of the late Uriel Tal'Dorei II, the fort keeps around 4,400 standing soldiers and 500 civilians who are responsible for upkeep of Fort Daxio and supplying most of the needs of the army. The forces are divided into four different regiments: The Dusk Regiment, the Gale Regiment, the Aegis Regiment, and the Tide Regiment. Each regiment is lead by their own assigned general, all answering directly to the Warmaster, and it's not uncommon for regiments to be sent out across the land to aid and defend other territories or allies to the Council.

General Fei Yujian is the unusually cheery commander the Dusk Regiment, and General Jillian Sylph is the calm, tactical commander of the Gale Regiment. The Aegis Regiment is overseen by the dour General Elle Gorgofon, while General Kay Clearsight is the spell-slinging commander of the Tide Regiment.

FORT DAXIO ADVENTURES

FROZEN BLOOD

For high-level characters: Warmaster Mikael Daxio has been found dead on the bottom floor of the Watchman's Rest, a popular public house in Fort Daxio. He was stabbed through

RELIGIONS: *Majority:* Allhammer, Stormlord, Dawnfather, *Minority:* Platinum Dragon

IMPORTS: Lumber, spices, fish, grain, livestock

EXPORTS: Precious gems, industrial metals, gold, silver, platinum, mithral, cobalt, fine stonework, jewelry, fungal produce, weapons, armor



the heart with a dagger of frozen blood, says Temmik Lars, the only eyewitness. All of the Daxio garrison has been thrown into chaos, and every major officer is blaming each other for the attack. The PCs must investigate this murder, and ultimately uncover why the **vampire** Vrylaska Fellbranch posed as General Kay Clearsight to kill the Warmaster.

GATSHADOW

Drawing a menacing shadow over the Bramblewood around Westruun, the monolithic mountain of Gatshadow stands unnaturally tall against the surrounding mountains. This ominous tower of stone is well known and used as a visual landmark for caravans and travelers crossing the

Dividing Plains, as well as a mining center for Westruun. The local folklore of the Dividing Plains tells of the evils within the mountain, and though they are now told to keep children from wandering into the forest alone, not all stories are rooted in fiction.

It was in the Age of Arcanum that Gatshadow was transformed into a place of evil. Acek Orattim, a priest of the Betrayer God known as the Chained Oblivion, made the mountain the seat of his power. The Oblivion's unstoppable power corrupted the mountain, stretching the mountain like putty until it was a jagged needle that towered over all other mountains, and etching a maddening labyrinth of twisting passages into the mountain's heart.

Acek spread the Oblivion's madness across the Cliffkeep Mountains and the Dividing Plains below,

but eventually his reign of terror came to an end. Utterly defeated by the Dawnfather during the Calamity, the wounded god retreating to Acek's domain to rally. However, the Dawnfather followed close behind, shackling and banishing the dark god within the depths far beneath Gatshadow. It was said that Acek's mind and spirit were so filled with his master's essence, the god's banishment tore his body asunder. Today, only the empty maze of deadly chambers and traps remain beneath the mountain, forgotten and awaiting discovery.

The high bluffs of Gatshadow have in recent years been the home of many a villain, most recently the ancient black dragon Umbrasyl of the Chroma Conclave. Legend says that Gatshadow's interior tunnels spiral infinitely downwards, into a void of utter darkness. Immortal, white-eyed devotees of madness pace endlessly into Gatshadow's depths, carrying lightless torches, whispering that the Chained Oblivion itself is sealed in the depths below. The stone doors that bar entrance to Gatshadow's lowest reaches are sealed by magic so great, even the most inquisitive of the Arcana Pansophical cannot breach them.

GATSHADOW ADVENTURES

BLOOD OF THE DRAGON

For high-level characters: The body of the ancient black dragon Umbrasyl was never recovered—some think that's a waste of a perfectly good business opportunity; after all, a black dragon's bones are a potent alchemical reagent, and its scales stronger than any steel. Of course, there is a reason why no one has dared to recover the Hope Devourer's corpse. When Umbrasyl died, the caustic acid and magical blood within its body seeped through the caverns of Upper Gatshadow, devouring stone and transforming the mountain's upper levels into a vitriolic swamp maze, teeming with oozes, half-black dragon warriors, and the spirits of goliaths from the Herd of Storms that failed to kill the dragon.

NO LIGHTS IN THE DARKNESS

For epic-level characters: The wars of gods and mortals ended when the Betrayer Gods were banished to their planes of eternal imprisonment, but something has upset the laws of the planes. A being called the Nameless—supposedly a cultist of the Whispered One—has stolen her master's secret knowledge and fled to Gatshadow in search of the tortured spirit of Acek Orattim. Agents of the Arcana Pansophical have sensed that the lower gates of Gatshadow have been breached, and frantically call for Tal'Dorei's greatest heroes to rush to the evil mountain. As the PCs race to the bottom of a labyrinth of insanity, they will discover that they race not only the new Herald of Oblivion, but also the Remnants she betrayed.

THE GREY VALLEY

North of the Umbra Hills lies a wide valley of ill omen and dark history. So named for the forest of dead, petrified trees that fill the majority of the valley

floor, this forest once marked a bastion of influence for the Demon Prince of Indulgence. During the Scattered War, Trist Drassig obsessed over the possibility of losing and pledged his service to the demon in exchange for power to smite his foes. The bargain accepted, the Demon Prince sent his forces to this valley to aid Trist in the Battle of the Umbra Hills, but ultimately both fell to the incredible power of the rebeling forces. The release of terrible energies cursed both the battlefield and the valley where the demonic forces hailed. Now left cursed and dead, the valley remains a whispered warning to dealing with demons, and a hotbed of darker entities drawn to the ruined place.

GREY VALLEY ADVENTURES

SWORD OF THE DEMON PRINCE

For mid-level characters: In a dream, a warrior PC continually sees visions of a noble, kingly sword embedded in the ground, surrounded by shadows and demons. "Free me... it whispers. "I need your help... I am in the Grey Valley." The sword is not as it appears; though the Demon Prince was defeated at the Battle of the Grey Valley and banished to the Abyss, his accursed greatsword still lingers. The last shard of his malevolence in this world, *Graz'tchar, the Decadent End* rests in the center of the valley, its tip embedded in the earth. The twin **hezrou** demons that guard it pretend to be the ghosts of great knights, protecting the blade of a lost Sovereign of Tal'Dorei.

JORENN VILLAGE

Small Town • Population: 1,873
(68% Human, 10% Dwarf, 8% Halfling, 14% Other)

For many years, Jorenn Village was just a tiny pioneer town trying to build off the unused resource of shadegrass. Over the past seventy years, the village has exploded in size and population after plentiful silver veins were discovered within the nearby rocky hills. Hardworking common folk and opportunistic prospectors alike flocked to Jorenn despite its unsettling proximity to the Umbra Hills.

Jorenn is far enough away from Emon that the influence of the Council rarely touches it, giving opportunists and lowlifes freedom to subvert and control both the village government and the local economy. Ten years ago, a small circle of vigilantes and mercenaries declared themselves protectors of Jorenn, and took the name Shadewatch, hunting and slaying creeping dangers in the night and returning to great fanfare. Over the past decade, others seeking fame and glory joined the ranks of the Shadewatch and the group ballooned into the unofficial town law enforcement.

Yet corruption took hold of the Shadewatch. The vigilantes now personally stoke the fires of fear, all while demanding increasing tribute for their services—and breaking kneecaps if they don't get it. Today, the people of Jorenn are just as afraid of the Shadewatch as they are of the creatures they keep at bay.

GRAZ'TCHAR, THE DECADENT END

Weapon (greatsword), artifact (requires attunement)

This blade appears to be a beautiful cruciform sword of shining silver, inlaid with sparkling rubies.

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. It has the following properties.

CORROSIVE SUBMISSION

When you hit a humanoid with this weapon, you may force it to take an additional 3d6 acid damage and it must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the creature is charmed by you for up to 1 hour. If you attack the creature again while charmed, the acid damage increases to 10d6 and the charm ends. It cannot be charmed again for 24 hours after the charm is ended in this way.

HIDDEN NATURE

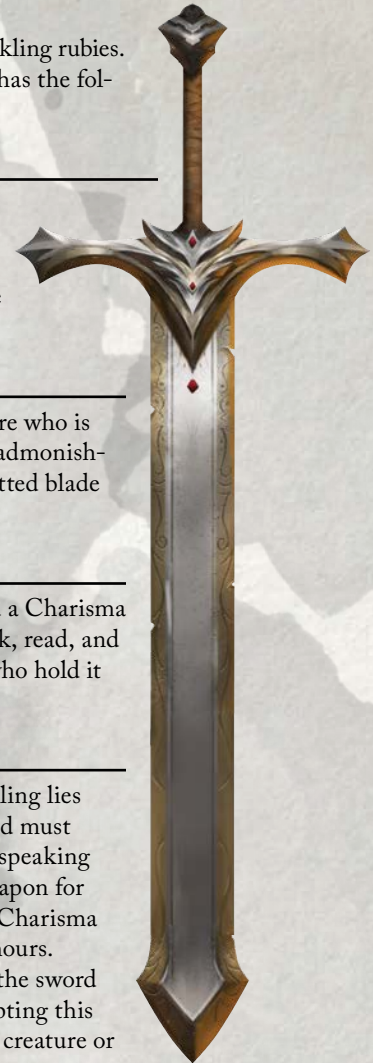
The acid damage dealt by this greatsword appears to be radiant damage; Any creature who is successfully charmed by it is under the illusion that the damage to it was merely an admonishing jostle. A *true seeing* spell or similar reveals that this sword is actually a rusted, pitted blade dripping with acid.

SENTIENCE

Graz'tchar is a sentient evil weapon with an Intelligence of 14, a Wisdom of 12, and a Charisma of 18. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. The weapon can speak, read, and understand Common, and can communicate with its wielder telepathically. Those who hold it hear the wise voice of a sorrowful king, beckoning the user to seize their destiny.

PERSONALITY

Graz'tchar slowly attempts to sway the character into sowing chaos in Tal'Dorei, telling lies about great leaders, claiming that the heads of the Tal'Dorei Council are corrupt and must be overthrown. The voice of this blade is actually the Demon Prince of Indulgence, speaking from his Abyssal prison. Should the wielder continue to disobey the urges of the weapon for an extended period of time, it can attempt to charm the wielder. They must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 14). On a success, they are immune to the sword's charm for 24 hours. Upon a failure, they become charmed by the sword for 24 hours. During this time, the sword can force the character to take an action of its choice once an hour, the wielder accepting this action as their own will. Should the chosen action lead to the harm of a non-hostile creature or ally, the charm immediately breaks.



The Shadewatch is a minor organization in the grand scheme of things, but Shademaster Arhanna Lewyn has grand ambitions. She's planning something; every night, she consults a ball of polished white quartz, and every week she sends a trio of her agents to the Umbra Hills... or to the base of Gatshadow.

JORENN VILLAGE ADVENTURES

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

For low-level characters: The PCs are attacked by a group of **worgs**, and more just keep coming. They'll be overwhelmed soon... if not for a sudden volley of black-feathered bolts! Six **thugs** join the battle and "rescue" the PCs. The battle was rough, and these Shadewatch "officers" like the cut of the PCs' jib, but only once they hear their names. They offer them a position in their force back in Jorenn, with unbelievable pay: 50 gp a day *each*. What is the Shademaster planning?

KRAGHAMMER

Large City • Population 43,550
(83% Dwarven, 10% Gnome, 7% Other)

Heralded as the true living center of dwarven culture on the continent, the stronghold of Kraghammer was established by the surviving families of the high-mountain kingdom of Uthtor, said to have crumbled nearly a millennia ago in the Calamity. Rebuilt by survivors of Uthtor within the southern face of the Cliffkeep Mountains, Kraghammer grew with industrious vigor a few centuries ago with the discovery of rich veins of platinum and mithral, which remain its main source of wealth and trade power. It currently holds its ground as a long-standing autonomous city-state allied with the Council of Tal'Dorei, and the instigator of countless expeditions into the Cliffkeeps to extract the riches and long-forgotten secrets beneath the staggering peaks.

An ominous walk of a thousand stairs climb the side of the mountain to the gates of the city carved from the mountain itself, just wide enough for two dwarves to walk abreast. Too steep and treacherous for carts or common beasts of burden, traders and trappers use **giant goats** to transport their goods to and from market, while wealthy dwarven merchant lords employ serfs and laborers to carry their goods. Kraghammer's impenetrable adamantine gates stand at the end of a perilous bridge overlooking a hundred-foot chasm, and is guarded by three watchtowers carved into the mountain itself.

Within those gates, the massive stronghold is made up of three cylindrical levels called "slabs" that descend deep beneath the mountains. Kraghammer's granite walls are lit by roaring fires, enchanted torches, and shimmering candlerock, which glows with internal fire. Even when the evening fires are extinguished, the amber light of the Bronzegrip Metalworks at the base of the city bathes the city in its warm glow.

GOVERNMENT

Kraghammer law is written by a consortium of the five most powerful houses within the city, each appointing a delegate to serve on their behalf. That tenuous union of houses is kept by the city's executive officer, the Ironkeeper. The Ironkeeper is elected by the houses, carries a term of ten years, with no term limit, though most Ironkeepers rule for between three to five terms. The current sitting Ironkeeper is Gradim Greyspine of House Greyspine, halfway through his third term. His heroics in the recent war have made him beloved of his people, and his softer view of outlanders has made him a champion of the repressed.

The laws of the city are enforced by a military class of elite warriors called Carvers that act as guards, soldiers, and jailers under the guidance of the Ironkeeper. Becoming a Carver is a lengthy, rigorous, and taxing pursuit, and many who choose to join fail to complete their training and find another career path. As such, many Carvers are brought to it through family tradition, the pressure and expectation of the family name and a father's honor being stronger than personal pain and preference. Once officially named, a Carver is given a homestead built into the center slab of the city, a set of masterwork armor and weapons, and a steady income.

PREJUDICE

No non-dwarf has ever served as a delegate of the houses, let alone the Ironkeeper. Though dwarves individually are often trusting, honest folk, Kraghammer breeds a culture of xenophobia that prevents people of other races from participating in the highest levels of dwarven society. Even if they were born within Kraghammer, their epithet will always be outlander, surface-dweller, sun-eyes, or worse. Yet this startlingly overt racism seems to melt away for as long as an outlander is useful—and no longer. Greed drives Kraghammer; it fuels its furnaces and works its bellows, and many outlanders within Kraghammer do their best to live within its system, trying to eke out a meager living.

The only exception to this xenophobia are the gnomes. When the gnomish city of Wittebak was sundered by hill giants nearly 400 years ago, the refugees were accepted into Kraghammer, bringing their innovative mechanical ideas to the growing community and cementing a kinship of convenience between the two races. As time passed, the partnership has flourished for both parties, and the drive to reclaim their old home has since been ever-postponed due to procrastination and lack of interest. Still, no gnome has ever served as a representative of the Houses, nor as Ironkeeper. Some minority peoples within Kraghammer are jealous of the gnomes' place of "honor" within the dwarven community and seek to subvert them, while others implore the gnomes to use their voice to speak up for the outlanders.

CRIME

Citizens of Emon who visit Kraghammer often marvel at how lawful and organized the dwarven enclave is. Crime is ostensibly low within Kraghammer thanks to the Carvers' protection, but this peace comes at a cost. Corruption is rife within the Carvers, and within House Gloenthal, their patron house. Because of Gloenthal's close ties with the Carvers, corruption has been hard to uncover within either organization. That all changed when a gnomish journalist named Ida Mudrake uncovered something damning within the Gloenthal vaults. The information has not been made public, but a massive trial is on the horizon, and the Carvers are in chaos.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Though the Cliffkeep Mountains themselves are blanketed in thick snow, the bone-piercing chill does not extend into Kraghammer itself. Heat from the Bronzegrip Metalworks and the other blast furnaces in the Bottom Slab rises and permeates the entire city, though the Top Slab still grows cold in the winter. The city itself is carved out of the granite core of Mount Kraghammer; though the dwarves rarely see the night sky, its walls still sparkle like starlight in the amber glow of the furnaces.

THE TOP SLAB

The Top Slab, also called **the Arch**, is the entry level of the city, built on a massive ring that sends off-shoot neighborhoods and tunnels deeper into the mountain around it. Here is where most residential life is rooted, with thousands of stone-built abodes dotting the walls, while popular taverns like the Firebrook Inn and the Ironhearth Tavern fill alcoves pushed into the rock. Most of the gnomish and non-dwarf population is relegated to a neighborhood called the "Otherwalk." A fine layer of soot tends to coat much of this slab, due to imperfect ventilation from the industrious center slab.

As members of the Kraghammer working class, "Tops-labbers" either make the long commute to labor in the Bottom Slab or work in the Toppers' farms above the mountain. Others are indentured servants to wealthy dwarves in the Middle Slab, and only return to their families on the Top Slab on their monthly day of rest.

THE CENTER SLAB

The Center Slab, also referred to as **the Heart**, marks the widest and most varied rung on the journey through Kraghammer, and is stratified between the residences of Kraghammer's dwarven elite and its wealthy merchant class. At the exact center of the slab—dwarves are very particular about geometrical symbolism—is the Pyrethrone, seat of the Ironkeeper. Radiating out from the Pyrethrone are the various fortress-manors of the dwarven noble houses, with several Carver barracks in easy reach.

Just below, the outer rings of the Center Slab are occupied by most of the city's non-mining businesses, from smithies, breweries, and jewelers, to tailors, butchers, and even tinkers like the gnome-run Crack-sackle Union. The Hunter's Club is also well known as the chief provider for non-imported meats to the city, sending parties atop the mountain or in the nearby Torian Forest for wild game. The extravagant marble temple known as Allhammer's Will stands on the center slab of the city, the grandest of all shrines to the most worshiped deity under the mountain. Enormous in size and impeccable in detail and architectural design, this hall calls artisans and crafters throughout the city for inspiration.

Of the five noble houses, only two conduct their affairs entirely in the Center Slab. The magically talented Lord Steddos Thunderbrand and his family are known to rarely leave their mansion, except on business with the Ironkeeper. Wallera Gloenthar used to oversee the combat training of all Carvers within Kraghammer, but the scandal that rocked her house has called her leadership into question. She is currently on leave.

THE BOTTOM SLAB

The Bottom Slab, or **the Pit**, is the industrious center of Kraghammer, boasting the most blast furnaces per square mile in all of Tal'Dorei, courtesy of the Bronzegrip Metalworks and their competitors. The expansive Keenstone Quarry is chief among the numerous mining operations that have tunneled through the depths of the mountains—depths plumbed by Vox Machina early in their adventures as they searched for Lady Kima of Vord, an adventure that saw them overthrow the duergar of the Emberhold and the hateful aberrations of Yug'Voril. A network of fungus-farming paths called the Glowgrove works its way around this level, passing through all sorts of caverns. The mushrooms are harvested by the Toppers, the dwarven agricultural league that got their name from the small topside farms they tend above the city.

Three of the five dwarven houses has business interests in the Bottom Slab, though they direct its operations from the next tier up. Nostoc Greyspine is the grim overseer of Keenstone Quarry; he swears that his relationship to Ironkeeper Gradim Greyspine gives him no special privileges. Haddi Bronzegrip is the forewarf of the Bronzegrip Metalworks; she claims to be the wealthiest dwarf in the North. Blenton Zuurthom is an architectural savant, and one of the older and kinder



noble dwarves; he tries his best to oversee every major construction project in the Bottom Slab.

LANDMARKS

THE STARSHRINE

Most dwarves worship the Allhammer, and his teachings of community and ancestral piety have been all but completely subsumed into Kraghammer's culture at large. For outlanders with different faiths, however, the monolithic religious culture can feel inescapable. When the world shook at the coming of the Chroma Conclave, tremors rocked the upper layers of Kraghammer, causing certain caverns to collapse—and in some cases, reveal places of great beauty. The Starshrine was established near the Otherwalk inside a grotto whose granite walls mysteriously shine with a perfect replica of the stars in the night sky. Here, marginalized people of all faiths can worship in peace. If a character prays to a Good or Neutral deity here, there is a 1% chance per character level that their prayer is answered, as the cleric's Divine Intervention feature.

CRACKSACKLE HEADQUARTERS

The Gnomish-designed Cracksackle guildhall looks unlike anything in Kraghammer. It is made of a dozen glistening steel domes, like sleek, metal igloos, and the light of unusual experiments flicker through its slitted windows at all hours of the night. While intrinsically tied to the Bronzegrip Metalworks for resources, contacts, and distribution, the Cracksackle gnomes' inventive contributions to mining and masonry technology have made them indispensable to the dwarven elite.

On any working day, a dozen gnomish tinkers will set up shop in the courtyard, selling strange and untested devices they have made in their workshops. The GM determines which non-magical curiosities can be purchased here, but some include:

- *Dynamite* (50 gp), range 30 ft., 4d6 fire damage to all creatures and objects in 20 foot radius (DC 12 Dexterity save for half), detonates at the start of the thrower's next turn after 6-second fuse
- *Glue bomb* (50 gp), range 30 ft., creatures within 20 foot radius must make a DC 12 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be restrained. A creature may make another DC 12 Strength check as an action to escape.
- *Stink bomb* (25 gp), range 30 ft., creatures within 20 foot radius must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1d6 rounds, detonates after 6-second fuse
- *Wind glider* (200 gp), requires 1 minute to harness. While harnessed and falling, the bearer falls at 30 feet per round, and the wind glider carries the bearer 40 feet in a line each round until they land. You can change direction each round. While harnessed, your movement is halved, and you have disadvantage on attack rolls. A wind glider has an AC of 10, and 5 hit points.

HALL OF BURNING MUSHROOMS

The Bronzegrip Metalworks just carved deeper into the mountain to expand their furnaces, only to discover the most magnificent cavern; a mile-wide cave filled with bioluminescent purple mushrooms. Industry had to move in, and the Bronzegrips hired Wyrmhide Thunderbrand and his pyromancer brigade to torch the cavern. The mushrooms never stopped burning, and the myconoids that lived in the fungal forest never stopped fighting. PCs known within Kraghammer may be requested by House Bronzegrip or Thunderbrand to cut through the inferno and destroy the myconoid monarch.

LYRENGORN, THE ELVENPEAKS

Small City • Population: 5,430
(85% Wood Elf, 10% High Elf, 3% Dark Elf,
1% Dwarf, 1% Human)

Every year, dozens of travelers from across Tal'Dorei travel past the far northern reaches of the Cliffkeep Mountains to see the Moonweaver's Ribbons twist around the Elvenpeaks, pulled through the sky by those mysterious figures on wyvernback. The Elvenpeaks are a single mountain split perfectly in the center, with ice-sheated forests topping both peaks. While the exterior of these forest canopies appear frozen and without life, the interior is instead a warm and humid wood, blooming with flowers of all colors and roamed by living plants and wild game. In the boughs of these thick tropical trees also lives a society of wood elves, some of those wild folk who broke away from Yenlara's pact and the city of Syngorn. Their city of Lyrengorn—*lyren'gorn* literally meaning "mountain city" in elvish—is the last bastion of safety before the endless ice of the Neverfields to the north.

The wild elves call themselves friends of none, enemies of fewer; they welcome all who manage to make it to their home—provided they come in peace—and take no sides in any conflict. In ages past, they were highly sought-after as mercenaries because their warriors had learned the impossible art of wyvern riding. When Warren Drassig's empire marched to conquer Tal'Dorei, the elves of Lyrengorn refused to die for anyone else's war, and retreated to their mountaintops and lush forests.

Today, few wild elves are actually warriors, though many among them are hunters. In the intervening centuries wyvern riding has transformed from a martial art into a ceremonial one; great athletes called skyswimmers train year-round for the annual coming of the Moonweaver's Ribbons, great streaks of multicolored light that illuminate the northern sky on the winter solstice. The skyswimmers and their wyvern mounts seize the strands of light on their spears and paint radiant, esoteric portraits in the wintry sky, drawing intrepid outsiders from across Tal'Dorei to camp on remote mountains and marvel at their visual poetry.

Beyond the ceremony's artistic merit, it is also a ritual to the goddess known as the Moonweaver, chief deity of these



elves. The high priestess of the moon claims the annual rite purifies Lyrengorn, and gives the wild elves long life.

LYRENGORN ADVENTURES

THE IMPOSSIBLE ART

For low-level characters: While traveling through the Cliffkeep Mountains, the cold becomes too much for the PCs to bear and they pass out in the snow. They are healed and rescued by a trio of Lyrengorn wyvern riders, but their roles are suddenly reversed when a massive horde of ice goblins pincushions the riders in mid-flight. When the PCs crash in the snowfields, they must try to learn the impossible art of wyvern riding before they are claimed by the blizzard.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE LIGHT

For high-level characters: While the PCs are in Lyrengorn, they discover a small community of dark elf refugees. They fled here from a monstrous, nameless source of aberrant corruption that has been devouring their society for centuries. The dark elves hope that the skyswimmers' ceremony will cleanse them of the corruption and bouts of sadistic madness that still plague them. However, strange accidents conspire to kill the skyswimmers and the priestesses, and on the day of the solstice, a pair of aberrant Death Eyes rise from the underworld and try to bend the Moonweaver's Ribbons to their evil purposes.

THE NEVERFIELDS

The farther north one goes into the Cliffkeep Mountains, the taller the peaks grow and the colder the weather becomes, until the snowstorms are so thick that no human unprepared for their chill can survive. The spiky peaks grow shallow, trading treacherous rock for glacial ice and the untempered fury of endless blizzards. No bastions of living society exist this far north, though some brave, foolish warriors endure the elements here to hunt rare and powerful game or to seek lost relics from before the Calamity. Rumors do speak of a time when this region once was green and temperate, where trees and ancient elven colonies held the land, and that many secrets of this era are now buried deep beneath the icy wastes. Many that go seeking answers to these rumors never return. The few that do, however, occasionally emerge with artifacts of intense power and mystery, reigniting interest in the region and sending further generations to their doom among the ancient, ice-rimed ruins and plains of endless glacial wasteland.

NEVERFIELDS ADVENTURES

SEED OF LIFE

For mid-level characters: Heroes of Tal'Dorei who have made themselves known to the elves of Syngorn may suddenly find themselves contacted by Verdant Lord Celindar, leader of Syngorn's armies. His report is grim; the warding trees of the Verdant Expanse no longer protect the city, in fact, some have turned against it. **Treants**

that once defended the elves have grown pale and sickly and are now attacking the elvenguard. Celindar requests the PCs, as elf-friends, to venture into the Neverfields and seek out the Seed of Life, the last bloom of an ancient treant named Cedargaunt, that may restore the withered treants' senses. The Seed of Life is worn on the neck of a frost giant jarl's pet **remhoraz** within the Neverfields.

OTHENDIN PASS

This massive valley carved into the southwest section of the Cliffkeep Range was historically a proud territory of the indigenous stone giant clans that already warred with the dwarves of Kraghammer. When the human expansion pushed into the valley and discovered mineral-rich rock, many battles ensued with the reclusive giants.

The volume of human forces eventually overwhelmed the clans, forcing them to retreat from their caves higher into the mountains to the northeast. This allowed the forces of Emon to claim the valley's resources and land for its people, establishing Fort Daxio to defend it. However, since then, a slow rise in the bulette population maintains a constant threat to the northern fortress, as well as the local miners, gatherers, and travelers that attempt to pass through.

OTHENDIN PASS ADVENTURES

BITE THE BULETTE

For mid-level characters: A tribe of stone giants and goliaths have taken up residence in an important choke point of the Othendin Pass. They claim that they are the Stoneherders, a great druidic order that keeps the balance between civilization and nature in the North. Fort Daxio's military presence here has kept them away for several generations, but the unusual rise in bulette population has forced them to return. Their plan to thin the bulette herd requires the PCs' aid in rounding up the beasts; once they have been assembled, the goliaths will tame as many as they can and move them elsewhere in the Cliffkeep Mountains. Those that cannot be tamed will become fare for the stone giants' bulette-eating contest!

THE POOLS OF WITTEBAK

Wittebak was once a peaceful city of three thousand or more rock gnomes, a safe haven for the small ones built into the mountain rock and heated by a series of geothermal pools. The Wittebak gnomes weathered great wars by not getting involved, investing in contraptions and laughter, rather than wars and empires. They found joy in inventing complicated ways to simplify their daily lives. Yet, for all their efforts, trouble eventually came to them.

Around four hundred years ago, a displaced band of **hill giants** found fancy in the hot springs and began to set up a new homestead on their banks. By complete accident, a flaw in the stonework of the gnomish city cracked under the force of the giants frolicking within the pools, and the

cave-in that followed released an immense amount of previously contained volcanic gasses into Wittebak.

Over a thousand gnomes suffocated that night. The survivors fled into the mountains, assailed by hungry giants as they ran. The gnomes have found unlikely refuge in Kraghammer, but Wittebak has been abandoned entirely, choked by caustic gas and locked in a terrible moment in time. The giants that caused the gnomes to flee now call the hot springs their ancestral home, and flourish within their unchallenged territory.

Today, Wittebak is three distinct tiers of death and despair. Creatures that need to breathe can survive the gases in the widest, uppermost level—the **Tinkerer's Tier**—for a number of hours equal to their Constitution modifier, and take 1d6 poison damage each minute after that time. The hill giants that live within have adapted the gas and do not fear it. The gas begins inflicting damage after only a single hour.

The middle level—the **Homesteads**—is heavy with gas, and the quaint gnomish homes on this level are filled with the decomposed remains of those too slow to escape. Visibility is poor here, and tiny streams of hot water leak from the walls, waterfalling into the level below.

The bottommost **Engine Core** is a mechanical marvel, a titanic wheel of rusted iron and shining steel with no known purpose. This level is completely flooded and filled with **merrow**, and is the lair of a **sea hag** named Mauvlettir. Adventurers aware of the demonic origin of the merrow will find their presence here deeply unsettling—what was the purpose of the secret lower level?

SERPENT'S HEAD

Thordak only flew to the Cliffkeep Mountains once during his occupation of Emon. No one living knows why the nearly-invincible Cinder King left his prized city to attack a single, isolated mountaintop village, but the ruins of Serpent's Head prove he did. Serpent's Head is a squat mountain in the southern reaches of the Cliffkeep Mountains. Its people were mostly dwarves and humans, miners and farmers. They had no militia to speak of, and most had already evacuated to Kraghammer when news of Emon's fall reached them—but not everyone.

The village that surrounds the Serpent's Head mountain is now nothing more than ash, and the immolated corpses of its people lay buried beneath the cinders. The mountain itself was transformed into a small volcano by Thordak's magic, and mindless **cinderslag elementals** (see pg. 130) endlessly prowl the village's shattered buildings and fortifications. Earth tremors have cracked the foundation of the keep that lay at the center of the village, revealing deep magma caverns filled with precious diamonds infused with chaotic magic. Occasionally, small rifts to the Elemental Plane of Fire flash open within the depths, and sporadic groups of **azer** and **salamanders** have found their way through. The two factions have made camp in the lower caverns, and both struggle for a foothold in the Material Plane.

TERRAH

Village • Population: 673
(64% Human, 21% Dwarf, 15% Other)

Sheltered within a cauldron-like valley miles deep into the northern mountain range lies the home of the Terrah tribe of the Ashari people. Long have they stood watch over the exposed rift to the Elemental Plane of Earth, protecting the ever-quaking ground of this crumbling valley. Those without druidic power have dug long trenches around their village to protect their people against rockslides that roll off the mountains, while a handful of mighty druids use their magic to reshape the valley and rebuild damaged structures.

Living off of mainly hunted game and scavenged fungus, the Terrah people are stockily built warriors of stubborn mind and immense pride and loyalty. Precious jewelry is heralded as a sign of station and respect, and the trade is well-regarded. The mountains that surround the rift seem to shake with rage, and from their angry slopes rise a constant source of **earth elementals** and **dust mephits** that seek to undo all that the Terrah have created, leading the Ashari to sleep in shifts while keeping aware of any sudden shifts in seismic activity. Pa'tice is the current Heart of the Mountain of the Terrah tribe, and while tenacious and ornery to many, this venerable warrior has boundless appreciation and support for those who prove honorable and self-reliant.

TERRAH ADVENTURES

DEPENDABLE AS STONE

For high-level characters: The Terrah people are insular and dutiful, and rarely take sides in any conflict. However, sometimes times of great peril require that even the Ashari go to war. Whatever the conflict, the PCs must convince the Terrah to join their cause. Pa'tice meets with them and grimly states that the Terrah cannot aid them because a terrible new threat has come through the portal. The Stonesight Council, four medusas aided by two gorgons, now command the elementals descending from the peaks around Terrah. Kill them, Pa'tice says, and perhaps the Terrah can join you.

UMBRA HILLS

The Battle of the Umbra Hills, the climactic battle of the Scattered War and the death knell of the Kingdom of Drasig, transformed the floral, sun-dappled Emerald Highlands into a blasted wasteland. A tide of demonic blood spilled across the highlands like fire, and cursed the land forever. Generations have passed, but the heather that once grew on these hills is as black and burnt as the day of the battle. No animals live here, and the only plant that grows in the Umbra Hills now is shadegrass. Its ash-gray stalks are dry and unfilling, but its unique, acrid flavor has drawn the interest of spice traders worldwide, drawing wealthy merchants to hire armed escorts for their spice-pickers.

Though no animals live here, danger still lurks within the Umbra Hills. Undead soldiers rise from the grass



when the moon is high, and the ruins of ancient Drassig war camps seem to still draw **shadow demons** to patrol these lands, still bound by the contract between Trist Drassig and the Demon Prince of Indulgence.

UMBRA HILLS ADVENTURES

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

For low-level characters: A famous gnome archaeologist named Wilmet Wizcrack, who was staying in the same inn as the PCs, died last night. Everyone is buzzing with rumors by breakfasttime. Wizcrack's body shows no signs of physical attack, but his skin is drawn tight to his bones and his muscles are atrophied. Investigating his room reveals no sign of any assailant, but it does turn up many relics, including a very shiny *+1 longsword* with the inscription "Trist Drassig" on the blade. One day after his death, Wizcrack turns into a **shadow**. One week after carrying the blade, its wielder is attacked by 1d4 **shadows** every midnight.

YUG'VORIL

Where the dwarves of Kraghammer whisper fearful words of the duergar, so too do the duergar whisper of Yug'Voril. Beyond the ash-dwarves' fiery kingdom, ever deeper into the heart of Exandria, there is a miles-wide grotto coated in glowing crystal. A lake fills the grotto, its surface so smooth and placid it seems like a jade mirror, perfectly reflecting the light of the crystals around it. In the middle of the lake is an island, atop which looms the grand,

austere towers of Yug'Voril. The clean lines and beautiful facade of the city belies its current, abominable denizens.

Thousands of years old, the builders and previous denizens have long vanished, leaving the unspoiled ruins to become home to a host of psychic, mind-eating creatures from beyond the stars. The tyrannical society of the Flayers flourishes here, far from their cosmic pursuers and giving them the freedom to build a legion of thralls, mind-slaves whose delicious brains the Flayers allow to remain in their bodies... until those bodies fall apart from toil.

Yug'Voril and its inhabitants fell recently under the control of the extraplanar aberration called K'Varn, before he was slain by Vox Machina. Now that the Flayers have been freed from K'Varn's tyranny, they have reclaimed Yug'Voril as their own and have continued work on their strange and terrible plots.

YUG'VORIL ADVENTURES

A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE

For high-level characters: Four of the foremost minds at Emon's Alabaster Lyceum have disappeared without a trace. All vanished on the same night, and there have been no confirmed sightings since. Investigations have been underway for several months, and some dwarves of Kraghammer have recently reported seeing four figures that could be the missing scholars entering the lower passages of the Keenstone Mine under cover of night. Something has mentally dominated these scholars, and the Flayers of Yug'Voril hunger for a specific morsel of powerful knowledge within their brilliant minds.



RELIGIONS: *Majority:* Archeart, Dawnfather, Wildmother. *Minority:* Moonweaver, Stormlord, Ruiner, Scaled Tyrant, Spider Queen

IMPORTS: Livestock, lumber, grain, silver, arcane components

EXPORTS: Lumber, gold, grain, red stone, iron

THE STORMCREST MOUNTAINS

Spanning Tal'Dorei's distant southern reaches, buttressed against the Verdant Expanse, stand the massive Stormcrest Mountains. The winds of the Lucidian Ocean thunder between the storm-wracked peaks, and few civilized people dare make these treacherous mountains their home. The few who do call the Stormcrests home are ferocious monstrosities and godless hordes of goblinoid butchers. The only bastions of civilization anywhere near these forsaken peaks lie in the the Mornset Countryside pushing along the Stormpoint range, far beyond the influence of the Council of Tal'Dorei. These rugged folk are used to fending for themselves and spit at the thought of returning to so-called "civilization," preferring life among the swamps and shadowed forests of their homeland.

THE ASHEN GORGE

One mountain stands out among the Stormcrests. Its twin peaks rumble with fury, breathing fire and smoke into the sky to mingle with the stormclouds that surround the mountains. Lightning tears through the ashen stormclouds with unusual excitement—this is a place of supernatural power. Cartographers in Emon call this crater the Ashen Gorge, but the people of the low valleys call it the Dragon's Throne, for they know what creature once lived atop the mountain. They remember when they too were under the dominion of Thordak the Cinder King.

Today, several shattered tribes of lizardfolk and kobolds fight for dominion over this ruined vale. When the mountain was the lair of the Cinder King during his first incursion into Tal'Dorei, the lizardfolk flocked to his side, worshiping his might and cruelty. Though Thordak is slain, his influence yet lingers in this place. His lair overflows with gold and jewels, the lion's share of his relocated and forgotten treasure hoard. Magic items from all ages of the world lie in wait within the half-dozen vaults of the Cinder King's lair.

When the king of dragons still held dominion here, he had thousands of kobolds, lizardfolk, and half-dragons at his beck and call, moving invaluable treasures into deep holds. Beyond the main cavern of Thordak's lair, even the Cinder King himself had to take human form in order to traverse the winding tunnels his servants carved through the rock.

Thordak's old servitors now fight an endless war over his treasure. Every year, it seems a petty new "Cinder King" rises to power within the Ashen Gorge, but they are always dethroned before their minions can enter the ancient locked vaults. In order to steal Thordak's greatest treasures, an adventurer would have to either broker a peace between the warring clans, or somehow sneak into the mountain undetected.

WARRING CLANS OF THE GORGE

The following three major tribes fight for control over the Ashen Gorge:

SCIONS OF FLAME

This tribe of black-scaled lizardfolk claim to have been Thordak's elite guard in ancient times, and are the current



rulers of the gorge. They are lead by a five hundred-year-old druid named Burning Oak, and while his awesome magic keeps the other tribes at bay, his frailty makes him vulnerable to attack—and the other tribes know it.

TINYSOOT

Any kobold will tell you that their people are small, but fierce! Every ten years brings a new generation of kobolds, and while the Tinsyoot tribe's warriors are not the mightiest, their numbers have allowed them to overwhelm even the greatest of the Flame Scions' champions. The Tinsyoots' leader, a zealous young warqueen named Yabber Tinsyoot XIV, wears around her neck the key to Everflame Crevasse, Thordak's deepest treasure vault.

BLACK SNOW

When Thordak's ally, Umbrasyl, was slain atop Gatsadow, his caustic blood seeped into the corpses of a dozen goliath scouts from the Herd of Storms. The black dragons' magic, combined with the fell power of Gatsadow itself, transformed the goliaths into a squadron of undead black dragonborn. Skeletal wings sprouted from their backs, and the Black Snow tribe flew instinctively to the Ashen Gorge, drawn to the *Ruby of Oblivion*, a pitch-black ruby of immense unholy power—now stored in the Obsidian Geode, a treasure vault guarded by a legion of golems and elementals. This tribe of hateful revenants is small, but each of their kind wields the strength of twenty lesser warriors.

BRONBOG

Village • Population: 740

(64% Human, 18% Half-Elf, 9% Halfling, 9% Other)

If there ever was a civilization that called the Dreamseep home, Bronbog is all that remains of it. Its buildings are made from planks of water-logged bogwood, the only sign of its previous greatness being the ring of stone pillars that once supported the Temple of the Dawnfather. Even though the temple to their patron god has crumbled, the people of Bronbog keep the faith; their belief in the sun god's afterlife is their greatest comfort against their meager lives. Yet for all the gloom that surrounds the Dreamseep Marshlands, the Bronboggi keep a sunny disposition. There's a saying in the village that goes: "If you don't feel the storm, you can't know there ain't sun."

The only reason anyone north of the Stormcrest Mountains knows of Bronbog is because of the queenscap, a rare swamp fungus that serves as a reagent in creating potent *potions of superior healing*. It's been harvested almost to extinction in the more accessible K'Tawl Swamp, and Tal'Dorei's alchemists pay good money for a shipment.

BRONBOG ADVENTURES

MORNING GLORY

For mid-level characters: On a queenscap-gathering expedition to Bronbog, the PCs find that the mushrooms have been crushed by an unusual plant. As they spend time

THE SILVER TABLET

*Ye who seek my boundless wisdom,
Pass into the white trees' kingdom.
Return to the shrine Mistress' eyes,
And follow the light in the skies.
I am the Beast of the Heavens,
Thou shalt kneel before my presence,
Lest the wisdom thou seekest,
Be lost to the cowardice of your weakest.*

This poem was discovered by Jorlund Vohr on his first expedition to the Frostweald, on a silver tablet written in flowing Celestial script. Upon examination, scholars at the Alabaster Lyceum discovered the language of the heavens is so sublime that its poetry rhymes even when translated into any language. The tablet was stolen later that week, along with the rest of Vohr's findings, but Jorlund keeps a parchment-and-charcoal copy of the tablet in a chest beneath his bed in Emon's Erudite Quarter.

in the swamp town, vine-choked stone obelisks begin slowly emerging from the swampy waters, emanating an unearthly light. Some villagers immediately fall under the obelisks' sway, claiming they are "heralds of the Dawnfather, the rising sun," but others are disturbed by their fellows' feverish worship of the stones.

CAVERN OF AXIOM

The Cavern of Axiom is a lost shrine to the Knowing Mistress spoken of only in riddles. Hidden by ever-shifting illusions, the entrance to this cavern opens only to those who are expected by fate. Its entrance looks different to every group that finds it, from the imperious to the humble, but it appears simply as a heavy snowdrift to those not fated to open its doors. Within its shifting facade are dangerous challenges and trials designed to test the will and mettle of those who seek the infinite knowledge of the Knowing Mistress. The chambers plunge deeper into the rock beneath the mountain as half-eroded murals and strange puzzles evaluate any wanderer who seeks an audience with the keeper of the cavern, an ageless **androsphinx** named Kamaljiori. The final challenges presented by the sphinx alters from subject to subject, and failure banishes the subjects from the cavern, barred from ever returning.

THE DREAMSEEP MARSHLANDS

East of the Stormcrest Range, within the Kirmont Valley, is the sprawling, fetid Dreamseep. The perpetual rain rolling off the Stormcrests' enchanted slopes have

transformed this once-lush forest into a fetid morass of rotting vegetation, sulfurous mud, and gnarled, weeping trees. So many cruel murders have been committed within the Dreamseep that the very land is cursed, forsaken by the gods. Negative energy pools like the water, and the dead drink deep of it. More than just the walking zombies of killers and their victims, awful amalgamations of dozens of bodies, both humanoid and bestial, are birthed within the Dreamseep's fetid womb.

Somewhere in the middle of this accursed realm is a sinkhole that plunges deep beneath the earth. At its deepest point is the Tomb of Udah, a legendary necropolis of countless chambers, littered with traps and treasures that have claimed the lives and imaginations of untold hundreds of treasure hunters and grave robbers. Every death within Udah's accursed walls only adds to the legions at its dread master's command; characters who explore its tunnels face not only undead warriors in armor from a bygone millennium, but steely warriors in armor from every epoch in Tal'Dorei history.

The small community of Bronbog holds the only lights of civilization within the shadows here, and those that continue to thrive against the oppressive swamp are of the heartiest stock.

DREAMSEEP MARSHLANDS ADVENTURES

THE SKULL OF UDAH

For epic-level characters: Two rumors persist of the Tomb of Udah. First, within its deepest sanctum there is a three-eyed golden skull, and in each socket is inlaid a wish-granting ruby. Second, unlike the mindless undead of the Dreamseep above, the abominations in the necropolis below are commanded by a dread master. Little do these rumor-spreaders know that the skull and the master are one and the same. Udah the Undying, once a lich of tremendous power, has faded into a **demilich**, savoring his torment of the few greedy souls that invade his sepulchral city.

THE FROSTWEALD

Along the northern base of the Stormcrest lies a forest magically locked in perpetual winter, cursed to eternal cold by the invasion of the Ice Lord Errevon during the Icelost Years. Within the forest, ponds magically freeze into perfect mirrors, reflecting the snowy sky above, and the snow-draped trees hide families of fey hiding from enemies in the Feywild. At first blush, the Frostweald seems a wonderland of crisp snow and aromatic pines and firs, yet the serene landscape belies sinister danger. Herds of basilisks roam the woods, so travelers who encounter mysterious snow-covered statuary or copes of petrified trees are advised to flee.

A massive tribe of orcs known as the Shivergut also calls the Frostweald their home, to the chagrin of its fey inhabitants. Travelers are easy sport for them, a relaxing hunt for these battle-hardened warriors. The Shiverguts

THE ASTURAL SCROLLS

Clemain Astural covered thousands of pages of parchment with his writings, ranging from alchemical formulas to powerful spells to esoteric star charts... but his later notes descend into paranoid, half-crazed ramblings. One of the heroes that killed Astural, a wizard named Atz Yuminor, took as many of the scrolls as he could find and brought them back to his house in the Dividing Plains. Yuminor's bloodline continues in Estella Ladimar, headmistress of the Westhall Academy in Westruun, and many of the Astural Scrolls are kept secretly by the Scions of Yuminor in the academy's observatory.

throw an annual coming-of-age festival, in which the tribe drinks and brawls the night before their young warriors leave to cross the mountains on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Ruiner in the Dreamseep Marshlands. Those who brave the perils of the wilderness return as true warriors.

The Frostweald is also home to a host of benevolent fey, most of them **pixies** or **dryads**, using the forest as a safe haven away from the Feywild. If pressed for answers on why they have left the Feywild, their answers are always cryptic and dissatisfactory, but always ominously suggest a "Great Shadow" has descended upon their lands, perhaps even a host of warriors from the Shadowfell? A nymph named Arethusa (use **mage** statistics) watches over a cluster of three mirror-like pools that form a pathway into the Feywild, each to a different Archfey's forest. She is suspicious of all mortals, and both her trust and a favor, are required for passage.

Many forgotten obelisks of the Knowing Mistress also lay buried under the ice and snow, half-lost beacons that guide travelers to the Cavern of Axiom. If any living creature knows why these ancient monoliths reside here when no other ruins of the Knowing Mistress have been discovered, they have kept the knowledge secret from the other scholars of the world. Ten years ago, the half-orc Emonian archaeologist Jorlund Vohr discovered a cache of *Ioun stones* buried here and returned them to the Alabaster Lyceum of Emon, but his research and findings were stolen the week after he returned. Vohr has since stated he "got over it," and is back to work on new research on Visa Isle.

WRETTIS

A relic of the Age of Arcanum, Wrettis is the ruined tower of a powerful mage driven mad by the seductive whispers of beings from the beyond. What few legends survive of Wrettis's master say he was known as Clemain Astural, the Sight Shepherd, and that he was a powerful arcanist who peered into a realm beyond the planes in search of power to end the war that ravaged his world. He found it, and thought it would serve him. He was wrong.

Astural's sanity crumbled, but his power only grew, fueled an entity he called the Sightless One. As devastation crept across southeastern Tal'Dorei, heroes of the land rode to Wrettis to end Astural's chaotic reign,

destroy his tower, and bury his corpse in the rubble. Wrettis is now a moss-coated ruin, but some chambers within and below the tower still hold secrets, as well as creations, of the mad mage.

RUHN-SHAK

Small City • Population: 6,670
(92% Dark Elf, 5% Deep Gnome, 3% Other)

If you find carved arches and steel gates in the mountain slopes, do not rest there, no matter the cold. There are no dwarf-halls among these forsaken peaks.

Deep below the surface world, countless caverns and tunnels wind into regions where light finds no purchase. It is here, beneath the Stormcrest Mountains, that the largest subterranean society of dark elves maintains its tyranny. Hidden entrances riddle not just the mountain range, but the Dreamseep, and darker regions of the Verdant Expanse, allowing hunting and raiding parties quick and easy access to the surface under cover of night, slaughtering many, enslaving the rest, and taking the spoils as gifts to the Spider Queen.

This twisted network of tunnels are easily collapsed and reopened through the use of "Pit Witches", dark elf druids who master the art of rock and dirt manipulation, making it near impossible to give chase. Syngorn is ever alert and seeking a way to find and destroy this center of dark elf society on Tal'Dorei, but the sly and cunning ways of Ruhn-Shak have yet to meet a match.

RUHN-SHAK ADVENTURES

SLAVES OF THE SPIDER-QUEEN

For mid-level characters: While traversing the Stormcrest Mountains, the party plunges into a deep pit as the seemingly solid stone all around them gives way. Badly pummeled by the fall, they are set upon by a hunting party of dark elves to be taken captive. If captured, the adventurers are taken to the slave markets of the dark elves' city and must plot their escape, perhaps with the aid of their fellow captives. If they overcome the dark elf ambush, they must still find their way out of the maze of underground tunnels created by the Pit Witches, who have sealed off the way through which the characters fell into the dark.



RELIGIONS:

Majority: Changebringer, Lawbearer, Strife Emperor.
Minority: Wildmother, Moonweaver, Cloaked Serpent

IMPORTS: None

EXPORTS: None

THE RIFENMIST PENINSULA

South of the dividing lines of the Stormcrest Mountains and the Verdant Expanse, the touch of greater civilization does not quite reach, allowing a number of autonomous communities to exist outside the tangled wilds of the Rifemist Jungle. Many who fled the rule of Drassig joined with outcasts of Syngornian society to establish a life away from larger politics, forming the outsider colonies of the Mornset Countryside. However, with freedom comes isolation in resources to defend against the vicious denizens of this primal territory.

Enormous, ancient beasts stalk the vine-twisted paths of the jungle that consumes the majority of the peninsula's coastline. A hidden culture of savage wood elves call the rainforest region home, keeping outsiders away and skirmishing with indigenous tabaxi tribes. An expanding morass of fungus spreads from a mysterious, corrupt source along the eastern depths of the underbrush, while a secret society of naga-worshippers bring bloody offerings to their snake-queen. This land lies on the fringe of Tal'Dorei, and is mostly avoided for that very reason.

BEYNSFAL PLATEAUS

Where below there is life and freedom, above there is naught but death and tyranny. In the high, southern plateaus of Rifemist, verdant jungle gives way to a cracked, volcanic landscape, its basalt fields interrupted only by towering structures of crude iron. This hellish place is the home of the Iron Authority, and one of the last battlegrounds of the Calamity.

It is here that the Betrayer God known as the Strife Emperor and his goblinoid legions clashed with the Wildmother and her Free Children. Though the Wildmother was victorious and the goblinkin were freed, the site of the Strife Emperor's defeat was reduced to rock and ash, a place where plants would never again grow.

The goblins left behind in the wake of Strife Emperor's defeat have run wild across Rifemist and even into the rest of Tal'Dorei for centuries. Hobgoblins asserted

their authority over the squabbling tribes, launching grand military campaigns across the blasted plateau and growing as large and powerful as they could before they collapsed under their own distrust and greed. But ninety years ago, something unusual happened. When the Iron Authority conquered the plateau, their empire never stopped growing. The Iron Tide never broke, and within a decade it had engulfed all other hobgoblin kingdoms, uniting them under Tz'Jarr, the Iron Emperor.

While the entirety of Beynsfal is firmly controlled by the Iron Authority, the hobgoblin empire has pushed into the jungles below, and are locked in a decade-long war to subjugate the native creatures. Five major city-states comprise the core of the Iron Authority, though all swear fealty to the Iron Emperor in its capital of Tz'Arrm, the southernmost city of the plateau. From south to north, the other imperial city-states are Rybad-Kol, city of the Forge Lords; Hdar-Fye, the



necropolis of Prince Hdar; Ezordam-Haar, eyrie of the red pegasi; and Ortem-Vellak, the petrified elventree.

BEYNSFAL PLATEAUS ADVENTURES

THE WAYWARD BLOODLINE

For mid-level characters: Tz'Jarr has a single heir to his throne: his hobgoblin child Zuun'dak, nearly of age and being groomed to become a great general. However, Zuun'dak has grown up with trepidation regarding the brutality of his society, and after being briefly captured by an outlying Orroyen scouting party and learning of the gentler world abroad, he's begun to long for escape and reformation. When the party stumbles upon a disguised and fleeing Zuun'dak, they must decide whether to turn over such a valuable bargaining tool to the Orroyen, or aid and groom the defecting heir as a rebellious force against his father.

BYRODEN

Small Town • Population: 850 (46% Human, 21% Half-Elf, 15% Halfling, 10% Gnome, 8% Other)

The northernmost, and second-largest community in the Mornset Countryside, Byroden borders the Gladepools and marks the first stop for any traveler endeavoring to traverse the Rifemist. Most who live here spend their days farming, fishing the pools, or manning the small chasm on the outskirts of the township to recover minerals and ore from the exposed earth.

While comparably pleasant and welcoming on the outside, this lifestyle is protected by a fierce and intense drive to defend their way of life at the first sign of threat or danger. Most citizens are armed at all times, and trained to rise as a communal militia at a moment's notice from the town's War Ringer, a designated sentinel charged with the town's protection.

Much of this behavior stems from an event nearly two decades ago, when Byroden was brought to its knees by Thordak the Cinder King in an attack that reduced half of the town to ash and rubble, and condemned a third of the population to burn in the wyrm's hellish flames. While most of the town has been rebuilt since the incursion, this tragedy has instilled the people of Byroden with an ever-present, underlying paranoia of another such attack... and rumors of the Iron Authority looking northward hasn't helped quell this anxiety.

BYRODEN ADVENTURES

GLASS WATERS

For low-level characters: A streak of sudden and unfortunate suicides by drowning have taken a number of youth within the town. When the War Ringer is sent to the Gladepools to investigate, he is found attempting to drown himself as well. Having no recollection of the event or reasoning to have done so, the mystery grows... is there some enchantment on the waters beckoning people to their death? Has something sinister taken up nearby?

USING RIFENMIST PENINSULA

Like the Neverfields in the far north, the lands of Rifemist have been deliberately left more vague than the rest of Tal'Dorei. Just as these distant realms are a mystery to the people of the Tal'Dorei Republic, they are too a mystery for all players who explore them. They are a place where the GM of a Tal'Dorei campaign can run wild, setting any sort of adventure in these uncharted lands.

THE DREAMGATE

For mid-level characters: After a scavenging party goes missing deep within the chasm, locals begin to report vivid, communal dreams involving members of the missing party pleading for help. When another local goes seeking answers and vanishes as well, they quickly begin to appear in these same dream, referencing them directly. The adventurers are requested to delve into this unearthed pathway and find answers while hopefully returning with the missing people.

MORNSET COUNTRYSIDE

As the Verdant Expanse and Gladepools give way to scrublands, and the Stormcrests break into rolling hills, an open plain of grass and scattered woodlands marks the Mornset Countryside. Home to many misfits and self-proclaimed "free folk" who either shun the guidance of northern governments, or have fled persecution for their illegal deeds, the people here have maintained a simple, if occasionally tumultuous lifestyle.

Bound by necessity to survive in the outskirts, this land is held by a general code of honor and respect for all outcasts. Each denizen looks out for their neighbor, while the towns and homesteads are quite self-sufficient, if modest in living. This, however, does not absolve them of the occasional uncouth upstart wanting to seize power, or an incursion of dangerous creatures raiding from the Rifemist Jungle tearing through the outlier communities.

Most of the Mornset free folk are humans, but many free cities have alliances with the local hill giants, cyclopes, and ogres—the "Lowborn" giantkin—that help protect them against the hobgoblins to the south.

MORNSET ADVENTURES

ANGER EVERBURNING

For low-level characters: A recent trend of residents suddenly flying into a violent, mindless rage has left many within the local community confused and worried about a new plague. However, investigation by the party reveals each individual driven to these unending fits are connected to a failed herbalist endeavor in Kymal ten years before, and if there's any luck to find an antidote, perhaps they must seek the reasoning or instigator.

THE ORROYEN TRIBES

Nomadic Tribes • Population: 11,850
(64% Elf, 12% Half-Elf, 10% Human, 14% Other)

Born from a wandering colony of shelterless elves fleeing the Calamity, these wood elves have not just survived within the deadly jungles of the Rifemist for generations—they have flourished. Learning the dangers of the surrounding lands, refining their hunting techniques, and maintaining a healthy mistrust of the civilized world, the Orroyen call the the jungle their domain and protect it furiously.

The Orroyen tribes have no central government, and their membership shifts as different clans move through the region and encounter other tribes, sometimes trading members as they go. Elders are given the most oversight and respect among a traveling tribe, the eldest given the title of *dura* (tribal master) and tribes commonly maintain between 100 and 1,000 members to a single unit. Temporary lodging is constructed at each resting point, or *tomenda*, and a tribe will generally remain based at that tomenda for a year or two before moving on due to depletion of resources, migration of game, or the jungle itself aggressively reclaiming the tomenda.

To come into prominence within the tribe, or request admittance into the tribes as an ally or member, a series of ceremonial trials are placed upon the individual. These trials change from *dura* to *dura*, but are designed to test strength of body and mind. It is not uncommon for those who attempt these trials to return maimed, or not return at all, and many elders bear the marks and scars

of their trials long past. Few *orfindes*—outlanders from the north—have been allowed into any of the dozens of Orroyen tribes, and the elders have little intention of changing this, for they have heard distant tales of the tyranny of Drassig and the supernatural horrors the people of northern Tal'Dorei invite upon themselves.

RIFENMIST JUNGLE

Where the Verdant Expanse is a massive landscape of fey-touched forest, the shadowed groves and glittering paths belying the threatening nature of the wood, the Rifemist Jungle stands as an endless, tangled mass of unchecked natural chaos. The vine-strangled floors of the jungle are clustered with swollen trunks, spine-laden ferns, and carnivorous plant life that waits for the unknowing wanderer to make an incorrect step.

The sweltering, sun-baked heat of the peninsula grows even less inviting with the humid jungle air, while clusters of venomous insects buzz through the mists alongside large lizards and wild beasts in search of carrion, or prey. Sunken valleys lead to pockets of marshland or quicksand pit traps, while others are wrought with a dire, spreading fungus. Very few who venture here from northern Tal'Dorei return, and those that do warn others to never make the same mistake.

The farther south one travels into Rifemist, the denser the jungle grows, and no northern explorer has completed even a rudimentary map of this humid land. Though some elves and humans of northern Tal'Dorei have attempted to colonize the jungles for their vast resources, they have been quickly rebuffed by the Orroyen elves of the jungle. Their message is clear: no cities are to be built south of the jungle's edge—and if the northern jungles are cleared or burned, the trees' vengeance will be swift and just. The few settlers who have joined the free folk of the Mornset Countryside are deeply superstitious about the southern jungles, and rarely travel there, except to respectfully parley with the Orroyen.

Even the Iron Authority, who has been at war with the trees of the jungle itself for decades, has not managed to destroy their foe. The Orroyen fear the hobgoblin slavers of Beynsfal Plateau and the massive armies their authoritarian leaders supply them with, but these raids are expensive and are growing rarer as more and more hobgoblins fall to the terrors of the jungle.

RIFENMIST JUNGLE ADVENTURES

THE INSATIABLE SANCTUARY

For mid-level characters: Long have rumors stirred regarding a vine-obscured temple from an epoch long past, but reports have mapped it at many different locations, with returning expeditions finding it missing. This temple has seemed to reveal itself once more in the northern region of the Rifemist, its shadowed passages and secret bounties ripe for the plucking. It isn't until a venturing band delves deeper into the structure that signs begin to reveal the shrine itself a living entity, and the treasure a lure to draw in prey.





THE HOLOCAUST SEED

For high-level characters: Deep beneath the twisted floors of the jungle lies a long-slumbering relic from before the Founding: an unborn primordial titan seed, its energy responsible for the fertile landscape and extreme overgrowth of the jungle. With the seed sought and triggered by figures of dark intent, the titan begins to develop and awaken rapidly. If the process isn't halted, it will awaken and terrorize the continent. However, if the seed is destroyed, the jungle may wither and die without its magical essence.

STORMPOINT MOUNTAINS

Where the southern cliffs of the Stormcrest Mountains mostly come to an end, a single bridge of raised rocky peaks continue to push southward, piercing into the Rifemist Jungle itself. This extended range of mountains is known as the Stormpoints. These steep peaks are shrouded in low-sitting clouds and fog for most of the year, the rocky surface hidden from view from lush overgrowth fed by the near-perpetual rain. This region would be considered beautiful by most, were it not home to many vicious denizens. Treasure hunters are becoming more and more of a familiar site wandering through the Mornset, as rumors now spread of the long-dead green dragon Raishan's lair being hidden, and abandoned, somewhere within these jagged peaks.

STORMPOINT MOUNTAINS ADVENTURES

THE DECEIVER'S LEGACY

For mid-level characters: While the terrible manipulator dragon Raishan was slain at the hands of Vox Machina one year ago, her personal lair sits deep within the swamp-choked valley cracks at the heart of the Stormpoint Mountains. Protected by venomous plant-life, treacherous illusions, and dominated beasts, the bulk of her hoard lies within, unguarded... or so it is thought. Something dark and vengeful returns to the shadows of her lair, something familiar, mending, and carrying the curse of the Wildmother.

TZ'ARRM, HELM OF THE EMPEROR

**Large City • Population 47,400
(70% Hobgoblin, 10% Goblin, 20% Enslaved Races)**

When the Strife Emperor fought the Wildmother, he took the form of a giant of unimaginable size, clad from head to toe in armor of pitted iron. When he was defeated and cast back into his planar prison, his immense, divine armor remained and crashed to the ground. Centuries have passed, and the thirty-foot tall Helm of Strife is now the palace of the hobgoblin's Iron Emperor. The rest of their imprisoned god's armor fuels the unstoppable war machine of the Iron Authority, melted down to create walls, weapons, and worse.

GOVERNMENT

The Iron Authority is meticulously ordered, and its ruthlessly structured society is no different. As in society, every hobgoblin knows their place, from whom they must unquestioningly serve to every lackey who must obey them. Iron Emperor Tz'Jarr is the supreme military commander of the empire, and is loyally served by the four royal generals that rule the empire's individual city-states. The government of Tz'Arrm itself is doggedly focused towards maintaining the Authority's war machine, and is filled with propagandists, military officials, wealthy slaveowners and nobles, and their cronies. No elections are held; positions are only vacated in the event of death or promotion, and all leaders are appointed by the emperor or an immediate superior.

SOCIETY

As the capital of a war-like empire, Tz'Arrm is awash with propaganda and crawling with secret police. Nearly all hobgoblins within the city are proud imperial citizens, bound by the Curse of Strife to lust for war—and bound by the will of the Iron Emperor to obey unquestioningly. Hobgoblins occupy all of the highest positions within the city, and are the only people allowed to serve in the mighty imperial armies.

Goblins are second-class citizens within the imperial capital. While they are afforded citizenship and a certain level of goblinoid respect, their role in society is clear; they live to serve. Every general, duke, and petty lord has several goblins on their payroll, either as housekeepers, as serving-folk, or as artists to serve their own vanity.

SLAVERY

The armies of the Iron Authority have captured tens of thousands of slaves during their wars of conquest across Rifemist. The slaves of Tz'Arrm are mostly used as laborers, and are sent to chisel iron scraps from the Strife Emperor's fallen armor, or to venture back into the lower jungles to forage for food. The slaves that pass in and out of the city are always escorted by a military detachment, to prevent escape. Hobgoblin taskmasters prize tieflings over all other slaves as laborers, especially for work in the furnaces. Tz'Arrm's nobles also prize their few elven slaves, passing them down like heirlooms from generation to generation. Elves are treasured possessions by the Authority's despicable elite, not just because of their beauty or because it is so difficult to break their will, but because of how difficult it is to procure slaves from the sheltering boughs of the jungle.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Tz'Arrm is hellishly hot. The black stone of the Beynsfal Plateau and the iron walls of the city trap the heat of the relentless Rifemist sun. Hobgoblins are well suited to such a climate, but the city's goblins sweat and suffer as they toil. The captured elves, used to the hot but humid climate of the jungle lowlands, are especially harmed by the hot, dry heat of the plateau.

THE VERDANT EXPANSE

East of the Stormcrest Mountains, hundreds of miles of massive, unbridled forest shrouds the landscape in mystery and shadow. Widely understood to be the domain of the elves within Tal'Dorei—or *Gwessar*, as the continent is called in their tongue—the dense timberland is traversed by few beside the elves of Syngorn. Brave, well-protected merchants travel from Emon to Syngorn along roads sanctioned for trade, hunters both human and elven alike seek glory in tracking the wild beasts that roam the untamed wilderness, and the occasional band of dark elf raiders from Ruhn-Shak prowls the forest under cover of night. The enchanted nature of this wood holds the decay of the seasons at bay, the trees blooming evergreen year-round.

The Verdant Expanse sprung from the ley energies that shifted here following the Calamity, bringing vibrant, accelerated growth, and rampant magical flux to the region. This has instilled the forest with countless factions of stranded fey folk, and displaced aberrations that call the darker groves their home. Ruins slowly fall to the swelling overgrowth, and some say that parts of the wood move and hunt on their own, claiming the lives of those who wander too far from the points of civilization. Even so, much of the Expanse is under watch of the Wardens of Syngorn, granting a measure of safety to those who travel beneath its dusky boughs.

THE GLADEPOOLS

Surrounding the southern edges of the Expanse lies a cluster of broken ponds and lakes that ever draw fresh water from the Stormcrest Mountains to the east, and salt water from the Ozmit Sea to the west. The strange mixes of habitats across this somewhat marshy grassland has led to unusual ecosystems and odd, dangerous denizens, which in turn has drawn the attention of many fishermen from the Rifemist region, and Syngornian hunters from within the Verdant Expanse.

The clay and silt gathered along the shores of the salt-water lakes can be refined into fine ceramics and simple constructs that fetch fair prices in northern Tal'Dorei. Syngornian tradition speaks of an oracle's spirit that is bound to the lakes, and when given sufficient offering and respect, the oracle will come to parlay a trade for information of one's fate.

GLADEPOOLS ADVENTURES

NO BASIS FOR A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

For characters of any level: While traveling along the edge of the Gladepools, a fighter or a paladin notices a gleaming longsword embedded in the bank of the lake. No one but that character can see it until they draw it from the mud. A phrase in dark elvish Undercommon is written along the side, saying "*Whosoever draws this blade has the power to free Ruhn-Shak from madness.*" If translated in Syngorn, the translator pauses before the name Ruhn-Shak, then stammers instead, "the, uh, *city*... from madness," and refuses to help further.

THE MIRESCAR

Deep within the western reaches of the Expanse lies a section of extremely dense forest that allows nearly no sunlight to enter. Existing since the birth of the Expanse itself, the trees cluster and twist together into a labyrinth of knotted roots and branches, while a tangled canopy of drooping foliage and gray moss choke the sky from view.

Natural creatures often wander from the Mirescar altered or touched by darkness, lending to population surges of dire beasts and fey abominations.

While the source of the Mirescar's corruption has many myths in Syngornian folklore, none have yet been able to define the purpose nor reason for the darkened region. While many scholars find fascination with this curiosity, the few who proceed do so with caution, as a number who have delved deeply into the Mirescar either fail to return, or do so with but a shred of their former sanity. These tales lead most denizens to avoid the area altogether, instead using the fables to frighten young elven children into not wandering the forest alone.

MIRESCAR ADVENTURES

A SICKNESS SPREADS

For mid-level characters: Whispers within the scouting circles speak of nervous observations: The ever-localized shadow of the Mirescar appears to be slowly spreading, the corruption reaching out to consume more and more of the Expanse. New, wild terrors spring from the shaded tangle, and the Wardens reach out in hopes of finding trustworthy investigators to find the cause of this expanding darkness, perhaps even finally unveiling and destroying the true source of the Mirescar.

THE SHIFTING KEEP

Built within and around a cluster of massive, living trees that form the heart of the Expanse, and enchanted with the most powerful illusion magic Syngorn could muster, the Shifting Keep acts as the satellite military compound for the Syngornian scouts and rangers that patrol and defend the forest here. The enchantments embedded within the keep's foundation allow the fortress to cloak its presence, falsely projecting its location anywhere within a mile.

This advantage played a major role in the historical victory over Neminar in the Scattered War, and lent to the mystique that now surrounds the outpost. Nearly a thousand trained elven warriors, hunters, and spies call the

RELIGIONS: *Majority:* Archheart, Wildmother, Moonweaver.

Minority: Matron of Ravens, Knowing Mistress, Stormlord, Cloaked Serpent

IMPORTS: Precious gems, grain, gold

EXPORTS: Lumber, Elvish arms and goods, jewelry, exotic meat and vegetables, enchantments



Shifting Keep their home, though many spend their time wandering the Expanse, vigilant and ever curious what fools would dare trifle with the might of Syngorn.

SYNGORN

Large City • Population 37,030
(91% Elven, 5% Human, 2% Halfling, 2% Other)

Founded by the sorceress Yenlara in the wake of the Divergence, Syngorn marked the first major point of elven civilization on Tal'Dorei following its calamitous destruction. The remnants of the fallen Court of Ullusa fled to the Feywild for a generation following the end of the Age of Arcanum, returning only when Yenlara found the realm safe to return. These four hundred survivors built a new home, taking inspiration from their temporary home among the fey, and formed the foundations of Syngorn. Nearly a millennium later, Syngorn stands as the proud, defiant cultural and economic center of elven society on the continent.

The massive city is built against the western base of the Stormcrest mountains, and is all but impervious to external assault. Syngorn is not only protected by 40-foot-high walls of ivy-covered jade, it is also surrounded by living trees of the Verdant Expanse and elf-made beacons of detection that keep constant vigil for intruders. Every entrance to the city is warded by a series of threshold crests, massive emblems of a crescent

moon flanked by two trees over a deep cerulean stone. These enchanted stones act as an anchor to the Feywild where Syngorn's founders once recovered, allowing the city itself to displace into the Fey realm as a final act of preservation.

GOVERNMENT

The city has been governed since its inception by the High Warden of Syngorn, a hereditary monarch who appoints proven individuals to three other offices alongside them as the Wardens of Syngorn. Each Warden carries a title and net of responsibilities to guide the city into continued safety and prosperity. The Verdant Lord acts as the head of the city guard, though they delegate this responsibility to a Vice Protector when leading the armies of Syngorn to war abroad.

The Guildrunner manages the city's treasury and oversees commerce within Syngorn's borders. The Voice of Memory is a heralded keeper of history and culture, and is often seen interacting with the elven people, gathering new memories for the archives. The High Warden has always been of Yenlara's bloodline, and is responsible for keeping order within Syngorn and its territories, and within the Wardens themselves.

SOCIETY

Rooted in the older cultures of Exandria, Syngorn is steeped in elven tradition that dates back to before the Divergence. The arts are lauded and revered, the pursuit of

knowledge is respected and encouraged, and some training in refined martial techniques are culturally expected. The idea of trade between other cities and nations is understood to be both healthy and beneficial, but most foreign trade and travel is relegated to outer areas of the city. Few foreigners ever see the inner city. Delicate crafts by Syngornian hands are sought after by collectors around the world, so many take up the trade for both profit and honor.

Being a populace of people who live extraordinarily long lives, having children is a rare, and largely regulated process. Prospective parents must gain approval from the office of the Voice of Memory to procreate, and any unapproved children are sent out of the city to be raised in outposts or foreign cities.

PREJUDICE

While wary of outsiders from the beginning, it wasn't until the historic betrayal of Drassig that the elves of Syngorn adopted a severe prejudice against humans and their outsider allies. This rift was mostly mended through the alliance with Zan Tal'Dorei following the Scattered War and the centuries of good faith that followed, but humans are still respectfully kept at arm's length. The prideful dwarves of Kraghammer, however, have never made amends for their support of Drassig in those days. No trade passes between Syngorn and Kraghammer, and dwarves who swear fealty to the Ironspeaker are barred entrance from the city.

It's extremely rare for a non-elf to be granted citizenship within Syngorn, and usually only by decree of the High Warden herself. Many that reside here do so under the banner of "temporary lodging," and are firmly prompted to leave should they overstay their welcome. Half-elf children are considered flawed and an embarrassment to not only the family that bore them, but to the cultural purity of Syngorn. They are tolerated within the city, but rarely with respect or companionship.

CRIME

If Syngorn appears free of crime, it is because elven criminals have hundreds of years of experience lurking in the shadows. A thriving market for illegal goods runs invisibly through the Linens Guild. Running a private trade line to and from Kymal, small shipments of suude, stolen goods, and dwarven trinkets are brought in for interested parties and collectors. The few pockets of poverty that are largely swept into the shadows of the walls serve as a haven for pickpockets and swindlers that avoid the gaze of the Verdant Guard.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The perpetual shade of the thick, green canopy of the forest maintains cooler weather throughout the summer months, while the ice and snow of the winter is present but minimal this far south.

THE MEMORY WARD

The Memory Ward is the mind of Syngorn, and is contained within a ring of marble walls in Syngorn's northeast reaches. A winding stair, the One Thousand Steps, leads up to its lofty gate. Standing in the center of its grand court is the mystical Sequoia of Remembrance, a three hundred-foot-tall redwood within which are stored the lives and memories of every elf in Tal'Dorei. Wisps of violet light flit about the sequoia's ancient boughs, and those who look closely into their centers have been known to catch glimpses of eras past, troubles present, and things that yet may be. The great redwood and its spirits are watched and tended to by the Dreamweavers, elves who have dedicated their waking and sleeping lives to the protection of their heritage. About five hundred Dreamweavers and five thousand scholars, merchants, and other elves call this district their home.

The elves are a culture obsessed with tradition and the past. As such, the Dreamweavers are among the most well-respected factions within Syngorn. Their leader Ouestra, the Voice of Memory, is likewise the most revered and socially powerful of the Wardens. Ouestra rarely descends from her tower of moonlight in the south of the Memory Ward, but when she does, all of Syngorn pays heed.

BERYL KEEP

Beryl Keep is the fortress-district that houses the might of Syngorn. Situated on a hill in the northwest of the city, thick walls of leaf-green beryl separate the district from the rest of Syngorn. Within these walls are rows of barracks, archery ranges, trance chambers, forges, mess halls, and all the other necessities of training an army of long-living, magical elves. At the far northwest of the district is the Beryl Keep itself. The near-unassailable fortress proves the saying that even the most utilitarian of elven things are beautiful to mortal eyes. Six ancient eucalyptus trees mark the boundaries of the keep, but between them grows a thick curtain of ironbark, and a dense canopy of impenetrable steelfern forms its roof. Legend says that when Syngorn's need is greatest, the six ancient eucalyptus trees that guard the keep will uproot and march as mighty treants to defend the bastion of the elves.

Beryl Keep is commanded by Verdant Lord Celindar. Syngorn's master strategist uses a seeing crystal within his war room to view all of the Verdant Expanse. From this vantage point, he commands his forces like a chessmaster, always one step ahead of the savage threats within the enchanted forest. So far, Syngorn remains safe because its enemies are wild and disorganized. Were they to unify, the might of the Verdant Guard would truly be put to the test.

The armies of Syngorn are about five thousand elves strong, though only about three thousand are within district at any time. The rest are stationed at outposts within the Verdant Expanse and the Feywild.

"Syngorn is a city of wonders and beauty of the like rarely seen anywhere on Exandria. Towers and bowers, cloisters and arches so graceful and fine they make your heart ache—and yet, for all of these works, the most precious treasure in our city is the innocent laughter of children."

—Ouestra, the Voice of Memory



THE TARN WARD

The Tarn Ward is Syngorn's central ward, a peaceful commerce district surrounding Lake Ywynnlas and split by the channels that feed it. An elven market is unlike any business center in mortal lands. From sunrise to sunset, no business is conducted here, save for food at public houses and beds at inns. During the daylight hours, elves socialize, play, and meditate here like in any other city.

At nightfall, however, the market changes. The Tarn Thoroughfare opens at moonrise, lit only by the heavens and by floating lanterns. The streets are silent but for the ethereal elvensong that guides those who know how to listen through the streets. Elves and half-elves raised in Syngorn know this musical language, but those unfamiliar with it must use a *comprehend languages* spell to follow the melody. When the river of sound guides a customer to a vendor, they speak in hushed elvish, like an audience whispering at the theatre.

Any basic goods can be purchased here at 200% their usual cost. These goods, however, are of fine elven make. Weapons have a +1 bonus to damage rolls, horses and other mounts increase their movement speed by 10 feet, and other items are possessed of unearthly beauty and uncanny durability. All *common* magic items can be easily found here, and any *uncommon* magic item has a 50% chance of being found here.

Guildrunner Rawndel is this district's Warden. He lives in a permanent *magnificent mansion* with a façade adorned with gargoyles, and is respected by elven merchants and

nobles alike. Most shops along the Tarn Thoroughfare are affiliated with one of three guilds—the Spellbenders' Guild, the Elvencraft Alliance, or the Mithral Fellowship—and the sly Guildrunner is at the head of all three. The elves don't seem to mind Rawndel's monopoly, as their lives haven't been affected much, but High Warden Tirelda worries of the long-term consequences of Rawndel's power-hungry actions.

THE FEYGROVE

The Feygrove is a once-splendid manor house in southern Syngorn, now completely overgrown with plant life. Massive mulberry trees sprout at odd angles out of windows and through gables, and fairy lights dance around the house at all hours of the day. When Syngorn returned from the Feywild after the Conclave's defeat, the elves unintentionally brought a little of the Feywild with them. Somehow, a number of fey creatures slipped through Syngorn's defenses and made their home in the mansion of an elven noblewoman named Lady Il'shavfa. Il'shavfa has tried for years to reclaim her home, but even the patience of elves wears thin; the fey infestation is just too great.

The fey, however, are having the time of their lives. Far from merely throwing nightly parties—though they do that, too—Il'shavfa Manor has become a place for them to experiment with wild new magic. Their leader, a pixie prince named Windybranch, has found great pleasure in planting strange fey plants in the house and watching as they integrate

with the mansion. The house is now living, breathing, thinking... a new friend for the fey! It keeps the elves out *and* it's a great conversationalist! What could possibly go wrong?

The Feygrove goes by many names. Elven nobility and people concerned about "the fey menace" within Syngorn still refer to it in hushed tones as Il'shavfa Manor, a place of great malice. Elves who care little of this matter, or who are sympathetic to the fey, call it the Feygrove. The fairies themselves, however, named it after the Archfey who first allowed them into the city. To them, their new mansion is called Artagan's Lodge.

THE REVERIE WALKS

The Reverie Walks make up the artistic and spiritual center of Syngorn. This district is a winding labyrinth of living trees and stones. Elves who seek brief meditation may wander the Reverie Walks for a few short hours, entering a trance-like state as they do so. Those who seek true enlightenment may dedicate years of their near-immortal lives to wandering the ever-shifting labyrinth, finding peace in isolation or in search of the Stone of the Archeart in the labyrinth's center. An elven monk named Lyssev Sorveline has walked the labyrinth for five hundred years, seeking answers to questions even the gods do not know. Some elves leave gifts of food for the Wanderer within the labyrinth, allowing them to continue their eternal meditation in peace.

No Warden holds sway over the Reverie Walks. Legend holds that the living stones and trees that shift the

labyrinth are devotees of the Archeart that swore to be their god's eternal wardens.

THE EMERALD CITADEL

The Emerald Citadel looms high over northern Syngorn, a mighty castle of faded white marble, now covered with climbing ivy and sprouting plants. As the highest point in the gradually sloping city, its emerald-tipped spires can be seen from anywhere below. Visitors to the citadel first climb a grand set of stairs, curved like a flowing river of marble, before reaching its brass gates. The Verdant Guard aggressively protects the castle's main entrance, rejecting any commoner who does not have an invitation to the palace marked with the High Warden's seal. High Warden Tirelda's monocled majordomo, a silver-haired elf named Ibbimas, screens all of the High Warden's supplicants.

The palace's high, vaulted ceilings are supported by pillars of gleaming marble carved in the image of tall elm trees, such that the ceilings are a canopy made of marble. Beautiful portraits and busts of past Wardens, and opulent tapestries of Yenlara and the creation of Syngorn line the walls. The citadel is made up of four main levels. The basement levels hold the castle dungeons, as well as grand vaults containing fabulous treasure, historical artifacts, and tacky humancraft gifts given by emissaries from Emon. The first floor holds lush quarters for ambassadors and visiting dignitaries. The second floor's chambers are dedicated to business of state, including the High Warden's throne room. The towers above the citadel contain studies and quarters for the High Warden and her family.

LANDMARKS

THE SPIRES OF YUREK

Roads lined with dormitories and vendors radiate out from the sequoia's branches to the district's walls, providing essentials for not only the Dreamweavers, but the elven scholars who teach, study, and experiment with magic within the Spires of Yurek. This academy was named for Yurek Windkeeper, founder of the Arcana Pan-sophical and personal counselor to the Voice of Memory herself. The school is small compared to Emon's magnificent Alabaster Lyceum, but its seven marble towers are no less awe-inspiring. Characters who visit the Spires of Yurek can learn any historical fact with a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check, and even uncover hints towards long-lost secrets with a DC 25 check. New spells are constantly being invented here, and countless tomes filled with ancient spells can be found within the libraries.

LAKE YWNNLAS

Like the market that encircles it, shining Lake Ywnnlas changes beneath the light of the moon. When lit by sunlight, its clear waters are filled by dozens of magically propelled boats and their mirthful elven riders. At night, the cheerful boats disappear, and the lake becomes a perfect mirror of the night sky above. On rare nights when the spiral-shaped constellation of the Imprisoned is high in the



sky, spectral figures dance across Ywnnlas's surface, bright as starlight and casting no reflection. Myth surrounds the star spirits, of their ancient curse, of their betrayal of the moon goddess, and of the limitless power they can grant to those who pledge their souls to them. The star spirits or the Imprisoned itself are a suitable patron for a warlock who seeks the power of the Old Ones.

STONE OF THE ARCHEART

In the heart of the labyrinth is a column of pure diamond in the radiant likeness of an androgynous elf. Though the Archeart is worshiped throughout Tal'Dorei as a god of magic and art, they are something greater to the elves. They are a progenitor of their race, a deity of fatherhood and motherhood, yet also of neither—a liminal deity that by their very nature both embraces and destroys binaries. Elves that are “born of the Archeart” are honored within Syngorn, and many who seek that honor wander the Reverie Ward in search of the Stone, longing for physical transformation, social power, or arcane might. Some search for centuries and never find it, but in times of peril, the Archeart always makes their wisdom known to the pure of heart.

SYNGORN ADVENTURES

THE RIVER DOES NOT RUN THROUGH IT

For low-level characters: Word arrives from Verdant Scouts that the Feshun River has stopped emptying into the Ozmit Sea without warning. The powerful flow from the Tormor Falls shows no signs of dwindling river flow, so the party is sent to investigate, only to find a sudden sinkhole that has consumed a small section of the Expanse, causing the river to pour into this massive, underground cavern. The rock and earth below appear to be crumbling at an accelerated pace, and the air therein smells of decay. What could be the source of this rapid destruction, and how can it be remedied?

A LESSON IN TROPES

For mid-level characters: While walking the roads of the Expanse, the party comes across a wounded, dark elf ranger and his panther pet, surrounded by many other dead dark elves... seemingly at the hand of this survivor. This injured ranger seeks asylum, claiming to be an escapee, who long chafed at the terrible, immoral dynasty of Ruhn-Shak's elite. Now free and wishing to better the surface world, they ask to join the party, and request their aid in being accepted within Syngornian society. However, should one look hard enough past the gleaming scimitars and blue eyes, they may find the essence of a skilled liar and ruthless assassin, scheming to get as close to the Wardens of Syngorn as possible.

TORMOR FALLS

Feeding the mouth of the rushing Feshun River that carves through the body of the Expanse, Tormor Falls is

an incredible multi-level series of waterfalls that cascade down the eastern side of Orenclift Mountain for hundreds of feet. Swelling with every major rainfall, and beautiful to behold at all times of the year, Tormor Falls is also host to a number of caves that hide beneath the mist and spray, leading beyond the forest and under the Stormcrest Mountains.

A band of Verdant Guards patrol the base of the falls throughout each day, and many have explored the caverns in the past. Some return with nothing, others discover old relics and trinkets from the previous age, while others still fail to return. Rumor even speak of the cave entrances moving, shifting with each rising sun, leading superstition and fear of exploring further.

TORMOR FALLS ADVENTURES

THIS CAVE WAS MADE FOR ME

For mid-level characters: PCs traveling near the edge of the Verdant Expanse hear distressing news that people from small villages, and even from Syngorn, have disappeared in the night. What they don't know is that these people are leaving the village themselves, hypnotically drawn to the caves behind Tormor Falls by an **aboleth** living within a pool deep inside the cave system.

VUES'DAL WATERS

The Vues'dal volcano erupted for the last time in the early days of the Age of Arcanum. Its explosion shook the earth so terribly that the mountain itself was swallowed by the earth, creating the Vues'dal Basin at the edge of the Stormcrest Mountains. Today, the basin has been completely filled by the Feshun River, and the land around the Vues'dal Waters is among the most fertile farmland in southern Tal'Dorei. An elven farming town of about 1,000 souls exists on the shore of Vues'dal.

For the past several decades, the Vues'dal farmers have clashed with the lizardfolk that dwell in the marshes beyond the basin, but something has changed. The lizardfolk have grown more aggressive and less bestial. Their tactics have evolved, and the local farmers are struggling to repel their attacks.

VUES'DAL ADVENTURES

LEGIONS OF THE REPTILE GOD

For mid-level characters: The people of Vues'dal have unwittingly been skirmishing with the vanguard of a force that wishes to bring Syngorn to its knees. The **spirit naga** Maledicta Hexos has come from below the Stormcrests to rally the lizardfolk tribe in the name of the Cloaked Serpent. Vues'dal is overrun, and the Verdant Guard has called for Emon's aid in driving back the legions of the reptile god. Maledicta's armies contain not just countless **lizardfolk**, but also several **hydras** and a **night hag** that serves as her lieutenant. Maledicta is also in possession of one of the Astural Scrolls, an artifact looted from Wrettis that grants her uncanny cosmic powers.

THE BLADESHIMMER SHORELINE

The Bladeshimmer Shoreline, named for the distant glimmering of sun across the Ozmit Sea, stretches across the central western coast of Tal'Dorei. It is the cradle of human civilization on Tal'Dorei, and bears the marks the first human colonists to set foot on this continent, as well as the heart and capitol of the Tal'Dorei empire. This side of the landmass is the closest to the continents of Issylra and Marquet, and dozens of tall-masted trading ships set sail to and from its calm shores each day—as well as the occasional Skyship drifting towards Emon.

Inland Bladeshimmer is mostly temperate grassland, intercut by cool, winding rivers. The bulk of western Tal'Dorei's produce comes from farms here, blessed with clean water and non-salinated soil, despite the ocean's proximity. Emon's nearby military presence lends the region some stability, but the yeomen living beyond the city's walls still struggle to defend their small plots from burrowing ankegs, nomadic gnolls, hungry goblin scavengers, and other terrors.

CRYSTALFEN CAVERNS

Located deep beneath the Bladeshimmer Coast lies a vast network of natural, underground caverns and rivers that predate the Age of Arcanum. This seemingly endless and unfathomably deep series of caves reaches even below the ocean offshore, and has roots in early colonization by denizens of the Far Realm.

An ancient society of powerful **aboleth** and other aberrations sprung up from a door between worlds and conquered this subterranean web, drove their slaves to construct their imperial capital of Salar, the Unseeable

THE SISTERS GRAST

Rumors and stories of a mysterious pair of ancient hag-like entities occasionally swirl through learned circles within the city of Emon, though they often become tools to frighten lyceum students from wandering forbidden vaults at night.

Some more knowledgeable and worldly folk, however, take these whispers very seriously. A number of delvers or treasure seekers wandering the subterranean ruins of the Crystalfen have encountered one, or both, of these wretched witches, returning with tales of fright, dark dealings, and unholy pacts. In reality, these creatures are elven scholars that stumbled upon the Ruins of Salar long, long ago. Their discovery and research of the profoundly magical location twisted their minds and bodies, infused them with power, extended their lives, and granted a glimmer of knowledge of some immense, unknowable purpose to the lost city.

They've become obsessed with the mysteries of the Ruins, Trysta remaining below to continue to excavate and study, while her sister Forscythia travels back and forth from Emon under the veil of glamour illusion to acquire goods and gold in exchange for her unsettlingly insightful fortune telling. Anyone who seeks the sisters with ill intent is rarely seen again. Those who stumble upon them often find themselves temporarily in service to the sisters, bound by a pact made out of fear and self-preservation.

City, and began slowly pressing their influence toward the surface. Their plot was quickly and unintentionally ended when the final battle of the Calamity sent powerful waves of magical force throughout Exandria, causing much of the underground caverns to collapse and the aboleth civilization to fall under rock and rubble. Remnants of that time still remain, however, with surviving terrors slowly rebuilding from the dust within the ruins of their once-great capital.

The Crystalfen Caverns are home to scattered veins of azuremite, a gorgeous blue crystal that formed from millennia of psychic energies near element deposits. Curious explorers who discovered the veins found that, when mined and refined into a fine dust, the powder has a strong mind-altering agent and induces temporary visions or minor psychic phenomenon. This substance is a powerful hallucinogenic drug called *suude*, and is peddled secretly across Tal'Dorei.

While a number of small, isolated entrances to this labyrinth of tunnels have been discovered and several adventuring parties have attempted to chart the mines, the caverns are so vast and deep that either the parties gave up for fear of becoming lost, or they were assailed by the terrible denizens of the caverns, never to return. As such, most who now brave the caverns are foolish treasure hunters or criminals seeking to mine more azuremite for the *suude* trade.

CRYSTALFEN CAVERNS ADVENTURES

MINING THE PAST

For low-level characters: Adventurers who delve into the Crystalfen Caverns—from the gate in Emon's Cemetery District or elsewhere—must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, a woman's voice fills their minds, guiding them down the twisting natural caves to an abandoned mine shaft. Looking down the shaft, the stones at the bottom glitter a faint blue. Should they descend into the azuremite mine, they travel through one of the recorded mines and find a lone, dying **aboleth** that has wandered too far from its shattered empire. Kill it or save it? Either way, they are rewarded with a haunting premonition of the Ruins of Salar, and a murky vision revealing the depths and expanse of Crystalfen Caverns.

DAGGERBAY

Daggerbay, so named for the jagged Slumber Reef that flanks the bay, was where the first human colonists of Tal'Dorei made landfall. In that bygone time, it was a bustling port for the human city of Port O'Noa. It has since fallen into disuse after the Scattered War and the destruction of O'Noa. The bay is naught but a haunting reminder of darker days, housing hundreds of sunken ships and the lost bodies of their crewmen deep below the depths of the reef. The waters are considered cursed by those who know of their history, and the common folk spread rumors of ghost ships and sirens calling looters to their grave should they wander too close to the ominous waves.

DAGGERBAY ADVENTURES

THE OUSTED FEW

For mid-level characters: A society of banished merfolk have taken the bay as their new domain, harassing any treasure hunters or thieves that seek to loot any sunken wreckage that lies at the bottom of the waters. When a relic that appears to have the ability to summon and direct storms is uncovered by their circle, they begin to send the coast into perpetual tempest, sinking ships and taking their spoils back to Daggerbay.

DAGGERBAY MOUNTAINS

The pages of history do not remember the Molten Titan, or when this fierce entity of liquid metal was felled by primordial elves at the end of the Founding. The entity was sealed within and consumed by the earth, giving birth to a range of mountains that has stood for the ages since. Jutting upward against the northwestern border of the Verdant Expanse and stretching to the Ozmit Sea, these stormy peaks functioned as the first boundary between the long-established elves of Syngorn and the burgeoning human colonies on Tal'Dorei during their arrival.

For most of history, the Daggerbay Mountains, or the *loren'al* in the elven tongue, were known to be desolate and devoid of material worth. Colonial-era prospectors came home empty-handed, if they came back at all. The survivors warned all of tribes of bloodthirsty, one-eyed giants that roamed the peaks—cyclops. Any human or elf with half a mind knew to leave the Daggerbays well enough alone.

Yet, after the Emerald Outpost was established as a major settlement and trading post, the Daggerbays' hazardous peaks garnered renewed interest. Small searches for undiscovered riches led to a number of dispersed claims to pop up throughout the rocky valleys over the years,



RELIGIONS: *Majority:* Lawbearer, Wildmother, Platinum Dragon. *Minority:* Moonweaver, Matron of Ravens, Dawnfather

IMPORTS: Precious and industrial metals, lumber

EXPORTS: Stone, lumber, ships, fish, grain, produce, cobalt, gold, livestock

stirring up the territorial inhabitants of the mountains. Elven scouts report **cyclops** raiders and shamans conducting strange rituals within the eyes of thunderstorms at night, and hungry **bulettes** hunting beyond their normal domain, as if guided by some unknown intelligence.

DAGGERBAY MOUNTAINS ADVENTURES

THE EYE OF THE STORM

For mid-level characters: Hill giants are migrating into the mountains, leaving their foothill settlements empty of warriors, civilians, and infirm alike. A half-elven **scout** named Thunderchaser has caused a stir in the Emerald Outpost by bringing back the lightning-charred corpse of a hill giant with one eye ritually gouged out. What are the **cyclops stormcallers** (see page 132) planning beneath the concealing stormclouds of the Daggerbay Mountains?

A METAL OF MEMORY

For high-level characters: The ancient molten beast that was sundered beneath these rocky peaks left behind pockets of an incredibly rare metal with mysterious properties called “orichalcum” far below the surface. The sudden discovery has sent local entrepreneurs into a frenzy, and the ensuing rush has already sparked some violence. As they dig deeper, they discover that some essence of the ancient creature still lives, and it is seeking vengeance.

EMERALD OUTPOST

Small Town • Population: 1,456
(89% Elven, 6% Human, 3% Halfling, 2% Other)

Originally established by the elves of Syngorn as a hidden outpost to keep watch over the growing empire of Drassig, the Emerald Outpost fell out of use after the Scattered War. Now it stands as a trade post between Emon and Syngorn, and many day-to-day matters between the alliance of cities are handled here within the Emerald Chambers—previously the outpost’s war room.

The Outpost is neutral ground, but its elven majority population and heavy Syngornian military presence occasionally makes non-elven civilians and diplomats uneasy. The outpost is governed by an agreed partnership between two appointed captains, one by the Council of Tal’Dorei, and the other by the Wardens of Syngorn. The Syngornian captain Maina Rusalla has held a well-known rivalry with the Council’s appointed captain Jorn Krastef, and their bickering tends to hold up political negotiations. A small military presence is still kept here by both Emon and Syngorn as part of the arrangement, though mostly as combat reserves.

“The Emerald Outpost is proof that we of Syngorn should mistrust humans; not because of their treachery, but because of their greed, and the way grasping commerce seeps into the heart and spirit like a slow, sweet poison.”

—Captain Maina Rusalla

EMON, THE CITY OF FELLOWSHIP

Metropolis • Population: 287,550
(68% Human, 7% Dwarven, 6% Elven, 19% Other)

Emon stands defiantly against all who would threaten Tal’Dorei and its people. It is the cultural heart of human civilization on this continent, and as the republic’s capital, Emon is a nexus of politics, justice, business, industry, and education within the realm.

Encircled by 60-foot-high walls that stretch from the eastern fields to the western shore, Emon is accessible only through its heavily-patrolled gates and by skyship, the denizens of the city are generally well protected from outside attackers and sieges. A well-trained force of guards known as the Arms of Emon enforces the laws of the land from the Military District. Dense farms and farm communities surround the northeastern boundary of the city, while large slums cap the northern and southern landscape outside of the city walls.

GOVERNMENT

Emon is the seat of the Council of Tal’Dorei, the nation’s highest governing body. Though the council originally served under the Sovereign of Tal’Dorei, the nation’s final Sovereign was killed when the Chroma Conclave attacked Emon. Following the death of Thordak the Cinder King and the rest of the Conclave, Emon was rebuilt and the Council reformed as the backbone of the new Republic of Tal’Dorei. The Council and its members are described in detail on page 35.

One unintended consequence of relying on magic to rapidly rebuild Emon is that the mages of Tal’Dorei now hold incredible influence over the fledgling Council. Some fear that without a Sovereign, the Council will be unable to keep the arcanists in line, and Tal’Dorei will dissolve into magocracy.

SOCIETY

While classically the heart of a human empire, Emon boasts a diverse populace, with citizens of nearly all races from all of Exandria’s many nations, thriving on the new innovations and ideas of its diverse citizenry. Tal’Dorei’s tight alliances with the elven nation of Syngorn and the dwarven hold of Kraghammer invited some of those nations’ greatest artisans inside Emon’s walls, and their friends and families soon followed until Emon was home to a significant minority of elves and dwarves. Under the rule of Zan Tal’Dorei, Emon developed into a city whose people valued innovation and collaboration, especially in small, cohesive groups—virtues that some historians believe has given rise to the prominence of the modern adventuring party.

While Emon is becoming more commercial and the use of gold as currency has been ubiquitous throughout Tal’Dorei’s history, many communities within the city are still close-knit enough to use the barter system. During



the reign of Drassig, the humans of Emon adopted a dwarven oath called *rudraz*, an intimate promise between two people to repay a deed or trade. Though the *rudraz* is not a contract, the dwarves believed that an oathbreaker would be forever barred from passing beyond the Brightguard Gates of Hilmaire (*hill-MORE-uh*); the gates that allow dwarves to pass to the afterlife. Humans in Emon treat the *rudraz* more lightly, often using it to seal matters of business or politics rather than personal promises, but breaking this oath still carries massive social repercussions—few look kindly upon a person with the epithet “Oathbreaker.”

PREJUDICE

Though the people of Emon have come a long way since the human supremacy of Drassig’s rule, prejudice and discrimination still burns like a lingering fever. Overt racism is most common in the Upper and Lower Slums, where gentrification threatens to eradicate the culture of one of Emon’s oldest immigrant districts. The scholarly elite of the Erudite Quarter and the nobility of the Cloudtop District like to pretend they are too enlightened to succumb to bigotry, their wealth and power allows them to leave their own prejudices unexamined. While elves and dwarves are fully welcomed into human society for their stereotypical characteristics (elven beauty and arcane talent, dwarven honesty and metallurgical prowess), tieflings, half-orcs, and dragonborn rarely rise to Emon’s highest societal ranks.

REBIRTH

Emon is still recovering from its destruction at the talons of the Chroma Conclave and Thordak’s subsequent occupation, rebuilding the districts most marred from the short-lived reign of the Cinder King. Thanks to the Clasp’s underground networks and established hierarchies, Emonian society and culture was able to bounce back more swiftly than any other major settlement in Tal’Dorei. Because the last Sovereign relinquished his power, without heirs, before he was killed by Thordak, the Council of Tal’Dorei was able to transition their nation from an imperial power to a republic without war or insurrection.

However, the swiftness of Emon’s rebirth has put the Council of Emon in a precarious position. Not only are they socially indebted to a criminal faction, the Council now owes vast amounts of gold to mages in the service of the Alabaster Lyceum. These Lyceum conjurers created thousands of tons of stone and steel, and each of their transmuters rebuilt at the rate of one hundred laborers—and the Council cannot afford to pay them for their service, even with Thordak’s reclaimed treasure hoard. Some members of the Council have already caved to pressure from factions within the Clasp and the Lyceum, and turn a blind eye to the crime and magical abuse that run rampant throughout the city. The fragile new republic already threatens to collapse under the cost of its creation.

CRIME

Hundreds of tunnels run beneath Emon, the forgotten remnants of paved-over neighborhoods and secret passageways made by thieves' guilds during the reign of Drassig. These tunnels are now home to the Clasp's secret headquarters, where all manner of thieves, killers, fences, and spies are gathered underneath their banner. The Clasp and its leaders are detailed on pg. 34.

Some petty criminals look up to the Clasp, committing ambitious crimes in hopes of gaining the Spirelings' attention. Though politicians and commoners alike are grateful to the Clasp for their role in rebuilding their city, this unsavory "auditioning" has once again soured their reputation among the city watch.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Emon is not a tourist destination for its climate—the city is more temperate and prone to rain showers than most—but those who call it home swear they wouldn't trade their rain for all the sun in Kymal. The city is blessed with cool summers and warm winters, thanks to its proximity to the cool Ozmit Sea. Though snow rarely falls on the city itself, it relies on springtime snowmelt from the Cliffkeep Mountains to fill its reservoirs throughout the year. Emon is, in almost all senses, a city fated by water; were there anyone powerful enough to starve its farms and reservoirs, the city would be theirs.

ABDAR'S PROMENADE

Abdar's Promenade is the open marketplace district and massive bazaar that dominates eastern Emon. Named for the legendary spicemonger from Marquet who helped fund the construction of Emon, the name of Abdar is synonymous with both generosity and business savvy. Within the tents, carts, warehouses, and shops that stretch for miles of intertwining roads, nearly everything and anything you seek can be purchased, with the darker pursuits leading to Clasp-run rackets that work beyond the reach of the law. The Promenade is ever a whirlwind of commerce and excess, with a vigilant patrol by the city watch. Its most renowned establishments include the four-story Laughing Lamia Inn, the metalworker's paradise called the Anvilgate, and the emporium of mystical riches known as Gilmore's Glorious Goods.

THE CENTRAL DISTRICT

The Central District is the largest residential district within Emon's walls, housing most of the city's merchant class, including traveling traders, ship captains, and guild apprentices. The district is a patchwork of thousands of personal homes, tenements, and guildhalls of all shapes and sizes, peppered with small taverns and inns on nearly every street corner.

These neighborhoods lay clustered together among tightly set streets, occasionally broken up by park grasses or the Ozmit Waterways that snake through the region between the promenade and the port. Visitors to the Central District are advised not to go out at night; the

wide disparity of wealth from home to home here has seen crime rise recently, and the city watch seems reluctant to find a constructive solution. Residents who know the lay of the land have an easier time at night and can help visitors avoid the most dangerous streets.

THE CLOUDTOP DISTRICT

The Cloudtop District once stood as the height of luxury and throne of the social elite, containing the Palace of the Sovereign alongside the mansions of the various lords and ladies of the city. An elevated port to arcane levitating skyships called the Skyport platform—first port of its kind—stands atop the Skyport tower. This symbol of advanced magical technology is buttressed against a 100-foot-high wall of shining white stone that encircles the district, a second line of siege defense for the political leaders of Emon.

When the Chroma Conclave attacked the city, the dragons focused their ire on the Cloudtop, flying over the protective walls and leveling many of the ostentatious homesteads, as well as collapsing the palace itself. Thordak took the ruins here as his den, his presence bringing volcanic change to the earth throughout the inner walls. After Thordak's defeat, the fires died down and grounds of the district are being reclaimed. Reconstruction of the palace is underway, and Council matters are currently held within the Citrine Garrison, the hub of all large military planning and action within the city.

THE TEMPLE DISTRICT

The Temple District rests in the northern area of Emon, a ward that fosters many great sanctuaries built to uphold the worship of the city's many dominant religions. Cathedrals to the Lawbearer and the Platinum Dragon stand at apex among smaller temples to the Dawnfather, the Stormlord, the Wildmother, and the Matron of Ravens. Many poorer folk come here seeking shelter, while the pious offer their services and energy to upholding the tenets of their chosen deity.

Travelers and sailors come to leave tokens and gifts at shrines to bless their journeys, while merchants seek the graces of the Changebringer before a risky endeavor. The meek search for wisdom in the great halls of the Knowing Mistress as the artists and wistful folk give praise to the Archeart. Not all folk are drawn toward nor trusting of religion, however, and temples past have been exposed as frauds, or worse, corrupting cells hidden in the service of darker gods.

THE ERUDITE QUARTER

The Erudite Quarter acts as the center for higher education and studious pursuits through not just the city, but the realm of all Tal'Dorei. Beautiful towers stretch to the sky across a cityscape of centuries-old halls of learning and student boarding houses. Here, the finest schools and colleges draw the wealthy, the gifted, and the brilliant. Academies of the arts socially duel with universities of intellectual pursuits, all while overshadowed by the Alabaster Lyceum, the largest and most accomplished institute of arcane study on the continent.



Run by Headmaster Thurmond Adlam, the Lyceum acts as both a training facility for talented magic practitioners, and a formidable center for all forms of arcane research and study. Though its walls were shattered and its libraries crushed during the invasion of the Chroma Conclave, the Erudite Quarter has thankfully been mostly reconstructed thanks to the efforts of the Lyceum's staff and students. The district's greatest loss was the hundreds of thousands of pages torched during Thordak's reign, destroying centuries of magical, mechanical, and historical documents.

THE MILITARY DISTRICT

The Military District is one of the smaller districts within the city, containing many barracks and instructional facilities for both the Arms of Emon, and the

standing military soldiers of the city. Men and women seeking to join the Arms of Emon train within the Walls of Tribute, referred to wryly by recruits as the Quarry, where they are given the necessary skill at combat, arms, and law to keep the city safe. Military recruits are instead trained within the House of Discipline, a grueling camp that readies entrants for the dangers of warfare. While many small stockades are scattered across the districts, the largest prison in the city, called the Black Bastille, is kept here within the Military District.

THE CEMETERY DISTRICT

The Cemetery District is a smaller section of the city dedicated to interring the deceased who can afford it. Countless gravestone mark a row of rolling hills sectioned off by tall, iron fences, with mausoleums of more affluent

families dotting the grassy hillsides. As surface space grew limited in centuries past, the city began excavating a network of catacombs called the Undervaults. Upkeep, expansion, and general safeguarding of the sites are overseen by the Gravewatchers, a guild of families that has held political and social hegemony control over the district for generations. A very recent excavation in the Undervaults was found to lead into the Crystalfen Caverns, and was promptly sealed off. This did not stop some members of the Gravewatchers from seeing an opportunity, however; passage is occasionally granted to the Clasp or others willing to pay for entry to the dangerous realm below.

THE PORT OF EMON

The Port of Emon encompasses the massive inlet and series of docks that allow a vibrant flow of shipments in and out of the city. Over a hundred ships fill this port at any given time, and the dock crews are ever working, carrying crates and goods away to Abdar's Promenade, or to the empty vessels for exportation. The northern sector of the Port is mostly allocated to the Everline, a powerful fisherman's guild that frequently feuds with the shipping guild the Onyx Banner regarding dock space and taxing dock use. These feuds have never come to blows, but the Everline has begun making secret alliances with the sahuagin of the southern coast. What are they planning?

THE UPPER SLUMS

The Upper Slums began several hundred years ago as a tent city, built by citizens too poor to pay Drassig's outrageous taxes and were forced outside of the city gates. As time went on, the slum grew until it rivaled the size of a third of the city. Though their conditions were still meager when the magnanimous Zan Tal'Dorei ended Drassig's iron rule, the city's denizens chose to remain, having created a community with its own culture of inexpensive living and brotherhood in poverty, away from the bustle of the city's inner streets. A microcosm society now exists within the slum, including its own trade square, shrines for worship, and makeshift farms on the outskirts.

Though the district's name was once a sneering insult by the Cloudtop elite, its people have reclaimed the name, transforming the term "Upper Slums" into a symbol of pride. Two major ills afflict the region; the most obvious is its rampant crime and Clasp activity, for the Arms of Emon care little for defending the district. The second feeds the first; wealthy Emonians have suddenly begun building mansions homes within the Upper Slums, diluting its unique culture and fanning the flames of resentment.

THE LOWER SLUMS

The Lower Slums are a fraction of the size of its northern counterpart residing just outside the southernmost gates out of Emon. When a large refugee band from Othanzia was barred entry into the city near the end of Trist Drassig's rule, the squatters instead set up shop beyond the walls, slowly forming a community of farmers who requested land in exchange for providing produce and

grown goods to the people of the city. After the tyrant's fall, an agreement was made, and now the farming community has grown to become one of the larger sources of farming products within Emon. While called a slum to this day by habit, the humble farmers here are rather safe from crime and poverty.

THE SHORELINE FARMS

The Shoreline Farms is a stretch of murky shore that the denizens of the Upper Slums have converted into farmland specializing in the few vegetables that grow in saltwater-soaked soil. Bountiful harvests of quattet fruit and the hard-to-grow brineroot has led to a small economic boom for some within the Upper Slums. This situation has led to farmers being fiercely territorial, occasionally to the point of actual violence.

THE GROTTO

The Grotto is the sprawling series of chambers and halls that composes the Clasp's main base of operations beneath the city of Emon. Hidden amongst a series of labyrinthine tunnels and passages that are woven into the sewer system, it's rumored there are over a dozen entrances into the Grotto concealed throughout the city, and over a hundred others abandoned and filled in for fear of discovery. The very nature of the Clasp's business is to keep shifting out of sight, and as such, the actual core of the organization moves from base to base between multiple subterranean structures, ever building further underground or repurposing a long abandoned hideout whenever necessary.

LANDMARKS

GILMORE'S GLORIOUS GOODS

The broad, single-story façade of Shaun Gilmore's wondrous magical emporium belies the extravagance of its interior. Within, the air is thick with a dozen competing perfumes, each more pungent than the last. The interior is impossibly large—certainly larger than its exterior walls would have you believe—and filled with seemingly endless rows of arcane curiosities and artifacts, many of whose cryptic functions have been lost to time.

Everburning candles in an array of unnatural colors light the shop, casting tantalizing shadows over every bubbling phial and mystical orb. Characters entering the shop are first met by Gilmore's assistant Sherri, a half-elf draped in deep purple robes. If they are lucky, or particularly convincing, they may even meet the hero Gilmore himself. Gilmore is ever eager to recount his part in the fall of the Chroma Conclave, often embellishing his role in the final battle with Thordak himself.

Gilmore's Glorious Goods sells all magic items of *very rare* rarity and lower for the price range listed in the GM's guidebook, as well as one or two long-lost *legendary* items. *Artifact*-quality items are beyond even Shaun Gilmore's usual fare, but he may know clues to a specific artifact's location. Magic items are expensive, and those strapped for cash may inquire about sponsorships and quests done in Gilmore's service.

SKYSHIPS

Within the Clodtop district lies the Skyport, a thin tower that climbs along the surrounding wall onto a massive platform that acts as a raised harbor for docking skyships. These beautiful airships range in size, but generally are built to a similar scale as a coaster merchant ship. Skyships are held aloft and guided via the levitating power of three or more enchanted crystals called brumestones installed along the hull or topside of the ship.

The enchantments required to produce and maintain these brumestones is a very closely guarded secret by the Alsfarin Union within the distant city of Ank'Harel, and while the Alsfarin Union does occasionally sell skyships to foreign businesses, they retain absolute control over the maintenance of and number of skyships in operation. Reserved for goods and individuals who require expedient travel without the hassles of sea-faring dangers, the cost to utilize a skyship is prohibitively expensive for the common man, leading to a sense of elitism in those who often make use of their services. Due to the exclusivity of skyports within major metropolises, few skyships in service will deviate from dedicated shipping routes between major cities.

SKYSHIP

Purchase Cost: 100,000g • **Speed:** 10 mph • **Max Cargo:** 10 tons • **Crew:** 6-10 • **Max Passenger Occupancy:** 30
Personal Travel Cost: 2 gp per mile per passenger •
Shipping Cost: 1 gp per 100 lbs per mile.

AZALEA STREET PARK

Azalea Street is one of Emon's oldest neighborhoods, and is full to bursting with small businesses, quaint homes, and hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Amidst the chaos of daily life, Azalea Street is also home to a peaceful park overlooking the Ozmit Waterways. When the stress of constant battles becomes too much to bear, adventurers in the know take a moment to visit the Azalea Street Park and recover, maybe even swapping stories with other relaxing heroes. Legend has it that heroes who meditate among the flowers and drink in the sea air return invigorated by the spirit of the Wildmother. A dual statue of the Wildmother and Lawbearer dancing stands within a fountain in the center of the park. Once per week, a character who takes a short rest within the Azalea Street Park gains Inspiration.

THORDAK'S CRATER

The very center of the Clodtop District, despite restoration crews' best efforts, remains a smoldering ruin, home only to rubble and molten slag, still supernaturally hot from Thordak's fiery corruption. Whenever a restoration crew enters the crater, the pools of slag and cinder rise to life, repulsing all living creatures. Why the Thordak's

magic lingers enough to create these mindless **cinderslag elementals** (see page 130) is a mystery; but it seems to be limited to the crater, as the elementals cannot go beyond it without collapsing into inert slurry.

THE GODSBRAWL RING

Though the Temple of the Stormlord always has a fighting ring in its center, the annual Godsbrawl transforms the earthen, torch-lit sanctum into one of Tal'Dorei's most unusual tournament grounds. On the Day of Challenging, the Stormbringer's holy day, the athletic priests of the Stormlord invite warriors and worshipers of the entire pantheon to the Godsbrawl, asking that each temple offer forth their greatest warrior to act as their god's proxy in the tournament. The clergy of the Dawnfather and the Lawbearer send their champions, but rarely take it seriously, for they scorn the storm-priests' notion of "might makes right." Conversely, the champions of the Stormlord and the Platinum Dragon have a fierce—though friendly—rivalry, trading the title of Supreme Champion back and forth each year after a bloody final round.



TRAVERSE JUNCTION

It looms over the bustling center of the Erudite Quarter, shining like a pyramid of pure sapphire, its walls thrumming with arcane energy. It is the Traverse Junction, and it is one of the most magically-active structures in Tal'Dorei. In nearly every major Exandrian city exist teleportation circles that link mages to other circles around the world. Each and every one of these major circles has a twin in the Traverse Junction, a travel nexus for approved mages and world leaders. Any characters renowned in Emon or honored by the Alabaster Lyceum may make use of the Junction (perhaps at cost), allowing them to travel to major cities such as Westruun, Syngorn, Kraghammer, or even far-off Ank'Harel. The telemagi who curate the circles are always in search of new teleportation sigils to different lands; perhaps brave adventurers can aid them?

THE BLACK BASTILLE

Named for its ash-blackened walls, the ominous Black Bastille is a single-story prison that sprawls across the eastern end of the Military District. The compound has no windows, no open courtyards, and only one entrance, two imposing steel doors flanked by watchtowers. During the reign of the Chroma Conclave, the prison was one of the first buildings attacked, setting hundreds of Tal'Dorei's worst criminals loose to sow chaos across Emon. The Black Bastille has since been rebuilt, but dozens of its most deplorable inmates still run free, and the Arms of Emon are eager to recover them. Some include the human demon-summoner Felrinn Derevar, betrayer of the Arcana Pansophical; the half-elf pyromancer Illaman Falconsong, exile of the fire Ashari; and the vampiric tiefling Ixrattu Khar, cultist of the Whispered One and Tal'Dorei's foulest mass murderer.

TOMB OF THE LAST SOVEREIGN

Uriel Tal'Dorei II, the last of his line, was slain by the noxious breath of the green dragon Raishan during the attack of the Chroma Conclave. Uriel's wife, Salda, survived him and petitioned the reformed Council of Tal'Dorei to build their last sovereign a tomb befitting his benevolence and magnanimity. They complied, and the monumental Tomb of the Last Sovereign is now home to not just Uriel's ashes, but to tribute from all who loved him. Those with wealth gave gold, while those whose hearts outweighed their purses gave more personal tribute. Of late, the Gravewatchers have closed the tomb to all. The act is within their right as defenders of the dead, but Salda Tal'Dorei grows suspicious of their true intent.

CATYURIT FARM

The Catyurit family has grown chellerum gourds on their land for generations, and the farm is currently run by a human single mother, Helina, her two sons Rych and Empi, and her youngest daughter Foryuna. The chellerum is a briny vegetable known for being a hearty meat substitute, and has fed Emon's people in thin times

since before the first sovereign. PCs can buy chellerum here for 5 sp each, and a roasted gourd can feed a group of six for a full day. However, there is a 10% chance such a gourd is poisoned, and any who eat it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned and occasionally vomit uncontrollably for the next 1d6 + 1 days. Young Foryuna Catyurit has been secretly replaced by a **doppelganger** with delusions of grandeur, which has been covertly poisoning Emonian produce for the past two weeks.

EMON ADVENTURES

PRIMORDIAL CHILDREN

For low-level characters: Rumors of terrible creatures of fire and teeth stalking the sewers begin to spark across tavern bars throughout Emon, with such mutterings going largely ignored. However, an investigator has recovered what looks to be broken remains of a large, leathery, red egg not far from a collapsed tunnel beneath the Cloudbottom. It seems one of Thordak's primordial dragon spawn survives beneath the city, and is growing quickly.

RUINS OF O'NOA (NEW O'NOA)

Small Town • Population: 336 (85% Human, 15% Other)

The first human colonizers of Tal'Dorei journeyed across the Ozmit Sea, weathering terrible storms and deadly waves, and first landed in Daggerbay. From there, they founded the port city of O'Noa, and though the city quickly grew in wealth and influence, it became a site of contention with mistrustful Syngornian elves. When Warren Drassig took the throne of Emon, no city was devastated more than the contested city of O'Noa. It became the site of one of the Scattered War's bloodiest battles, and the arcane energies unleashed to end the struggle left most of the land scarred and the city in ruins. Built within a cursed bay, and without fertile land to grow, it was agreed after the war that neither the new nation of Tal'Dorei nor Syngorn would attempt to rebuild the city, instead letting it stand as a reminder of the horrors of the Scattered War.

Over centuries of dereliction, the ruins became a haven for looters, and eventually the ostracized and immoral. This small community of criminals, addicts, and opportunists began calling their home New O'Noa, taking this place of destitution and dust and making it into a lawless hotbed of thieves and delinquents ruled but their chosen leader, a charismatic tiefling called Waken who rose to prominence through honeyed words and selective murders.

"New O'Noa" still appears abandoned to the eye of the outsider, its inhabitants living and hiding among the standing buildings and shacks while avoiding or paying off any inquiring Emon interests that follow whispers of their organized den of sin.

RUINS OF O'NOA ADVENTURES

THIS TOO SOLID FLESH

For low-level characters: New O'Noa is a seedy town filled with strange magic. A serious suude addict named Shef Silverleaf is in major debt to Waken, the tiefling leader of the town. Hired by Waken to aid in collecting his debt, the party breaks down his door to discover that Shef's body has been turned to solid silver. Was this foul play, or poetic justice? Waken will take Shef's solid silver corpse as payment, but what if the silver-skinned man were still alive and able to magically walk away?

SCAR OF THE CINDER KING

The realm around Emon will never fully recover from Thordak's elemental corruption. His presence not only incinerated his enemies, it wounded the land itself. Even the Pyrah Ashari, called from across the sea by the Council of Tal'Dorei, could not completely mend the devastation. The wounds under and east of Emon are not the extent of Thordak's destruction—his indelible power lingers in several isolated corners of Tal'Dorei, such as the Ashen Gorge and the ruins of Serpent's Head—but their proximity to such a large social capital makes them the most devastating. The invisible power that radiates

from the wounds Thordak left here may corrupt areas of the land for generations to come, if no one figures out how to cleanse them.

While the crater within the Cloudtop has received intense attention due to the affluent nature of the vicinity, the land devoured by the Scar was mostly outer farmland and forest, occupied by serfs and laborers. Some displaced survivors whisper that the members of the Council are more concerned with rebuilding their mansions than healing the Scar. Whether or not these concerns are valid, the fact remains that thousands of Emonian families still have not found a home, and many have turned to thievery, banditry, and burglary to make ends meet.

FLAMEREACH OUTPOST

Flamereach Outpost is a stout, makeshift fortress of unassuming gray stone that stands at the edge of the Scar. Its denizens keep watch over the Shivergreen Grove, a small forest at the edge of the Scar that never stopped burning. The trees of Flamereach Grove, as it is now called, are little but blackened skeletons, but they burn eternally. The fortress was built as a base for the druids and elemental specialists who traveled to Emon to heal the Scar. Led by a half-orc fire ashari named Lorkathar, a group of firetamers from Pyrah keep constant vigil over the supernatural devastation, and those who watch the undying flames at night swear they can see creatures moving within.



THE SNOWEMBER FIELDS

The **Snowember Fields** are the widest, most barren portion of the Scar. This patch of ruined farmland is lifeless and coated by a thick layer of white ash, interrupted occasionally by the immolated remains of a windmill. The destruction looks peaceful from afar, like freshly fallen snow, but no one who wishes to live travels here, for to disturb the ash is to invite death. Living embers lurk beneath the snow-white ash—for every 5 feet a creature travels, a pyromaniacal **magmin** flares from below. And the deeper one travels to the heart of the Snowember, the greater the danger grows.

GREY SKULL KEEP

Built outside the city walls, beyond the southern most region of the southern slums, is the homestead of Emon's own heroes: Vox Machina. Designed by Theadorn Kraxz and constructed as a gift for saving the lives of the late Sovereign's family, this respectable stone fortress stands as home and the base of operations for the members of Vox Machina who have business within Emon itself. As the various adventurers are usually scattered to their own responsibilities across the lands, the entire band of warriors is rarely assembled within the Keep outside of holidays, political meets, or times of danger.

RUINS OF SALAR

In the deepest depths of the Crystalfen Caverns, directly under the prized city of Emon, lay the ancient ruins of Salar, capital of a time-lost subterrestrial aboleth empire. The aboleths know Salar as the Unseeable City, because mortal eyes cannot look upon its alien architecture without destroying their fragile minds. Salar is nothing more than a rumor to Emon's scholars and archaeologists—no sane person has ever verified its existence—but their crazed scribbling indicate all that survives of the ruined city are emerald marble structures of unfathomable design, seeming

KARALINE VON ETHRO

Archaeologist, Anthropologist, and Explorer Extraordinaire; Karaline von Ethro was a human adventurer and inventor. It was her designs that created the Sunbeam Compass, a device that always directs the user to the Sun by emitting a small light at the tip of the needle in a glass orb, allowing it to rotate in all directions; very useful when exploring subterranean territory. She had also recovered several relics from the battles that occurred in O'Noa, early civilizations from Daggerbay Mountains, and predicted civilizations on the Visa Isle. However, despite her discoveries she is most remembered for going mad after allegedly having visions of the Ruins of Salar. Karaline's madness eventually led to her demise at the young age of 37.

to shift and shimmer as the eye tries to comprehend, moving through time as they remain static in space.

The once-renowned archaeologist Karaline von Ethro has claimed to have visions of Salar, described a subterranean city with twisting pillars that stretched higher than any tower, kissing the seat of our land from the bedrock of the earth. At the tallest height of the central pillar floats a giant pearlescent disc, which she labeled the Moon Disc, that acts as the central light source of the city. In Karaline's journal, she recorded hearing whispers and voices; however, most believe her journal to be nothing more than the diary of a madwoman, and any inquiry of regarding her findings are generally laughed upon by scholars. Laugh as they might, the surviving aboleth brood, helmed by Overseer Durrom, lives on in secrecy while expanding their army of thralls and learning all they can about the ignorant surface dwellers. Durrom's ultimate goal is to shatter the forgotten Pillars of the Earth and cause the surface of Tal'Dorei to collapse into his subterranean domain.

SEASHALE MOUNTAINS

Northwest of Emon along the coast runs the curious range of mountains known as the Seashale. The name "Seashale" comes from their unique shape; appearing to looking like a tidal wave about to crash on the inland territories, frozen in dynamic stone within the few, broken bursts of forest that dot the perimeter of the mountain range.

Crashing waves and salty sea breezes have carved miles of twisted valleys between its jagged peaks, creating an unusual home for the many coastal creatures lurking within the cavernous rock, shoreside pools, and towering bluffs. High tide leads the briny waters into the Nightwash, a miles-long lagoon that wends its way through the base of the bluffs, carrying hosts of dangerous ocean life with each pass. Conversely, the tidal phenomenon also brings a bevy of deep sea fish on occasion, which gave birth to the fishing community of the Shalesteps within these mountains.

THE SHALESTEPS

Small Town • Population: 456
(40% Human, 30% Halfling, 30% Dwarf)

The Shalesteps is a series of small, allied villages that choose to live a more simple life outside of the bustle of the capital city, but close enough to enjoy ready imports and protection should the need arise. Most of their food is sourced from the ocean and the Nightwash tide, while a small hunting community wanders the higher peaks for avian quarry and other sources of meat and resources. While no known adventurers have ever been known to come from the Seashale Mountains, those who live there are sturdy and ready to defend themselves against the dangerous wilds surrounding them, and the occasional monstrosity that washes in with their nets.

SHALESTEPS ADVENTURES

FROM HELL'S HEART

For low-level characters: The Shalestep village of Puddlefoot has never had anything remarkable happen to it. People there are quiet and simple, with no interest in tales of great heroics. No great adventures have ever come to their rocky shore... until the whale. The dead whale, bloated with corruption, its white hide covered in oozing green lesions, is a source of fear for the nearby townsfolk. What happened to this behemoth? And why is Rill the Hermit ranting about seeing tall shadows spying on Puddlefoot from the mountain peaks?

VISA ISLE

About 40 miles off the coast of the Bladeshimmer Shoreline, west of the Verdant Expanse, two islands belch clouds of black smoke into the open sky. Visa Isle and its smaller sister island have been surrounded by rumors and sailors' legends since the dawn of human civilization. Some say that every night, the island burns to ash—giving the island its distinctive orange glow—and every day new trees grow to maturity by sundown. It is an island of fire and death.

Those who have explored its dense jungles and returned claim only to have found find common wild pigs and—at worst—unusually large fire beetles and mantises. They were the lucky ones. They didn't wander unprepared into the Ruins of Vos'sykriss, and did not encounter the

serpentine spirits that haunt its elder halls. The only expedition to have ventured into the Ruins of Vos'sykriss and lived to speak of it returned to Emon just as Thordak and the Chroma Conclave descended upon the city. Their leader, a half-orc professor of archaeology and spirit-speaker named Jorlund Vohr, survived the destruction of Emon, but all his notes and the stone tablets he recovered were dissolved along with his apartment by Umbrasyl's acid. He longs to return to Visa Isle and is desperately trying to get funding from the Alabaster Lyceum.

VISA ISLE ADVENTURES

A DORMANT THREAT

For mid-level characters: In ancient times, Vos'sykriss was the seat of an serpentfolk empire that dominated southern Tal'Dorei. Before the battles of the Calamity, seers within the empire had visions of the coming destruction and desperately sought a way to survive it. The serpents constructed a magical field of perfect stasis beneath their city and chose their strongest and most powerful to slumber and rebuild the empire when the danger had passed. Those that perished in the Calamity haunt the ruins of their ancient city as **ghosts**, eager to take revenge on the living for destroying their glorious empire. When Jorlund Vohr's expedition delved into Vos'sykriss's deepest sanctum, they unwittingly ended the serpents' ancient spell and awakened the Sleepers. Soon, a people long thought extinct will return to claim the world as their own.



THE DISTANT REGIONS OF EXANDRIA

The land of Gwessar, now known far and wide as the young nation of Tal'Dorei, is a sprawling, curious land full of adventure, danger, and glory. That being the case, the world of Exandria is far larger and more ancient than just the Lucidian Coast to the Bladeshimmer Shoreline. Many of the people who live here either descend from or are immigrants to these green lands, and the history that marks their origins stems from these distant realms that cover the other corners of this vast world.

Any of these mentioned lands can be the basis for a character's personal history or background, and if running a campaign in Exandria, feel free to utilize the open outline of these places as a base to expand upon and flesh out however you see fit. Does your adventuring party wish to sail across the Ozmit Sea to the taiga landscapes of northern Othanzia? Take the notes here and create whatever you'd like within that space for them to explore!

ISSYLRA

To the northwest of Tal'Dorei, across the freezing waters of the Ozmit Sea, lies the oldest continent in known Exandrian history. Issylra is considered by most to be the land where all civilization emerged and spread in the time of the Founding, making it the religious core for many, and the focal point of historical study for others. The territory known as Othanzia encompasses a majority of the continent's developed regions, keeping most domains protected and governed by the might of the theocracy of Vasselheim.

Nestled among eastern taiga forests of the Vasper Timberland, the city of Vasselheim stands as the oldest known seed of civilization and religion, and the only city to withstand every catastrophe that has rocked Exandria since the gods brought life to it. As the spiritual center of most of the world, Vasselheim functions as a partnership between the many faiths that follow the Prime Deities, with a handful of faiths holding tight council as the core protectors of society and life within those walls and the entire region of Othanzia.

Beyond those walls lies ever-cold seasons and savage wilds, as the ancient and magically rich nature of the area has led to dense wilderness, powerful beasts, and dangerous travel routes. Smaller camps, communities, and townships are scattered across the surrounding landscape, and those who call Othanzia home are a tough, hardened people who remain through duty, faith, or the need to protect. Beyond the Othanzian region, a handful of lesser republics hold smaller societies with varying moral interests, but the ferocious creatures that stalk the jagged Utesspire Mountains prevent expansion too far away from the Othanzian borders.

INSPIRATIONS

From a lifestyle and architecture standpoint, much of Issylra and the cities within are reminiscent of 12th

century Norway built around relics and ancient religious sites similar to ancient Sumerian and Mesopotamian temples in design, presentation, and structure.

MARQUET

Following the winds and waves to the southwest of Tal'Dorei across the Ozmit Sea will eventually lead one over the chain of islands called the Hespel Archipelago and to the shores of the continent of Marquet. The pebble beaches of the Bay of Gifts greet the traveler, where the port city of Shammel invites gambling and extravagance for the traders who travel from afar.

Beyond the port lies the rocky edge of the Aggrad Mountains, which spread for hundreds of miles of deep chasms and endless caves housing predatory creatures lying in wait, before giving way to the immense Marquesian Desert that seems nearly endless to the naked eye. Overbearing heat, deadly sandstorms, and ever-hungry denizens of the dunes encroach on the safe travels any caravan may attempt across these lands in search for a number of the oasis-like bastions of civilization.

Near the center of this intense desert, surrounded by a sprawling network of small villages, is the grand city of Ank'Harel, the center of culture, history, and power for all of Marquet. Ruled by the mysteriously undying J'mon Sa Ord, the streets of Ank'Harel are safe and rich with music and culture compared to the desolate lands that surround it. The Hands of Ord, the internal guard of the city, act as guardian to nearby villages and townships, but they can only reach so far. Further south the sands give way to scrubland and marshes tangled with the volatile mountains surrounding the smoking Suuthan Volcano and the dangerous clans that worship it.

The deserts of Marquet stand as the echo of a once lush landscape that housed a prominent civilization during the Age of Arcanum, one that ended in terrible internal conflict during the Calamity. The war that raged reducing the lands to sand and ash, burying a multitude of long-sealed secrets that many factions now compete to uncover and claim.

INSPIRATIONS

From a lifestyle and architecture standpoint, the larger Marquesian cities have a 12th century Turkish flair, with smaller villages being comprised of large tents and mud brick buildings via early Palestine.

THE SHATTERED TEETH

Should someone wish to sail the dangerous waters southeast of Tal'Dorei, past the ever-present fog bank called the Fool's Curtain, one might discover themselves adrift among a cluster of forty-three islands referred to as the Shattered Teeth.

Varying in size from small, mile-across reef-toppers to the large, city-holding islands like Ruukva, this cluster of broken lands contains two combative societies: the Ossended Host, an enormous fisherman culture of isolationism and self-empowerment through the worship of the power of dreams and nightmares, and the Wanderman Assembly, a centuries-old trade company that, upon being stranded across the Shattered Teeth after a hurricane, began a somewhat brutal capitalistic society that poorly masquerades under the banner of honor and brotherhood.

This tension has led to bloodshed in recent years, and each group is paranoid the other is bent on the destruction of their way of life. What brims beneath the surface of this conflict is the nature and source of the dreams the Ossended Host have been harnessing for generations, and what that answer may mean for the struggles of the people of the Shattered Teeth.

INSPIRATIONS

From a lifestyle and architecture standpoint, the Ossended Host bears a 10th century Japanese fishing village flavor to most townships, with the Wanderman Assembly taking inspiration from 16th century British colonies in the Caribbean.

WILDEMOUNT

Encompassing a varied and geologically diverse environment, the continent of Wildemount can be reached to the Northeast of Tal'Dorei, though traversing the Lucidian Ocean to get there involves treacherous waters, opportunistic pirates, and underwater monsters ever hunting for prey. Such a journey leads to the massive port down of Port Damali, a prosperous city where most anything is legal, largely run and puppeteered by the Myriad.

Further east leads the traveler to the massive Dreemoth Ravine, where the once-enslaved Ravinite Dragonborn rebuild their civilization from the ruins of the fallen Draconia. These two societies exist on the outskirts of the region known as Wynandir, a realm divided between a bordering pair of civilizations. First stands the mighty and far-reaching rule of King Bertrand Dwendal, sovereign ruler over Western Wynandir as the King of the Dwendalian Empire.

The Dwendalian Empire is known far and wide for its powerful military, disdain for religious practices, bleak weather, and totalitarian rule. Religious worship is considered taboo, the society publicly casting the divine magics aside as trickery to control the foolish. Dwendalians have adopted the ideals of the long-past Age of Arcanum, exalting the powers of mortal magics and ingenuity over claims of miracles and holy influence. Citizens of the empire pay extensive taxes to the crown while being required to maintain absolute loyalty. This has led to a social atmosphere that can range from tense to dreary. With such impositions placed upon the populace, few argue that the protections against the dark and hungry world beyond the borders of the empire make up for the

stark control placed upon their lives. Even so, tensions ever brim beneath the surface, and with the growing neglect of the crown towards the creeping curse of undeath in the east, whispers of dissent continue to grow.

Across the Eastern borders of the Dwendalian Empire lay the lands of Xhorhas, a smaller empire built on the ruins of Ghor Dranas, the ancient city of the betrayer gods. A bleak landscape with little resources of value, the Dwendalian Empire generally minds its own borders, away from the mysterious and misunderstood rule of the Empress Leylas Kryn and her “wasteland” of the Xhorhas Empire. However, recent attacks on outlier townships on both sides of Wynandir threaten to brew conflict between the two nations.

INSPIRATIONS

From a lifestyle and architecture standpoint, much of the Dwendalian Empire aesthetic pulls from 15th century gothic eastern Europe and Russia, with the outer regions beyond the empire displaying a distinct 14th century Spain flavor. Xhorhas runs with a more 13th century Romanian flair.



CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTER OPTIONS

History is driven by the bold, and often the names that ring through the annals of the ages are those who emerged from obscurity to take an ideal and fight for it with their every breath. Morality can be subjective, but heroism is unmistakable when witnessed. Heroes guide Tal'Dorei, whether by clever rule, impressive might, or endless compassion.

There are a number of interesting and specific paths an adventurer can take in their journey to become a hero, each with skills, abilities, and specialties that make them a valuable member of any party. Exandria's unique web of ever-threatened societies makes for a fertile breeding ground for heroes and villains, and a slew of unique capabilities among them. This section outlines a number of new options for players to choose from when creating and developing their characters along the way, and can easily be introduced into any 5th edition D&D campaign, whether or not it takes place in Tal'Dorei. Remember that all options presented here must be approved by your Dungeon Master for use within their game, and it is their final say on their inclusion.

PLAYER CLASS OPTIONS

Though any of the typical class options function just fine for heroes in Tal'Dorei, the following section presents a few class archetypes steeped in the setting's history and lore.

BLOOD DOMAIN

Divine Domain for Clerics

Originally developed in Wildemount by the Claret Orders, the Blood domain centers around the understanding of the natural life force within one's own physical body. The power of blood is the power of sacrifice, the balance of life and death, and the spirit's anchor within the mortal shell. The Gods of Blood seek to tap into the connection between body and soul through divine means, exploit the hidden reserves of will within one's own vitality, and even manipulate or corrupt the body of others through these secret rites of crimson. Almost any neutral or evil deity can claim some influence over the secrets of blood magic and this domain, while the gods who watch from more moral realms shun its use beyond extenuating circumstance.

When casting divine spells as a Blood Domain cleric, consider ways to occasionally flavor your descriptions to tailor the magic's effect on the opponent's blood and vitality. Hold person might involve locking a target's body into place from the blood stream out, preventing them from moving. Cure wounds may feature the controlling of blood like a needle and thread to close lacerations. Guardian of faith could be a floating, crimson spirit of dripping viscera who watches the vicinity with burning red eyes. Have fun with the themes!

BLOOD DOMAIN SPELLS

CLERIC LEVEL	SPELLS
1st	<i>sleep, ray of sickness</i>
3rd	<i>ray of enfeeblement, crown of madness</i>
5th	<i>haste, slow</i>
7th	<i>blight, stonkskin</i>
9th	<i>dominate person, hold monster</i>

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

At 1st Level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons.

BLOODLETTING FOCUS

From 1st level, your divine magics draw the blood from inflicted wounds, worsening the agony of your nearby foes. When you use a spell of 1st level or higher to damage to any creatures that have blood, those creatures suffer additional necrotic damage equal to 2 + the spell's level.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: BLOOD PUPPET

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to briefly control a creature's actions against their will. As an action, you target a Large or smaller creature that has blood within 60 feet of you. That creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or immediately move up to half of their movement in any direction of your choice and make a single weapon attack against a creature of your choice within range. Dead or unconscious creatures automatically fail their saving throw. At 8th level, you can target a Huge or smaller creature.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: CRIMSON BOND

Starting at 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to focus on a sample of blood from a creature that is at least 2 ounces, and that has been spilt no longer than a week ago. As an action, you can focus on the blood of the creature to form a bond and gain information about their current circumstances. You know their approximate distance and direction from you, as well as their general state of health, as long as they are within 10 miles of you. You can maintain Concentration on this bond for up to 1 hour.

During your bond, you can spend an action to attempt to connect with the bonded creature's senses. The target makes a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC. If they succeed, the connection is resisted, ending the bond. You suffer 2d6 necrotic damage. Upon a failed saving throw, you can choose to either see through the eyes of or hear through their ears of the target for a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1). During this time, you are blind or deaf (respectively) with regard to your own senses. Once this connection ends, the Crimson Bond is lost.

HEALTH STATE EXAMPLES

100%	Untouched
99%-50%	Injured
49%-1%	Heavily Wounded
0%	Unconscious or Dying
–	Dead

SANGUINE RECALL

At 8th level, you can sacrifice a portion of your own vitality to recover expended spell slots. As an action, you recover spell slots that have a combined level equal to or less than half of your cleric level (rounded up), and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher. You immediately suffer 1d6 damage per spell slot level recovered. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

For example, if you're a 4th-level Cleric, you can recover up to two levels of spell slots. You can recover either a 2nd-level spell slot or two 1st-level spell slots. You then suffer 2d6 damage.

VASCULAR CORRUPTION AURA

At 17th level, you can emit a powerful aura as an action that extends 30 feet out from you that pulses necrotic energy through the veins of nearby foes, causing them to burst and bleed. For 1 minute, any enemy creatures with blood that begin their turn within the aura or enter it for the first time on their turn immediately suffer 2d6 necrotic damage. Any enemy



creature with blood that would regain hit points while within the aura only regains half of the intended number of hit points (rounded up).

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

PATH OF THE JUGGERNAUT

Primal Path for Barbarians

When the Herd of Storms led their terrible raids across the continent under the leadership of Kevdak, tales spread of their bloodlust, brutality, and nigh unstoppable strength. Walls crumbled and legions fell to but a handful of fearsome warriors as they cut a path for the herd to charge in and take what they wished before vanishing back into the Dividing Plains. These fearsome barbarians that would break through the shields and towers of nearby townships became known as the Juggernauts.

While the Herd of Storms is no more, the lineage of trained juggernauts that survived to join the Rivermaw still teach the ways of their unbreakable rage. Honed to assault the lairs of powerful threats to their way of life, or defend against armed hordes of snarling goblinoids, the juggernauts represent the finest of frontline destroyers within the primal lands of Tal'Dorei and beyond.

THUNDEROUS BLOWS

Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, your rage instills you with the strength to batter around your foes, making any battlefield your domain. Once per turn while raging, when you damage a creature with a melee attack, you can force the target to make a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier). On a failure, you push the target 5 feet away from you, and you can choose to immediately move 5 feet into the target's previous position.

STANCE OF THE MOUNTAIN

You harness your fury to anchor your feet to the earth, shrugging off the blows of those who wish to topple you. Upon choosing this path at 3rd level, you cannot be knocked prone while raging unless you become unconscious.

DEMOLISHING MIGHT

Beginning at 6th level, you can muster destructive force with your assault, shaking the core of even the strongest structures. All of your melee attacks gain the siege property (your attacks deal double damage to objects and structures). Your melee attacks against creatures of the construct type deal an additional 1d8 weapon damage.

OVERWHELMING CLEAVE

Upon reaching 10th level, you wade into armies of foes, great swings of your weapon striking many who threaten you. When you make a weapon attack while raging, you



can make another attack as a bonus action with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of your weapon.

UNSTOPPABLE

Starting at 14th level, you can become “unstoppable” when you rage. If you do so, for the duration of the rage your speed cannot be reduced, and you are immune to the frightened, paralyzed, and stunned conditions. If you are frightened, paralyzed, or stunned, you can still take your bonus action to enter your rage and suspend the effects for the duration of the rage. When your rage ends, you suffer one level of exhaustion (as described in appendix A, *PHB*).

RUNECHILD

Sorcerous Origin for Sorcerers

The weave and flow of magic is mysterious and feared by many across Exandria. Many study the nature of the arcane in hopes of learning to harness it, while sorcerers carry innate talent to sculpt and wield the errant strands of power that shape the world. Some sorcerers occasionally find their body itself becomes a conduit for such energies, their flesh collecting and storing remnants of their magic in the form of natural runes. These anomalies are known in erudite circles as runechildren.

The talents of a runechild are rare indeed, and many are sought after for study by mages and scholars alike, driven by a prevalent belief that the secrets within their body can help understand many mysteries of the arcane. Others seek to enslave them, using their bodies as tortured spell batteries for their own diabolic pursuits. Their subjugation all throughout the Age of Arcanum has driven the few that exist this day into hiding their essence – a task that is not easy, given the revealing nature of their gifts.

ESSENCE RUNES

At 1st level, your body has begun to express your innate magical energies as natural runes that hide beneath your skin. You begin with 1 Essence Rune, and gain an additional rune whenever you gain a level in this class. Runes can manifest anywhere on your body, though the first usually manifests on the forehead. They remain invisible when inert.

At the end of a turn where you spent any number of sorcery points for any of your class features, an equal number of essence runes glow with stored energy, becoming *charged runes*. If you expend a charged rune to use one of your Runechild features, it returns to being an inert essence rune.

As a bonus action, you may spend any number of sorcery points to convert an equal number of essence runes into charged runes. If you have no sorcery points and no charged runes, you can convert a single essence rune into a charged rune as an action.

If you have 5 or more charged runes, you emit bright light in a 5 foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet. Any charged runes revert to inert essence runes after you complete a long rest.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

For additional options – including the Exandria-based Blood Hunter class, Order of the Lycan Blood Hunter option, the Fighter's Gunslinger Archetype, and the Bard's College of the Maestro – please visit and check out www.dmsguild.com.

GLYPHS OF AEGIS

Beginning at 1st level, you can release the stored arcane power within your runes to absorb or deflect threatening attacks against you. Whenever you take damage from an attack, hazard, or spell, you can use a reaction to expend any number of charged runes, rolling 1d6 per charged rune. You subtract the total rolled from the damage inflicted by the attack, hazard, or spell.

At 6th level, you can use an action to expend a charged rune, temporarily transferring a Glyph of Aegis to a creature you touch. A creature can only hold a single glyph, and it lasts for 1 hour, or until the creature is damaged by an attack, hazard, or spell. The next time that creature takes damage from any of those sources, roll 1d6 and subtract the number rolled from the damage roll. The glyph is then lost.

SIGILIC AUGMENTATION

Upon reaching 6th level, you can channel your runes to temporarily bolster your physical capabilities. You can expend a charged rune as a bonus action to enhance either your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution, granting you advantage on ability checks with the chosen ability score until the start of your next turn. You can choose to maintain this benefit additional rounds by expending a charged rune at the start of each of your following turns.

MANIFEST INSCRIPTIONS

At 6th level, you can reveal hidden glyphs and enchantments that surround you. As an action, you can expend a charged rune to cause any hidden magical marks, runes, wards, or glyphs within 15 feet of you to reveal themselves with a glow for 1 round. This glow is considered dim light for a 5 foot radius around the mark or glyph.

RUNIC TORRENT

Upon reaching 14th level, you can channel your stored runic energy to instill your spells with overwhelming arcane power, bypassing even the staunchest defenses. Whenever you cast a spell, you can expend a number of charged runes equal to the spell's level to allow it to ignore any resistance or immunity to the spell's damage type the targets may have.

ARCANE EXEMPLAR FORM

Beginning at 18th level, you can use a bonus action and expend 6 or more charged runes to temporarily become a being of pure magical energy. This new form lasts for 3 rounds plus 1 round for each charged rune expended over 6. While you are in your exemplar form, you gain the following benefits:

- You have a flying speed of 40 feet.
- Your spell save DC is increased by 2.
- You have resistance to damage from spells.
- When you cast a spell of 1st level or higher, you regain hit points equal to the spell's level.

When your Arcane Exemplar form ends, you can't move or take actions until after your next turn, as your body recovers from the transformation. Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

WAY OF THE COBALT SOUL

Monastic Tradition for Monks

Driven by the pursuit of knowledge and their worship of the Knowing Mistress, the monastery of the Cobalt Soul (known as the library of the Cobalt Reserve) stands as one of the most well-respected and most heavily guarded repository of tomes, history, and information across Exandria. Here, young people seeking the clarity of truth and the strength of knowledge pledge to learn the arts of seeking enlightenment by understanding the world around them, and mastering the techniques to defend it. To become a Cobalt Soul is to give one's self to the quest for unveiling life's mysteries, bringing light to the secrets of the dark, and guarding the most powerful and dangerous of truths from those who would seek to pervert the sanctity of civilization.

The monks of the Cobalt Soul are the embodiment of the phrase "know your enemy". Through research, they prepare themselves against the ever-coming tides of evil. Through careful training, they have learned to puncture and manipulate the spiritual flow of an opponent's body. Through understanding the secrets of their foe, they can adapt and surmount them. Then, once the fight is done, they return to record their findings for future generations of monks to study from.

MYSTICAL ERUDITION

Upon choosing this tradition at 3rd level, you've undergone extensive training with the Cobalt Soul, allowing you to mystically recall information on history and lore from the monastery's collected volumes. Whenever you make an Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (History), or Intelligence (Religion) check, you can spend 1 ki point to gain advantage on the roll.

In addition, you learn one language of your choice. You gain additional languages at 11th and 17th level.

EXTRACT ASPECTS

Beginning at 3rd level when choosing this tradition, when you pummel an opponent and connect with multiple pressure points, you can extract crucial information about your foe. Whenever you hit a single creature with two or more attacks in one round, you can spend 1 ki point to

force the target to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, you learn one aspect about the creature of your choice: Creature Type, Armor Class, Senses, Highest Saving Throw Modifier, Lowest Saving Throw Modifier, Damage Vulnerabilities, Damage Resistances, Damage Immunities, or Condition Immunities.

Upon reaching 6th level, if the target fails their saving throw, you can choose two aspects to learn. This increases to three aspects at 11th level, and four aspects at 17th level.

EXTORT TRUTH

At 6th level, you can hit a series of hidden nerves on a creature with precision, temporarily causing them to be unable to mask their true thoughts and intent. If you manage to hit a single creature with two or more attacks in one round, you can spend 2 ki points to force them to make a Charisma saving throw. You can choose to have these attacks deal no damage. On a failed save, the creature is unable to speak a deliberate lie for 1 minute. You know if they succeeded or failed on their saving throw.

An affected creature is aware of the effect and can thus avoid answering questions to which it would normally respond with a lie. Such a creature can be evasive in its answers as long as the effect lasts.

MIND OF MERCURY

Starting at 6th level, you've honed your awareness and reflexes through mental aptitude and pattern recognition. You can take a number of additional reactions each round equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1), at the cost of 1 ki point per reaction beyond the first. You can only use one reaction per trigger.

In addition, whenever you make an Intelligence (Investigation) check, you can spend 1 ki point to gain advantage on the roll.

PRETERNATURAL COUNTER

Beginning at 11th level, your quick mind and study of your foe allows you to use their failure to your advantage. If a creature misses you with an attack, you can immediately use your reaction to make a melee attack against that creature.

DEBILITATING BARRAGE

Upon reaching 17th level, you've gained the knowledge to temporarily alter and lower a creature's fortitude by striking a series of pressure points. Whenever you hit a single creature with three or more attacks in one round, you can spend 3 ki points to give the creature disadvantage to their attack rolls until the end of your next turn, and they must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature suffers vulnerability to a damage type of your choice for 1 minute, or until after they take any damage of that type.

Creatures with resistance or immunity to the chosen damage type do not suffer this vulnerability, which is revealed after the damage type is chosen. You can select the damage type from the following list: acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, piercing, poison, psychic, radiant, slashing, thunder.

TAL'DOREI BACKGROUNDS

The Player's Handbook presents a brilliant selection of character backgrounds already outlined for use throughout your Exandria campaign. This section offers additional options for character backgrounds you can offer player characters, these being specific to the Tal'Dorei region.

Similar to the section provided in the Player's Handbook, the backgrounds listed below provide proficiencies, languages, and equipment, as well as a background feature and sometimes a variant form. For personality traits, ideals, bond, and flaws, most of the backgrounds in this chapter use a thematically similar background in the Player's Handbook as their foundation.

CLASP MEMBER

Whether you grew up in the slum-run streets of Kymal bamboozling foolish gamblers out of their fortune, or spent your youth pilfering loose coin from the pockets of the less-attentive travelers throughout Emon, your lifestyle of deceiving-to-survive eventually drew the attention of the Clasp: the most organized, and dangerous, crime syndicate across Tal'Dorei. Offering protection, a modicum of kinship, and a number of useful resources to further develop your craft as a criminal, you agree to receive the brand of the Clasp and join their ranks.

You might have been working the guild's lower ranks, wandering the alleys as a simple cutpurse to fill the meager coffers with wayward gold until the opportunity arose to climb the professional ladder. Or you may have been ordained a Spook, a clever actor and liar whose skill in blending in with all facets of society has made you an indispensable agent of information gathering. Perhaps your technique with a blade and swiftness of action led you to become a feared hitman for a Clasp Spireling, sending you on the occasional contract to snuff the life of some unfortunate soul who crossed the Clasp. Regardless, while the threat of the law is ever looming, the advantages to having a foot in such a powerful cartel can greatly outweigh the paranoia.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, plus your choice of one between Sleight of Hand or Stealth.

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of one from Thieves' Tools, Forgery Kit, or Disguise Kit.

Languages: Thieves' Cant

Equipment: A set of dark common clothes including a hood, a set of tools to match your choice of tool proficiency, and a belt pouch containing 10g.

FEATURE: A FAVOR IN TURN

You have gained enough clout within the Clasp that you can call in a favor from your contacts, should you be close enough to a center of Clasp activity. A request for a favor can be no longer than 20 words, and is passed up the chain to an undisclosed Spireling for approval. This favor can take a shape up to the DM's discretion depending on the request, with varying speeds of fulfillment: If muscle is requested, an NPC Clasp minion can temporarily aid the party. If money is needed, a small loan can be provided. If you've been imprisoned, they can look into breaking you free, or paying off the jailer.

The turn comes when a favor is asked to be repaid. The favor debt can be called in without warning, and many times with intended immediacy. Perhaps the player is called to commit a specific burglary without the option to decline. Maybe they must press a dignitary for a specific secret at an upcoming ball. The Clasp could even request a hit on an NPC, no questions asked or answered. The DM is to provide a debt call proportionate to the favor fulfilled. If a favor is not repaid within a reasonable period of time, membership to the Clasp can be revoked, and if the debt is large enough, the player may become the next hit contract to make the rounds.





VARIANT: MYRIAD OPERATIVE

While the skill sets are similar in many ways, working with the Myriad brings some different benefits and challenges. The Myriad specializes in slavery and exotic trade, so you have access to servants and rare materials at times without using your A Favor In Turn ability. However, your access to contacts is far more limited, and should you be found out as Myriad by a member of the Clasp, you will quickly find yourself hunted.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Criminal background in the *PHB* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a member of the Clasp. Your bond is likely associated with your fellow Clasp members or the individual who introduced you to the organization. Your ideal probably involves establishing your importance and indispensability within the Clasp. You joined to improve your livelihood and sense of purpose.

LYCEUM STUDENT

You most likely came up through money or a family of social prestige somewhere in the world, as tuition at the Alabaster Lyceum is not inexpensive. Your interests and pursuits have brought you to the glittering halls of Tal'Dorei's highest place of learning, soaking in all and every lesson you can to better make your mark on the world (or at least you should be, but every class has its slackers). However, the call to adventure threatens to pull you from your studies, and now the challenge of balancing your education with the tide of destiny sweeping you away is looming.

You may have come to better research and understand the history and lore of Exandria and the lands you now call home, perhaps seeking a future here at the Lyceum as a professor. You could also have been drawn by the promise of prosperity in politics, learning the inner workings of government and alliances to better position yourself as a future writer of history. Perhaps you've discovered a knack for the arcane, coming here to focus on refining your spellcraft in the footsteps of some of the finest wizards and sorcerers in days of yore.

Skill Proficiencies: Your choice of two from among Arcana, History, and Persuasion.

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a lyceum student uniform, a writing kit (small pouch with a quill, ink, folded parchment, and a small penknife), and a belt pouch containing 10g.

FEATURE: STUDENT PRIVILEGE

You've cleared enough lessons, and gained an ally or two on staff, to have access to certain chambers within the Lyceum (and some other allied universities) that outsiders would not. This allows use of any Tool Kit, so long as



the Tool Kit is used on the grounds of the Lyceum and is not removed from its respective chamber (each tool kit is magically marked and will sound an alarm if removed). More dangerous kits and advanced crafts (such as use of a Poisoner's Kit, or the enchanting of a magical item) might require staff supervision. You may also have access to free crafting materials and enchanting tables, so long as they are relatively inexpensive, or your argument for them is convincing (up to the staff's approval and DM's discretion).

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Sage background in the Player's Handbook as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to match your pursuits at the Lyceum. Your bond is likely associated with your goals as a student, and eventually a graduate. Your ideal probably involves your hopes in using the knowledge you gain at the Lyceum, and your travels as an adventurer, to tailor the world to your liking.

ASHARI

Away from the complex political struggles of the massive cities of Exandria, you've instead been raised to revere and uphold the protection of the natural world, while policing, bending, and guiding the elemental powers that either foster life or destroy it. Living among smaller bands of tribal societies means you have stronger ties to your neighbors than most, and the protection of this way of life is of cardinal importance. Each Ashari is tethered to one of the four elemental tribes and their villages. You must select one: The Pyrah (Fire), the Vesrah (Water), the Terrah (Earth), or the Zephrah Ashari (Wind).

Your upbringing may have prepared you to be a fierce warrior, trained in combat to defend your culture and charge as protectors of the rifts. It's possible your meditation on the balance of the elements has brought you peace of mind with strength of body as a monk of the Ashari. Perhaps you found strength in bending the elements yourself, joining the ranks of the powerful Ashari druids. Regardless, your loyalties ultimately lie with the continued safety of your tribe, and you've set out to gather allies to your cause and learn more about the world around you.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, plus your choice of one between Arcana or Survival.

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism Kit

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: A staff, hunting gear (a shortbow with 20 arrows, or a hunting trap), a set of traveler's clothes, a belt pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: ELEMENTAL HARMONY

Your upbringing surrounded by such strong, wild elemental magics has attuned your senses to the very nature of their chaotic forces, enabling you to subtly bend them to your will in small amounts. You learn the Prestidigitation

Cantrip, but can only produce the extremely minor effects below that involve the element of your chosen Ashari tribe:

- You create an instantaneous puff of wind strong enough to blow papers off a desk, or mess up someone's hair (Zephrah).
- You instantaneously create and control a burst of flame small enough to light or snuff out a candle, a torch, or a small campfire. (Pyrah).
- You instantaneously create a small rock within your hand, no larger than a gold coin, that turns to dust after a minute (Terrah).
- You instantaneously create enough hot or cold water to fill a small glass (Vesrah).

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Outlander background in the Player's Handbook as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to match your ties to your Ashari upbringing. Your bond is likely associated with those you respect whom you grew up around. Your ideal probably involves your wanting to understand your place in the world, not just the tribe, and whether you feel your destiny reaches beyond just watching the rift.

RECOVERED CULTIST

Since the Divergence, the influence of the Betrayer Gods was sealed away with the rest of the pantheon and a time of religious rediscovery began anew. Through the small net of the Divine Gate, however, the will of the darker deities could still reach out, could still whisper and promise. The rise of cults are scattered and separated, with little to no unity between the greater evils. Hidden hierarchies of power-hungry mortals corrupt and seduce, promising a sliver of the same power they had been promised when the time comes to reap their harvest.

You once belonged to such a cult. Perhaps it was brief, embracing the rebellious spirit of youth and curious where this path may take you. You also may have felt alone and lost, this community offering a welcome you had been subconsciously seeking. It's possible you were raised from the beginning to pray to the gods of shadow and death. Then one day the veil was lifted and the cruel truth shook your faith, sending you running from the false promises and seeking redemption.

You have been freed from the bindings of these dangerous philosophies, but few secret societies find comfort until those who abandon their way are rotting beneath the soil.

Skill Proficiencies: Religion and Deception.

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: Vestments and a holy symbol of your previous cult, a set of common clothes, a belt pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: WICKED AWARENESS

Your time worshipping in secrecy and shadow at the altar of malevolent forces has left you with insight and keen awareness to those who still operate in such ways. You can often spot hidden signs, messages, and signals left in populated places. If actively seeking signs of a cult or dark following, you have an easier time locating and decoding the signs or social interactions that signify cult activity, gaining advantage on any ability checks to discover such details.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the Acolyte background in the Player's Handbook as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to match your ties to your intent on fleeing your past and rectifying your future. Your bond is likely associated with those who gave you the insight and strength to flee your old ways. Your ideal probably involves your wishing to take down and destroy those who promote the dark ways you escaped, and perhaps finding new faith in a forgiving god.

FATE-TOUCHED

Many lives and many souls find their ways through the patterns of fate and destiny, their threads following the path meant for them, oblivious and eager to be a part of the woven essence of history meant for them. Some souls, however, glide forth with mysterious influence, their threads bending the weave around them, toward them, unknowingly guiding history itself wherever they walk. Events both magnificent and catastrophic tend to follow such individuals. These souls often become great rulers and terrible tyrants, powerful mages, religious

leaders, and legendary heroes of lore. These are the fate-touched.

Few fate-touched ever become aware of their prominent nature. Outside of powerful divination magics, it's extremely difficult to confirm one as fate-touched. There are many communities that regard the status as a terrible omen, treating a confirmed fate-touched with mistrust and fear. Others seek them as a blessing, rallying around them for guidance. Some of renown and power grow jealous, wishing to bend a fate-touched beneath their will, and some stories speak of mages of old attempting to extract or transfer the essence itself.

Players are not intended to select this background, but this is instead provided for the dungeon master to consider for one or more of their players, or perhaps a prominent NPC, as their campaign unfolds. It provides very minor mechanical benefit, but instead adds an element of lore, importance, and fate-bearing responsibility to a character within your story. Being fate-touched overlaps and co-exists with the character's current background, only adding to their mystique. Consider it for a player character who would benefit from being put more central to the coming conflicts of your adventure, or for an NPC who may require protection as they come into their destiny. Perhaps consider a powerful villain discovering their fate-twisting nature and using it to wreak havoc. All of these possibilities and more can be explored should you choose to include a fate-touched within your campaign.

FEATURE: FORTUNE'S GRACE

Your fate-touched essence occasionally leads surrounding events to shift in your favor. You gain 1 Luck point, as per the Lucky feat outlined within the Player's Handbook pg 167. This luck point is used in the same fashion as the feat, and you regain this expended luck point when you finish a long rest. If you already have the Lucky feat, you add this luck point to your total for the feat.

NEW FEATS

The following new feats are appropriate for campaigns taking place in Tal'Dorei.

CRUEL

The challenges and struggles you've faced throughout your life have left you ruthless in combat, relishing in the pain you inflict.

- You have a number of cruelty points equal to your proficiency modifier. Once per turn, whenever you deal damage to a creature with an attack, you can spend one cruelty point to deal an additional 1d6 damage of the attack damage type to that creature.
- You can also spend one cruelty point when you score a critical hit against a creature to regain 1d6 hit points.
- While making a Charisma (Intimidation) check that involves inflicting pain, you can spend one cruelty point to gain advantage on the roll.

- You regain your expended cruelty points when you finish a long rest.

DUAL-FOCUSED

Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell

Countless hours have been spent training your mind to maintain focus on concurrent incantations, taxing as the process may be.

- If you attempt to cast a spell that requires concentration while already concentrating on an existing spell, you can maintain concentration on both spells simultaneously.
- If you take damage during this time, you must make a concentration check for each spell individually.



- At the end of each turn where you have two spells you are concentrating on, you must make a Constitution saving throw (DC equals 8 + both spells' levels combined). On a success, you maintain concentration on both spells. On a failure, you lose concentration on both spells.

FLASH RECALL

Prerequisite: The ability to prepare spells, and cast at least one spell

You've developed the ability to instantly recall an unprepared spell in moments of sudden necessity. As an action, you can instantly prepare a spell from your available class spell list (or spellbook, if you prepare spells from one) that you did not have prepared. This spell choice must be of a level for which you have spell slots. You then lose preparation of a different spell of your choice of equal or higher spell level.

If you are multiclassed, you can only Flash Recall spells from a class that prepares spells. Once you use this ability, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

GAMBLER

Spending countless hours winning and losing coin in ale-stained taverns has forged you into a consummate gambler and chance-seeking addict. You gain the following benefits and features:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with two types of gaming sets of your choice.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks to bluff opponents in games of chance, and Charisma (Persuasion) checks to convince others to join you for a game.
- You have a reputation as a card shark in some circles. Some folks may avoid playing you for this reason, while other higher-stakes gamblers may seek you out specifically.
- When you take the Carousing downtime action, you may reroll your result once, but must keep the results of the second roll.

MENDING AFFINITY

Your body has begun to adapt extremely well to healing itself through extraordinary means, gifting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When a creature uses a healer's kit to stabilize you when you are dying, you also regain hit points equal to your proficiency modifier.
- Whenever you regain hit points as a result of a spell, potion, or class ability, you regain additional hit points equal to your proficiency modifier.

MYSTIC CONFLUX

Through your repeated exposure to the natural flow of arcane magic throughout Exandria, you've adapted to attune with additional enchantments, though the process can be physically taxing. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks when investigating the nature of a magical object or device.
- You can now be attuned to a maximum of four magical items, rather than the normal limit of three. Other attunement limitations still apply.

RAPID DRINKER

Through a lifestyle of hard, competitive drinking, you've learned how to quaff drinks at an incredibly accelerated pace. You gain the following benefits:

- You can drink a potion as a Bonus action, instead of as an action.
- You have advantage on any saving throws triggered by ingesting an alcoholic or dangerous substance.

SPELLDRIVER

Prerequisite: Character level 8th or higher

Through intense focus, training, and dedication, you've harnessed the techniques of rapid spellcasting. You are no longer limited to only one non-cantrip spell per turn. However, should you cast two or more spells in a single turn, only one of them can be of 3rd level or higher.

THROWN ARMS MASTER

You've honed your ability to lob weaponry into the fray, including weapons not meant for ranged combat. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Simple and martial melee weapons without the thrown property can be treated as if they have the thrown property. One-handed weapons have a range of 20/60, while two-handed weapons have a range of 15/30.
- Weapons that naturally have the thrown property increase their range by +20/+40.
- When you miss with a thrown weapon attack using a *light* weapon, the weapon immediately boomerangs back into your grasp.

"Oh, you're venturing where again? Well! I certainly hope you've got more tricks up your sleeves than those swords and a couple spells scrawled in that book there, friends. Because you're going to need all the help you can get. Speaking of which, perhaps I've some wares that might interest you..."

—Davia Redresses,
provisioneer of Emon



THE VESTIGES OF DIVERGENCE

During the wars of the Calamity, great destruction rained across the many lands of the world. Broken remnants of history speak of battles between gods leveling mountains and sinking islands. Chosen heroes rose up to accept the artifacts of their patrons to combat the tide of death their adversaries harnessed. Powerful archmages harnessed the surging arcane powers of the war to forge incredible objects of potent strength and ability, further arming every side of the conflict.

Relics of the Age of Arcanum were further enhanced, creating unheard-of magical capabilities. When the battle climaxed in a wave of aberrant destruction, leaving much of civilization in ruins, many of these artifacts were buried among the ashes with their wielders. Others were passed down through bloodlines for generations, a sign of respect and importance within their culture. Some were locked away, the fear of their power giving temples reason to keep them from mortal hands, while a handful still see use to this day by great warriors or proven killers. These mighty echoes of the last great war, and the divine banishment that followed, are known as the Vestiges of Divergence.

The Vestiges are legendary artifacts that grow in power with the experience, force of will, and strength of character of the bearer. Many Vestiges, if sealed away or left without a worthy attuned individual for a period of time, will revert to their *dormant state*. A dormant state still imbues a modicum of power to the attuned, but with time, perseverance, and personal growth, the Vestige can regain access to some of its lost ability in its *awakened state*. Eventually, through extreme personal challenge,

evolution, and achievement, the Vestige can reach its full potential in its *exalted state*. This is the true power of the Vestige, the state when it was originally utilized in the Calamity against battle-ready gods.

Keep in mind, the Vestiges of Divergence are very powerful magical items, so consider the intended power level of your campaign before including them, and ensure their discovery and acquisition is treated with the proper amount of weight and responsibility. To be a bearer of a Vestige is to be considered a mighty champion, but many covet the power granted by their enchantment and will seek out the bearer to take them for themselves.

For a Vestige to progress to a more powerful state (dormant to awakened, or awakened to exalted), consider a catalyst that is specific to the character attuned to it. It could be as simple as having it advance when the character utilizes a class ability a certain number of times, or the relic could upgrade during a personal story beat where they overcome a great fear or point of conflict in their life. Consider something important, impactful, and memorable for the Vestige to further unveil its power to the wielder.

Following are examples of Vestiges that currently exist in Tal'Dorei, while many others are scattered throughout Exandria. The objects below might be lost to time, awaiting someone to find them among the dust and chains. Others might be in use by a powerful hero who may impart its power onto a worthy successor who fights for the proper cause. Others still may be in the hands of a twisted soul, using its abilities to terrorize the weak and defenseless. It is the DM's choice where these object may be found or earned.



AGONY

Weapon (flail), legendary (requires attunement by a non-good character)

Utilized in countless tortures and slow executions, the hooked chains of this brutal weapon still smell of dried blood and rot. You gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When you hit with an attack using this weapon, and that creature was injured with this weapon on your previous attack, you deal an additional 1d6 piercing damage.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Agony, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- The bonus to damage rolls is increased to +3.
- The damage bonus to striking a creature you have already injured increases to 1d8.
- When a creature is damaged by this weapon, they suffer disadvantage on Strength ability checks until the beginning of your next turn.
- When you drop a creature to 0 hit points with an attack using Agony, you can immediately make an additional melee attack with this weapon as a bonus action.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Agony, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- The bonus to damage rolls is increased to +4.
- The damage bonus to striking a creature you have already injured increases to 2d6.
- When you score a critical hit with this weapon, the target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. If this saving throw is successful, not only does the target not become frightened, they become immune to this frightening effect for the next 24 hours.

ARMOR OF THE VALIANT SOUL

Armor (scale), legendary (requires attunement)

This antique armor forged from jade and black dragon scales was once owned and worn by J'mon Sa Ord of Ank'Harel. You have a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor.

You can cast the *command* spell (save DC 13) while attuned to this armor. You cannot use this ability again until you have completed a long rest.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Armor of the Valiant Soul, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC to +2.
- You gain resistance to acid damage while wearing this armor.
- You gain immunity to the frightened condition while wearing this armor.

THE ADVANCEMENT OF A VESTIGE

The conditions in which a Vestige of Divergence progresses to the next stage of capability can vary, and many times revolve around the nature of the Vestige and its enchantments. Many times the attuned bearer must themselves symbolically progress to a new state of self-discovery or accomplishment. Other times, the artifact will respond to a moment of extreme personal duress or desperation. These triggering moments are entirely up to the DM to identify and enforce, and many times may manifest in ways you had not expected. Allow the organic narrative moments you feel may exemplify such an advancement to occur, and tailor your triggering moment accordingly. Some examples may include:

- A character finally surmounts one of their greatest fears, bravely facing an otherwise crippling phobia to save a party member.
- A character is beaten within an inch of their life by a long-hated foe, and in the face of such defeat, they feel a deep, dormant strength grow from within.
- A character loses a close ally in battle, and the anguish and fury stirs the power within their vestige.
- A character discovers a facet of their destiny that guides them towards a dangerous cause and, against their fears, they accept their fate and responsibility.
- A character gains vengeance against a rival who has tormented them for ages.
- A character known for restraint gives in to the amoral, violent urges that the artifact was forged in.

Generally, a vestige will remain dormant between levels 1-8, become awakened early between levels 9-15, and achieve exalted between levels 16-20. However, the moment of advancement ultimately lies within the preference of the DM, and when the appropriate moment presents itself.

- The spell save DC of the armor's command spell becomes DC 15, and it can target two additional creatures.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Armor of the Valiant Soul, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC to +3.
- Your immunity to the frightened condition extends to include all friendly creatures within 15 feet, as long as you are conscious.
- You gain immunity to acid damage while you are wearing this armor.
- The spell save DC of the armor's command spell becomes DC 17, and it can target four additional creatures.

CABAL'S RUIN

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This cloak of dark leather and gold trim seems to occasionally shimmer with small sparks of blue energy across the shadowed lining. This cloak has 4 charges, and regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

When you are targeted by an enemy's spell, you can use your reaction to have the cloak swallow part of the spell. The cloak gains a number of charges equal to the spell level of the triggering spell. You are still subject to whatever effects the spell would normally inflict on you. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

When you hit with an attack, you can choose to expend any number of charges from the cloak, dealing an additional 1d6 lightning damage per charge expended, which is inflicted on the target of that attack. If your attack strikes multiple targets, you must choose one target from the group to be subject to this damage.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Cabal's Ruin, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- You gain advantage on all saving throws against spells and other magical effects while wearing this cloak.
- The cloak's maximum charges becomes 6, and it regains 1d4+2 charges daily at dawn.
- When using the cloak's ability to swallow a spell, you gain resistance to the damage of that spell.

CABAL'S
RUIN

ARMOR OF
VALIANT SOULS

CIRCLET
OF BARBED
VISION

AGONY

EXALTED

When a character exalts Cabal's Ruin, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- The cloak's maximum charges becomes 10, and it regains 1d6+4 charges daily at dawn.

CIRCLET OF BARBED VISION

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a non-good character)

Upon wearing this circlet of gnarled onyx, black barbs dig into your head, imparting power as it twists your appearance to amuse the Spider Queen. While wearing this circlet, your Charisma score decreases by 2. You also have advantage on initiative rolls.

When you make an attack roll, you can use your reaction to gain a +5 bonus to the roll. You make this choice after you see the roll, but before the DM says whether the attack hits or misses. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Circlet of Barbed Vision, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- You also gain resistance to poison damage, and gain immunity to the poisoned condition.
- Your ability to gain a bonus to an attack roll can be used twice between rests.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Circlet of Barbed Vision, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- You gain immunity to poison damage in addition to the poisoned condition.
- You can also see invisible creatures and objects.
- Your ability to gain a bonus to an attack roll can be used three times between rests.

CONDEMNER

Weapon (heavy crossbow), legendary (requires attunement)

This shadow-touched hand crossbow once served as the weapon of choice for the legendary assassin Todora. You have a +1 bonus to attack rolls made with this weapon. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an additional 1d4 poison damage.

If you hit with an attack using this weapon, instead of dealing damage, you can choose one of two effects to trigger: A *fog cloud* spell centered on the target, or a *silence* spell centered on the target. You can use each effect once, and cannot use them again until you finish a short rest.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Condemner, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack rolls to a +2.
- Increase the poison damage inflicted on a hit to 1d6 poison damage.

- You gain an additional effect that can be triggered in place of damage: the target can be affected by a hold person spell (spell save DC 15).

EXALTED

When a character exalts Condemner, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack rolls to a +3.
- Increase the poison damage inflicted on a hit to 1d8 poison damage.
- The spell save DC for the hold person spell increases to DC 17.
- You gain an additional effect that can be triggered in place of damage: the blight spell (spell save DC 17).

DEATHWALKER'S WARD

Armor (studded leather), legendary (requires attunement)

This beautiful, black leather armor is covered in intricate scrollwork, the mantle bearing the black feathers of the Matron of Ravens. You gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor. You have advantage on death saving throws made while wearing this armor.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Deathwalker's Ward, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC to a +2.
- While wearing this attuned armor, the wearer chooses and imbues this armor with resistance to a damage type of your choice: fire, cold, acid, lightning, or necrotic. This choice can be changed during a short rest.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Deathwalker's Ward, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC to a +3.
- As a bonus action, you can grow large, black raven wings. These last for 1 hour, and grant a fly speed of 60 feet. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

FENTHRAS

Weapon (longbow), legendary (requires attunement)

This gorgeous longbow made of everbark from the Feywild seems to flex and shift like a living entity. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

When firing an arrow from this weapon, you can declare an *oracle shot*, allowing you to project your sight through the arrow you fire for up to 10 minutes. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short rest.

When a creature is killed by an arrow from this weapon, a single 6-ft tree rapidly grows out of their corpse over the next minute.

DEATHWALKER'S WARD



AWAKENED

When a character awakens Fenthras, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack and damage rolls to a +2. Additionally when you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an additional 1d4 lightning damage.
- When you hit with an attack, you can declare a bramble shot. The target takes an additional 3d8 piercing damage, and they must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or become restrained by the suddenly sprouting steel-hard thorn brambles that immediately grow from the arrow. The restrained target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Fenthras, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack and damage rolls to a +3.
- The lightning damage dealt by attacks with this weapon increases to 1d6.
- You can use your bramble shot ability twice between rests, and the saving throw DC increases to 17.

HONOR'S LAST STAND

Armor (shield), legendary (requires attunement by a non-evil character)

This massive, silvered shield bearing the crest of the Platinum Dragon never tarnishes. The metal is warm to the touch. While holding the shield, you have a +1 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC. You are also immune to the prone condition while bearing this shield.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Honor's Last Stand, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC to a +2.
- Whenever a creature's attack against you misses, you can use your reaction to immediately attempt to make a shove attack against that creature.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Honor's Last Stand, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC to a +3.
- Using a bonus action, you can protect an adjacent ally, imparting +3 to their AC until the beginning of your next turn, or they are no longer adjacent to you (whichever comes first).

KISS OF THE CHANGEBRINGER

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

A beautiful, glittering emerald is set within the center of this silver chain, humming with power and possibility.



PLATE OF THE
DAWNMARTYR

KISS OF THE
CHANGEBRINGER

PYREMAUL

MYTHCARVER

While wearing this amulet, you gain a +1 bonus to all saving throws, and are immune to the grappled condition.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Kiss of the Changebringer, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to all saving throws to a +2.
- You become immune to the restrained condition as well as the grappled condition.
- You may use an action to cast the spell blink on yourself without needing any components. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Kiss of the Changebringer, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to all saving throws to a +3.
- You become immune to the paralyzed and petrified conditions, as well as the grappled and restrained conditions.
- Whenever you make an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, you can choose to roll an additional d20. You can choose to do this after you roll the die, but before the outcome is determined. You choose which of the d20s is used for the attack roll, ability check, or saving throws. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

MYTHCARVER

Weapon (longsword), legendary (requires attunement by a bard)

This incredible silvered blade once belonged to the White Duke himself, and many more master bards before him. It resonates with nearby musical tones. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

Whenever you use your Bardic Inspiration feature, you gain advantage on attacks with this weapon until the end of your turn.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Mythcarver, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack and damage rolls to +2. In addition, targets damaged with this weapon take an additional 1d6 points of force damage.
 - Whenever you use your Cutting Words feature while wielding this blade, the target has disadvantage on their next saving throw.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Mythcarver, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack and damage rolls to +3.
- You can spend an action to let the spirit of the sword overtake you momentarily. You make four melee attacks

with this sword, then suffer one point of exhaustion. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

PLATE OF THE DAWNMARTYR

Armor (plate), legendary (requires attunement)

Beautiful silver scrolling and priceless, cut rubies adorn this set of brass-and-gold armor. Worn by the High Priest Duana of the Dawnfather as she fell in the Battle of Ghor Dranas. You gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor. When you are struck by a melee attack, you may use your reaction to cause the attacker to suffer 1d6 points of fire damage.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Plate of the Dawnmartyr, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC from this armor to a +2.
- You gain immunity to the frightened condition.
- You gain resistance to fire damage.
- The damage inflicted on an attacker by the armor increases to 2d6 fire damage.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Plate of the Dawnmartyr, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to AC from this armor to a +3.
- If you are knocked unconscious by an attack or spell, a blast of healing flame surrounds you. You immediately regain 1 hit point and are lifted to your feet. All enemy creatures within 10 feet of you suffer 2d6 fire damage. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

PYREMAUL

Weapon (maul), legendary (requires attunement)

Forged from deep red iron, this massive hammer houses an ever-burning gemstone of orange flame. You have a +1 bonus to attack rolls made with this weapon. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an additional 1d6 fire damage.

You can choose to have this weapon shed bright light in a 30 foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. If you kill a creature with an attack using this weapon, the corpse is immolated, turning to ash.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Pyre Maul, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack rolls to a +2.
- Increase the additional fire damage inflicted by a hit to 2d6.
- As an action, you can slam the Pyre Maul into the ground to cast the burning hands spell at 2nd level (spell save DC 15). You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest.

- When you score a critical hit with this weapon, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Pyre Maul, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack rolls to a +3.
- Increase the additional fire damage inflicted by a hit to 3d6.
- Your burning hands ability is now cast at 3rd level, and the spell save DC increases to 17.
- When you score a critical hit with this weapon, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. You can also roll an additional 3d6 fire damage when determining the extra damage for the critical hit.

SPIRE OF CONFLUX

Staff, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

A powerful relic passed down from generation to generation of Ashari leaders. The staff has 8 charges and regains 1d4 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding the staff, you can expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC and spell-casting ability: *burning hands* (1 charge), *fireball* (3 charges).

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Spire of Conflux, apply the following changes to the item's traits:



- The staff's charges increase to a maximum of 12, and it regains 1d6+2 charges at dawn daily.
- Add the following spells to the list of spells the staff may be used to cast: ice storm (4 charges), conjure elemental (5 charges).
- Whenever you cast a spell that deals fire, ice, or lightning damage and you roll a 1 on a damage die, you can reroll the die and must use the new result.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Spire of Conflux, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- The staff's charges increase to a maximum of 20, and it regains 1d6+4 charges at dawn daily.
- Add the following spells to the list of spells the staff may be used to cast: chain lightning (6 charges), fire storm (7 charges).
- While holding this staff, you gain a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls, and your spell save DC increases by 1.

TITANSTONE KNUCKLES

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Carved from the heartstone of a ruined earth primordial, these gauntlets bestow immeasurable might to the wearer. Your Strength score becomes 22.

Siege. You deal double damage against objects and structures.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Titanstone Knuckles, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Your Strength score becomes 24.
- You can use an action to grow in size as per the enlarge spell for 10 minutes. You cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Titanstone Knuckles, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Your Strength score becomes 26.
- While you are under the effects of the enlarge spell granted by this item, you gain resistance to fire, cold, and lightning damage. This lasts as long as you are affected by the spell.

WHISPER

Weapon (dagger), legendary (requires attunement)

Forged with a mercurial metal pulled from the Far Realm, light dances and shifts across this curved blade. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

Whenever you strike a creature with a critical hit using Whisper, the target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. On a

success, they are immune to being frightened by this effect for the next 24 hours.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens Whisper, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack and damage to a +2. Additionally, when you hit a target with this weapon, the target takes an additional 1d6 psychic damage.
- Increase the DC to resist being frightened from a critical hit to 15.

EXALTED

When a character exalts Whisper, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase the bonus to attack and damage to a +3, and increase the additional damage taken to 1d8 psychic damage.
- Increase the DC to resist being frightened from a critical hit to 17.
- Whenever Whisper is thrown but before it hits, you can choose to transform into shadow and merge with the blade, teleporting instantly to wherever the blade impacts. If the target is a creature, you emerge adjacent to the target in a space of your choice. If you miss with the attack, the DM determines where you teleport accordingly.

WRAPS OF DYAMAK

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a monk)

Created and wielded by the ancient warrior called Dyamak, these thick cloth strips of enchanted material appear to be stained with blood of unknown origin. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with your unarmed strikes.

Whenever you finish a short or long rest, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your full ki points.

AWAKENED

When a character awakens the Wraps of Dyamak, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase your bonus to attack and damage rolls to +2.
- As a bonus action, you can cast the spell *misty step*. You cannot use this ability again until you score a critical hit with an unarmed strike, or you complete a short or long rest.

EXALTED

When a character exalts the Wraps of Dyamak, apply the following changes to the item's traits:

- Increase your bonus to attack and damage rolls to +3.
- When you hit with an unarmed strike, you can choose to make the attack a Ravenous Strike. The target takes an additional 6d6 necrotic damage, and you regain hit points equal to the additional necrotic damage dealt. You cannot use this ability again until you complete a short or long rest.



OPTIONAL CAMPAIGN RULES AND GUIDELINES

Every campaign embarks on its heroic tale in its own way. Simple beginnings for a ragtag lot of sellswords. Students of the world falling into the wrong crowd. Unwitting pawns of destiny thrust into something bigger than themselves. However you wish to formulate your story and world, the existing rules for your game help set a very clear vision of how to run it with consistency and intended design.

That being said, sometimes the experienced group wishes to add some new flavor to the existing structure of the world. Bring in new options to how old rules function, or adjust to an advanced difficulty in a mystical world where danger, and even death, can be circumvented. This section outlines a number of homebrew rules and guidelines you, and your campaign, can adopt to further customize your gaming experience.

Like any homebrew or non-standard rules and option, should any of these elements presented before you be of interest, they must be approved and implemented by the dungeon master of your campaign. They may or may not fit their intended game balance. Dungeon Masters, discuss the possible inclusion of any of these elements with your players beforehand to ensure everyone can enjoy any changes you intend. Talk them over and make sure everyone is both aware, and fully understands, the new rules.

These guidelines can also be implemented into an existing campaign, just ensure discussion and approval resounds within your gaming group. Any of these proposed rules, as with any rules in a roleplaying game, can be altered, adjusted, and tailored to your personal preference.

COMBAT WITH LARGER PARTIES

When running games of larger party size (generally 6 or more players), the combat action economy can become difficult for some players to feel as involved or active due to fewer rounds of combat generally occurring per encounter. Here are a couple of possible recommendations to better allow characters some freer choices during their turn at the proverbial bat.

RAPID QUAFFING

Change the time required to pull free and quaff a potion from one action to one bonus action, or hand out the Rapid Drinker feat to the entire party. This enables many classes, especially more melee/combat focused classes, the ability to down a healing potion or enhancing liquid without sacrificing their entire round of attacks. Administering a potion to an unconscious character would still require an action. Don't forget: enemies can also drink their potions as quickly!

OPTIONAL RULES OF CRITICAL ROLE

For those who have watched along with our adventures, you may see some of these optional rules as familiar. Many of the elements included in this chapter are based on or retooled versions of the house rules we tried within our own campaign. Some have undergone a number of changes for balance as we try new things and learn from our experiences. For those that are curious, the ones we utilized within our own game are Rapid Quaffing and Multi-Spell.

MULTI-SPELL

At around 8th level, gift the Spelldriver feat to your players. This will allow spellcasting classes more options to aid themselves and the party at higher levels without a comparably sluggish per-round ability set, spending their solitary action on a bonus action spell. This would also apply to enemy spellcasters, leading to additional chaos and challenge.

ACCELERATED DOWNTIME

Certain adventures thrive on the adrenaline of the chase, or the ever-present fear of ambush. As it stands, the need to take a short rest can prove difficult during long dungeon crawls, and this lends itself to a nice tone of personal stress and risk-vs-reward. However, sometimes a rest is necessary for the party to even continue, but the current rush of the story's clock won't allow for a standard short rest. You could consider lessening the required time to complete a short rest to 30 minutes or less for the moment, or your entire campaign, as an option. Another possibility is to allow the party to take an Arduous Rally if they so choose.

ARDUOUS RALLY

The party spends 5 minutes to rally their resolve in the face of coming peril, the adrenaline fueling their need to push on. The party benefits from the completion of a full Short Rest, but all healing gained by spending hit dice is halved, and all rallying characters suffer 1 point of Exhaustion (p. 291 *PHB*).

ALTERNATIVE RESURRECTION RULES

Character death can often prove to become a minor inconvenience in some campaigns once the adventuring party reaches a certain level, with spells being available to return fallen comrades from the afterlife with temporary setbacks, robbing a small element of danger and threat to future conflicts and challenges within the story. If you wish to elevate the gravity of character death, you can introduce any of these optional rules.

A TAXING RETURN

This rule calls to the old D&D rules where every time a character is restored to life, the process corrodes a fraction of their vitality, slowly consuming the body until it can no longer sustain life.

Each time a character is brought back to life via a spell or ritual, that character suffers a permanent loss of 1 point of their Constitution ability score. This loss cannot be restored outside of a carefully worded *wish* spell. Use of the spell *true resurrection* to restore a character does not impose this loss of Constitution. Characters that reach a Constitution ability score of 0 are permanently dead and cannot be resurrected.

DIDN'T COME BACK RIGHT

Within this rule, the process of dying and being pulled back into your body is a harrowing experience. The magic itself pulls you from beyond the dark veil of death, taking its toll on your body and psyche each time, leaving you less and less the person you were.

When a character is brought back to life via magic, that character must make a Wisdom saving throw, DC (22 - level of the magic used to return the character to life). A failure on this check inflicts long term madness (see *DMG*, p260), except that the duration is measured in days rather than hours. A *lesser restoration* or *remove curse* will alleviate the madness itself, though it returns any time that character drops to 0 hit points or awakens from sleep, until its full duration has expired.

DIDN'T COME BACK RIGHT (ADVANCED)

For additional consequences and player difficulty, you can implement a further stage of corruption. If a character has died a number of times equal to their Constitution modifier, and they fail their Wisdom saving throw upon being brought back to life, they instead suffer an indefinite madness (see *DMG* p.260). Any subsequent deaths inflict an additional indefinite madness with each resurrection. A *greater restoration* spell can temporarily suppress a type of indefinite madness, with it returning anytime that character drops to 0 hit points.

"Like all of the great rites of passage in life, death changes us, and simply returning to the world of the living does not undo that change, nor is it at all simple. Those who have passed beyond the veil are marked by it, even if they manage to find their way back."

—From "On the Price of Death and Resurrection," by the sage Narrel



THE FADING SPIRIT

This resurrection rule set is designed to add an element of party roleplaying and narrative to the resurrection attempt, as well as the creeping threat of permanent death to a character. Any of the following DC modifiers are easily adjusted to fit your campaign needs.

RESURRECTION CHALLENGE

If a character is dead, and a return from death is attempted by a spell or spell effect with longer than a one action casting time, a Resurrection Challenge is initiated. Up to 3 members of the adventuring party can offer to contribute to the ritual via skill checks. The DM asks them each to make a skill check based on their form of contribution, with the DC of the check adjusting to how helpful/impactful the DM feels the contribution would be.

For example, praying to the god of the devout, fallen character may require an Intelligence (Religion) check at an easy to medium difficulty, where loudly demanding the soul of the fallen to return from the aether may require a Charisma (Intimidation) check at a very hard or nearly impossible difficulty. Advantage and disadvantage can apply here based on how perfect, or off base, the contribution offered is.

RESURRECTION CHECK

After all contributions are completed, the DM then rolls a single, final Resurrection success check with no modifier.

The base DC for the final resurrection check is 10, increasing by 1 for each previous successful resurrection the character has undergone (signifying the slow erosion of the soul's connection to this world). For each successful contribution skill check, this DC is decreased by 3, whereas each failed contribution skill check increases the DC by 1. Upon a successful resurrection check, the player's soul (should it be willing) will be returned to the body, and the ritual succeeded. On a failed check, the soul does not return and the character is lost.

Only the strongest of magical incantations can bypass this resurrection challenge, in the form of the *true resurrection* or *wish* spells. These spells can also restore a character to life who was lost due to a failed resurrection ritual, should you allow it.

QUICK RESURRECTIONS

If a spell with a casting time of 1 action is used to attempt to restore life (via the *Revivify* spell or similar effects), no contribution skill checks are allowed. The character casting the spell makes a Rapid Resurrection check, rolling a d20 and adding their spellcasting ability modifier. The DC is 10, increasing by 1 for each previous successful resurrection the character has undergone. On a failure, the character's soul is not lost, but the resurrection fails and increases any future Resurrection checks' DC by 1. No further attempts can be made to restore this character to life until a resurrection spell with a casting time higher than 1 action is attempted.



CHAPTER FOUR

ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

The lands of Tal'Dorei are rife with dangers, challenges, and mysteries. As you craft your own stories that traverse these fantastical paths, your players will encounter NPCs of many factions, backgrounds, and skill sets to either lend to their cause, or attempt to end it where they stand.

MONSTROUS RACES

The cities and strongholds of the folk from the **Campaigns** chapter (see p. 22) are not the only civilizations on the continent. The term “monstrous races” was first coined by humans under the rule of Drassig. Some say it was an attempt to demonize those who resisted colonization, others assert that their evil is inherent. Depending on the story you want to tell in Tal'Dorei, either point of view may be true—or, for a morally ambiguous story, both could have shades of truth.

Regardless of how righteous, civilized, or intelligent these beings are, most will attack humans and humanoids on sight, and negotiations can be difficult. However, some are willing to make alliances out of desperation, greed, or even pure goodness unclouded by prejudice. Some examples include the aberration Clarota's brief, treacherous partnership with Vox Machina in the caverns below Kraghammer, the Dustpaw gnoll tribe's desperate alliance with the humans of the Dividing Plains, and the fey folk's tenuous peace with the elves of Syngorn.

These descriptions are to aid a GM's roleplaying of NPCs outside of the typical player races. By giving monsters depth and civilization, a GM can make their intelligent monsters more than just XP to be gained. How does a goblin tribe retaliate to an attack compared to a flayer enclave? Though this section does not include stats for using these creatures as player characters, the history and roleplaying details below can help a player who wants to play an unconventional “monstrous” character in Tal'Dorei.

ABERRATIONS

The vilest and most intelligent of Tal'Dorei's monstrous civilizations, aberrations lurk in corkscrewing caverns deep below the surface of the earth. There is no question that aberrations are truly, irredeemably evil—all who attempt diplomacy with these twisted monstrosities end up as their food, or worse, their braindead thralls.

Many kinds of aberrant civilizations exist; some are lost cities of the ancient aboleth, while others are active colonies of flayers. What all types of aberrant civilizations have in common is that they are not of this world, and that all of Exandria's creatures are chattel, a resource to be enslaved, traded, and consumed. The underground empires of the dark elves have long since succumbed to madness, their psyches shattered and their bodies twisted by the aberrations' unnatural influence. Even the deep dwarves, the duergar, struggle against the tide of madness.

Though every dark elf is familiar with the dark whispers that echo within their mind, and every duergar child knows the stories of the Thousand Eyes in the Deep, the races of the surface world are unprepared for the aberrant

threat that lurks below them. Of the many alien beasts that plot against the surface world, the remnants of the aboleth empire are the most ambitious. As beings of the darkness, their only hope of conquering the surface world is to unite their domains. Overseer Durrom, lord of Salar, plots to collapse the Pillars of the Earth that support the surface of Tal'Dorei, causing the continent to crumble into his subterranean realm.

Major aberrant settlements include the flayer colony of Yug'Voril, deep below Kraghammer, and the aboleth ruins of Salar, beneath Emon. It stands to reason that nearly every major humanoid settlement has a city of otherworldly horror hidden beneath it. Perhaps that's why city life is so maddening.

BEASTFOLK

The term beastfolk was coined by humans as a way of referring to a half dozen separate cultures native to central Tal'Dorei. The wild magic released during the early era of the Age of Arcanum, as well as the chaotic energies scattered during the Calamity, did more than just destroy armies: it created entirely new races from

“As we grow, we are often taught to fear the unknown. To stay close, stay safe, and bury our curiosity. I rebelled like many youth do and struck out into the world, using my faith and wit to cast away the shadow of mystery. Do you know what I discovered, child? I found the shadow does not cast away easily. The wilds harbor dangers untold, and the black of night shields many hungry mouths full of teeth and malice. So... Listen to my words, child: Stay close, stay safe, and by the wisdom of the Changebearer, bury your curiosity with all your might.”

—Lady Diassa Kwynn, paladin of the Changebearer, to her squire Aedla



the animals of the world. Some creatures created by this outpouring of magic remain feral beasts, like the abominable owlbear or giant toad. Others, however, gained increased intelligence, the ability to create tools, and the capacity to form civilizations.

CENTAURS

During the Calamity, many elves fled into the Feywild to escape the war. One elven tribe that remained on Exandria to fight alongside their gods were the Horselords of Laphithas. The elves of Laphithas rode alongside the elven god Archeart against the mortal servants of the Ruiner, but the entire tribe was slain in a burst of chaotic magic when the Archeart stabbed the Ruiner through his eye, their power merging their mortal bodies with their horses. The Archeart rewarded his followers by reviving them as centaurs to ride across the Dividing Plains, forever free of war. The centaurs have diverged from their elven ancestry, but still hold a grudge against the elves of Syngorn for fleeing when their need was greatest. They are an incredibly faithful people—worshipping their creator with a fervor unknown even among the elves.

This story conflicts somewhat with the creation myth of the orcs, who were elves corrupted by the spilled blood of the Ruiner. It is possible that neither story is entirely accurate—or that both are. If both centaur and orcs are elves altered by the Ruiner's defeat, it would certainly explain the two peoples' long-standing hatred for one another.

DRIDERS

The betrayer god known as the Spider Queen was one of the first casualties of the Calamity; she was impaled by the Stormlord's thunderspear before her drow soldiers even saw battle. Her blood, thick and silvery, pooled in the sunless caverns beneath the world. In the years to come, it was discovered by her most loyal dark elven servants, and they drank deeply. The blood of the Spider Queen granted them the goddess's terrible power and warped their bodies until they were half-spider, half-elf. The driders grew in number as more and more drow accepted this gift, but the pools of divine blood began to run dry, and they found themselves tormented by its absence. The driders now roam the underground, desperately searching for hidden pools of the silver nectar. Yet, for their agony, they may still be in better shape as a tribal civilization than the dark elves.

GNOLLS

As their canine appearance suggests, gnolls were once mere hyenas. A pack of wild dogs was caught in the divine eminence of an unknown deity entering Exandria to do battle in the Calamity, and when the nimbus faded, the beasts were transformed. Today, most gnolls are still nomadic tribes led by a matriarch and her mate, finding food where they can, be it scavenged carrion or more civilized sustenance from human caravans along the Silvercut Roadway. Gnolls are a people with few allies, seen as weak by the Ravagers of the Dividing



Plains, goddess by the centaurs, and thieving by the people of Tal'Dorei. Some gnolls have found a home in Kymal and Westruun, and other tribes like the Duspaws have formed a tentative alliance with the city-folk to ward off the bloodthirsty Ravagers.

LIZARDFOLK

Once, the depraved lizardfolk were called the Kuul'tevir, noble masters of the earth and sky, created in the image of the first dragons—and in the time of the Founding, they built cities with magic nearly on par with that of the elves. The fires of their furnaces burned so hot their blood turned cold, and protective powers granted to them by the gods so great that their skin turned to scales. In those times, they were the paragon of warrior-priests.

However, in the wake of eons of violent, selfish pursuits during the Age of Arcanum, they are left now diminished, their cities turned to rubble, their magic forgotten, and their god-empress succeeded by a cabal of petty warlocks. After untold eons, many lizardfolk were so desperate to escape the squalor of K'Tawl Swamp, they chose to be dominated by the Cinder King. In their occupation of Emon, they once again felt a twinge of their ancestors' glory—but it has again turned to ash. The few surviving lizardfolk kingdoms are led by warlocks who siphon power from demons and immortal spirit nagas, forfeiting their souls in a vain hope to emerge once more from the swamps and conquer Tal'Dorei.

The remains of a lizardfolk empire inhabited by the Children of the Cloaked Serpent, a people more humanoid than lizard-like, can be found on Visa Isle, south of Daggerbay.

SAHUAGIN

Known by sailors as the “sea devils,” the shark-like sahuagin are both enemy and ally to humans who ride the waves, and are rumored to have spawned from a bottomless trench in the ocean floor. Pods of sahuagin have no de facto leader, and are usually have no more than six members, though sometimes several pods band together and collaborate on tasks they could not accomplish alone, forming schools. These schools follow the will of the majority, and disobedience to this will is surprisingly rare. The few sea devils who dominate multiple schools through personal strength are known as barons, and are as hated as they are revered. Sahuagin schools that fall under the sway of a baron are those most known for their piracy and slaughter, for they steal treasure to appease their tyrant's greed. Free schools often offer their service as mercenaries, aiding humanoids as much as they oppose them.

There are some pods that have fallen under the twisting influence of abhorrent, alien gods beyond the boundaries of reality. These often become cults of worship, merging pods into larger societies in service to the maddening whispers of these forgotten terrors, hidden within isolated ruins or swamp dens.

MINOTAURS

Originally created during the Age of Arcanum as living siege weapons and protectors of labyrinths where

treasures and secrets were hidden away, minotaurs have had to find their own purpose in the aftermath of the Calamity. Like most folk, when freed, they immediately retreated to the places that were most comfortable for them, and there they remain to this day. Clans of minotaurs can often be found in winding mountain passages and intricate cavern systems, using their innate comprehension of labyrinths to easily navigate such defensible spaces. The few roving clans of minotaurs that remain in Exandria have developed an isolated culture that prizes martial prowess but is led by spirit-whisperers similar to warlocks.

FEY

People don't discover the fey; the fey discover people. Though enchanted forests are their favored domain, the fair folk can be found wherever the power of nature is strong—even a flower garden in the middle of Emon. Of course, Emonian fey scholars debate which came first: did the fey come to a forest because it was magical, or did the magic bloom because of the fey? All fey mysteries have the same solution: if an answer exists, it is known only by the Archfey, and they don't like spilling secrets.

The Feywild is a place of intense emotion. Happiness becomes elation, anger becomes fury, and passions become obsessions. The very shape of the fey are defined by their innermost feelings, and even siblings can take different forms based on what they feel most strongly about. Two daughters from pixie parents are just as likely to be a sprite and a satyr if one sister is drawn to war and the other to wild parties. It is uncommon—though certainly not unheard of—for a fey to completely and spontaneously change form after a life-altering event. Since most fey live for upward of three centuries, particularly unstable fey take nearly a dozen forms over the course of their life, wildly altering in shape, sound, gender, and all other things mortals take for granted.

The only immutable fairies are the Archfey. Immortal, imperious rulers of fairykind, the Archfey very rarely travel to Exandria, instead spending their time scheming against each other plotting elaborate political overthrows. Of course, when mortals enter their realm, the Archfey take notice and often spy on them in person, using clever disguises and misdirection to keep them from disrupting their own maneuvering. Most recently, Vox Machina was trailed by Lord Artagan of the Morncrown, a jovial Archfey who finds the incursions of mortals more amusing than distressing.

The Arcane Pansophical has identified four other Archfey, though little else is known about them. They include Lord Saundor the Forsaken (now deceased), master of the Shademurk; Lady Elmenore the Unforgiving, High Warqueen of the Burning Vale and Matriarch of the Seelie Court; and Potentate Sammanar, They-Who-Walk-Unseen, keeper of the Sun's Shadow and Master of the Unseelie Court. Finally, a Pansophical spy in the Feywild has uncovered the existence of an Archfey



known as the Keeper of the Moontides, or simply the Keeper. This spy was never heard from again after her first report.

GIANTKIN

Some human folklore says that giants were precursors to humanity, the gods' failed attempts to create what would become humankind. Others say that the giants are what became of humans who tried to ascend to godhood themselves, making bargains with fiends and imbibing the essences of titanic elemental spirits. Today, giants live far away from major cities, as they have been hunted down for centuries and driven far from humanoid civilization.

LOWBORN

Ogres, cyclopes, and hill giants are the lowest of the giantkin and act as a sort of barrier between human and giant civilizations. The lowborn group together, cast out from highborn society and forced to fight and forage to survive. Cyclopes tend to rule lowborn settlements, and some hill giant warriors ritualistically tear out an eye in order to emulate their rulers—and some zealous hill giants do the same in worship to the Ruiner. Wealthier hill giants create fanciful eyepatches to wear over one of their eyes. Ogres are not clever beasts, and they lack the charisma of cyclopes and the dull cunning of hill giants. They rely entirely on numbers and brute force to overwhelm their prey.

Sometimes lowborn tribes are taken over by trolls or oni—creatures so loathsome that the highborn banished them from the caste system entirely—and transform lowborn communities into terrifying armies of evil.

HIGHBORN

The humanoid peoples of Tal'Dorei divide the highborn giants into types: cloud, fire, frost, stone, and storm. In truth, these are not different "races" of giant so much as there are different cultures. Though they have adopted different magics, codes of ethics and law, and fighting styles, they are all highborn. Even the hill giants were once highborn, but they were stripped of their nobility and exiled by the Council of Seven Scepters, and their people have fallen into ruin.

CLOUD GIANT

Cloud giants are denizens of Jovatthon, the Castle of Thunder. This mighty city-state flies invisibly above Tal'Dorei enshrouded in thick stormclouds, tracing a clockwise circular route around the continent, avoiding its cloudless, arid heartland. The cloud giants are ruled by two wedded kings, a City-King in charge of domestic affairs, and a War-King tasked with the defense of Jovatthon against both dragons and other highborn giants. The current City-King is a stern, fearsome ruler named Ardokles, while the War-King is a much more charismatic and beloved general named Vasilios.

FIRE GIANT

Fire giant civilization's heart is the city-state of Vulkanon, built deep into the magma tunnels that run beneath the heart of the Cliffkeep Mountains. The fire giants seem shorter than other highborn, but only because of their perpetually stooped posture. They are masters of the forge, and have been known to occasionally ally with the duergar of the Emberhold to produce some of the finest arms ever seen in Tal'Dorei. Vulkanite weapons are prized by mercenaries across the continent, and are as much a status symbol as they are an excellent weapon. The giants of Vulkanon have long dreamed of empire, and their duergar allies have given them a foothold in Tal'Dorei's darkest depths. They may be an excellent ally in the fight against the aberrations lurking below.

FROST GIANT

Frost giants make their home in the Neverfields, the frozen wasteland north of the Cliffkeep Mountains. Though their people are mostly nomadic reavers led by petty jarls, they all swear fealty to High King Jorskymmar, who rules from the fortress-city of Jotunborg. The frost giants are master animal-tamers, and are known to raid human villages with remorhazes, mammoths, and even white dragons at their side. Frost giants are among the most pious of the highborn, and most pray to the Wildmother for safety before crossing the ice fields. Some giants who have suffered near-death experiences, being trapped beneath an icy lake or being smothered by an avalanche, clandestinely join one of the cults of the Chained Oblivion, seeking solace in the inevitability of eternal cold.

STONE GIANT

Stone giants live in fortresses carved from the peaks of mountains. Their greatest stronghold is Skyanchor Citadel, a city hidden within a mountain of the Alabaster Sierras, its halls winding from its deepest roots to its highest summit. The stone giants view physical perfection to be the greatest of all virtues, and are obsessed with both physical appearance and feats of strength. Unlike the lowborn giantkin, who prize brute force over all else, the lithe stone giants see all forms of physical power as worthy. An quadrennial tournament of prowess called the Sky Queen's Favor is held in the coliseums atop Skyanchor, and giants from across Tal'Dorei gather to compete in tests of strength, agility, and endurance. Some champions of the smaller races even join, and goliath competitors are not an unusual sight at the Sky Queen's Favor.

STORM GIANT

Storm giants are the most mysterious of all the highborn. Their flying city-state of Tempestar was destroyed by an unknown force in times long past, and all the glories of their realm were cast into the Lucidean Ocean, hundreds of miles off the coast. The storm giants live solitary lives, keeping no other giant for their neighbor, protecting only themselves and their families. Centuries have passed since Tempestar was the seat of the Council of Seven Scepters, yet the reclusive storm giants are still considered part of the

"A quality of fire giants you don't bear mentioned all that often is that some are shockingly good card players."

—Scanlan Shorthalt

highborn out of fear of their sorcerous power. The cloud giant kings are particularly concerned with appeasing the storm giants; if unified, the remnants of Tempestar could conquer the flying city of Jovatthon with ease.

THE COUNCIL OF SEVEN SCEPTERS

The Council of Seven Scepters unifies the highborn, ruling from the tallest spire of Jovatthon. One member of each giant civilization is sent as a representative to serve on the council and keep the rulers of each city-state from causing chaos. Already beset by enemies across Tal'Dorei, from the fast-breeding humans to the vengeful lowborn, the last thing the highborn desire is infighting. Two of the seven thrones have remained empty for generations; Hillqueen Ovam'mura refused to relinquish her scepter when her people were banished, and the Scepter of Wodensdottr has gathered dust in the vaults since Woden, demigod of the storm, abandoned the storm giants after the fall of Tempestar.

Humans outsiders are often confused by the existence of seven scepters for six giant civilizations. The answer is laughably simple to any cultured giant; the cloud giants' two kings each claim one of the scepters, and each claim a seat on the council.

GOBLINKIN

Scholars have often speculated why the three known races of goblinkind are so wildly different from one another. Why have goblins never formed an organized society when the hobgoblin Iron Authority has ruled the southern tip of the Rifenmist Peninsula for generations? Why are bugbears covered with fur when their kin only have hair on their head, and their bodies are otherwise disquietingly smooth? Human, elven, and dwarven nations have warred with the goblinkin throughout recorded history, and their few attempts to send envoys to goblin enclaves have always ended disastrously. Why?

Discovering the origin of goblinkind may be an exciting campaign arc, and one that can synergize with a campaign about the gods and the Age of Arcanum. In that time, the goblins lived far from Vasselheim, the Cradle of Creation. They resided on the other side of the world, in the land known today as Wildemount. There were no goblins, hobgoblins, or bugbears then: were all one people; a strong, cunning, and multitudinous race known as the Dranassar.

When the Betrayer Gods were freed from their planar prison, the divine Strife Emperor revealed himself to the Dranassar, and they were enthralled by his fell power. Many of the Dranassar followed him willingly, and their great kingdom of Ghor Dranas became the seat of the Betrayers' power. Those who opposed their emperor

were forcibly bent to his will. When the Strife Emperor's armies needed skirmishers, he corrupted his Dranassar slaves into tiny goblins. When he needed new legions, he twisted them into hobgoblins. When he needed spies, they became bugbears.

The Calamity has long since ended, but the effects of the Strife Emperor's subjugation of the Dranassar still haunt Exandria. The goblinkin on Tal'Dorei are the descendants of the armies who failed to dominate the new continent. Only a handful of Dranassar remain in Tal'Dorei, though they are more plentiful in Wildemount, where the ruins of Ghor Dranas still loom across its jagged peaks. They live alone in the shadows, trying in vain to cleanse their twisted kin of the Curse of Strife.

GOBLINS

Goblins are like vermin. Any human knows that, and it might be the one thing dwarves and elves can agree upon, too. They breed faster than rats, and sire children half as smart—or so the saying goes. Goblins have no cities of their own, and only name their temporary raid camps after the “kill-boss” who founds it. If not for smarter, more organized goblinoid species, the lesser goblins would probably have probably lost all semblance of civilization, and become as wild beasts. If nothing else, they are easily manipulated by threat of force and promise of reward. Goblins can be found anywhere on Tal'Dorei, and are surprisingly adaptive to unwelcoming environments.

HOBGOBLINS

The hobgoblins of the Rifemist Peninsula learn from an early age that they are born to serve the Iron Authority. The unholy Strife Emperor may have stripped the hobgoblins of their free will, but their mortal Iron Emperor has stripped them of free thought. Hobgoblin are among Tal'Dorei's foremost military strategists, and this tactical acumen makes them potent propagandists, as well. Every hobgoblin blindly serves the caste above them. For soldiers, this is their commanding officer. For serfs, this is their feudal lord. For the Iron Emperor, there is only one greater power: the Strife Emperor himself.

The hobgoblin warbands that threaten Tal'Dorei's hillfolk are slightly different. Though many owe allegiance to the Authority, their distance from imperial propaganda has given these field scouts a different perspective. Each soldier within a company is unflinchingly loyal to their commander, but they are also all a distinct individuals with goals beyond merely testing the readiness of Syngorn and Emon for conquest. A few rare hobgoblins have even been known to defect from their company after tasting

freedom, though many have been too thoroughly indoctrinated to seek freedom, even if it is offered to them.

BUGBEARS

Ghor Dranas has long since fallen, and the bugbears have loyalty for neither other goblins, nor the divine Strife Emperor. Where hobgoblins are willing to give all for the collective, bugbears are fiercely individualistic. Of all the goblinoids, bugbears are also the most willing to collaborate with humans and elves, and are renowned throughout Tal'Dorei's criminal underworld as top-notch burglars and bounty hunters. Bugbears who choose to offer their services to the Clasp or the Myriad are usually found in Tal'Dorei's largest cities, but those who avoid a life of crime typically live alone in the wilderness. Despite the sinister reputation of their kin, many of these hermits take up a life of peaceful druidism, fighting only to protect their animal friends and secure their own isolation.

ORCS

Throughout much of Tal'Dorei, the word “orc” is synonymous with slaughter. The people of the Dividing Plains live in constant fear of wandering bands of orcs, especially the bloodthirsty horde known as the Ravagers. Most live in small, animalistic packs within the valleys between the peaks of the Stormcrest and Cliffkeep mountain ranges. These packs are chaotic, leaderless, and easy to scare away at the first sign of resistance. However, when a particular orc distinguishes itself from the pack, either through preternatural strength or uncommon viciousness, it quickly establishes itself as the pack's alpha. An orc pack led by an alpha rapidly grows in size by absorbing leaderless packs. When the alpha believes its pack has grown large enough, it runs rampant across the land, slaughtering and pillaging everything in its wake.

Most humans have no remorse for orcs. They view them as savage, bloodthirsty beasts. And in a way, they are correct. Nearly every living orc is a ruthless killing machine, driven by its animal urges to kill, devour, and reproduce. But things were not always this way. In the time before the Calamity, there were no orcs. They were created by accident when the Arheart, god of elves, shot out the eye of the war god now known as the Ruiner. The Ruiner's blood poured from his wound and rained upon the armies of elves and humans that served the Arheart. These unsuspecting mortals were changed; their muscles bulged, wicked tusks grew from their jaws, and their minds burned with a thirst for blood.

Even today, some orcs still possess scraps of rational thought. Though the Ruiner's fiery blood sears their minds, what remains of their human and elven ancestry longs to treat others with love and tenderness, not with hate and pain. This knowledge is all but unknown to the people of Tal'Dorei—no one has ever studied the orcs, and those who claim to have been saved from a raid by a merciful orc are mocked, their story derided as a traumatic fantasy.

“Trying to reason with a hobgoblin is like trying to have a conversation with a very sharp axe swinging at your head. In fact, the two are practically one and the same.”

—Vex'ahlia

ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES OF TAL'DOREI

Many are the dangers of Tal'Dorei, and even mighty adventurers quickly learn to watch their step in these lands, whether in deepest wilderness or in the middle of one of its many settlements. What follows is a handful of the monsters, warriors, and agents iconic to Tal'Dorei for use in your campaign. As with any monster, the DM should feel free to adjust these traits using the guidelines in the DMG to make them better serve the needs of their campaign.

ASHARI

Though the tribes of the Ashari wardens are neutral and spurn the “petty political nonsense” that they consider outsiders to be focused on, it is still all too easy to run afoul of the Ashari. They consider the strange elemental rifts over which they are guardians to be of foremost importance, and it is very easy for strangers to take actions that unknowingly disrupt the delicate balance over which the Ashari carefully watch. Though they are generally friendly to travelers—particularly to travelers in need—they are guarded, and do not hesitate to act to eliminate threats to the elemental powers and their own way of life.

ASHARI FIRETAMER

Of all the ashari tribes, the fire ashari of Pyrah have suffered the greatest. Their people were all but destroyed when Thordak burst through the Rift of Flame in his cataclysmic return to Exandria. Yet despite their immense hardships, the fire ashari have given selflessly to the

people of Tal'Dorei. Led by a half-orc ashari named Lor-kathar, a group of firetamers keep watch over the volatile Scar of the Cinder King on the outskirts of Emon.

Firetamers are the elite elementalists of the Pyrah, using their attunement to the primordial forces of the world to not just create fire, not just command it, but tame it to their will. A firetamer of Pyrah is nothing like the manic pyromancers of Tal'Dorei; while the latter recklessly wields fire as a weapon, firetamers use their talent to protect others from fire's destructive power—or to use that same power to destroy those who threaten their people. Firetamers are almost always accompanied by a salamander, a fire elemental, or a small herd of magma or smoke mephits. While home in Pyrah, ashari firetamers use their power to control the Rift of Flame or to control the flames of the Cindergrove.

ASHARI STONEGUARD

The earth ashari of Terrah are a stoic people, slow to change socially, and more likely to fight defensive battles



ASHARI FIRETAMER

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral good

Armor Class 17 (red dragon scale mail)

Hit Points 92 (16d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Nature +9

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Druidic, Primordial (Ignan)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Flameform. As a bonus action, the firetamer can transform into a **fire elemental**. While in this form, the firetamer cannot cast spells, but can expend a spell slot as a bonus action to regain 1d8 hit points per level of the spell slot expended. When the firetamer is reduced to 0 hit points, falls unconscious, or dies in this form, it reverts to its humanoid form. It can remain in flameform for up to 5 hours, and can enter flameform twice, regaining expended uses after completing a short or long rest.

Spellcasting. The firetamer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, mending, produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, faerie fire, longstrider, jump*

2nd level (3 slots): *flame blade, heat metal, lesser restoration*

3rd level (3 slots): *daylight, dispel magic, protection from energy*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, freedom of movement, wall of fire*

5th level (1 slot): *conjure elemental*

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Flamecharm (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The firetamer can cast *dominate monster* (save DC 16) on a fire elemental or other fire elemental creature. If the elemental has 150 or more hit points, it has advantage on the saving throw.

and outlast enemies than wage offensive wars. The Terrah stoneguard are the perfect embodiment of this ideal; their druidic training has been augmented by ancient combat techniques, allowing them to hold fast against a tide of enemies. They craft arms and armor from the granite around them, and their magical stonecraft rivals that of the dwarves. It is said that in mythic times, when elemental armies poured into Exandria, that two legendary stoneguards protected all of Terrah against the elemental onslaught for ten days and ten nights, guarding each other while their partner rested.

Today, the order of stoneguards stands vigilant along key defensive points within the Cliffkeep Mountains, warding the Terrah tribe against the dwarves of Kra-ghammer. If the stoneguard were ever to falter in their vigil, they believe the dwarves would doubtlessly enter their ancestral lands and strip bare its natural beauty in search of wealth and fuel.

ASHARI STONEGUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (granite half plate)

Hit Points 152 (16d8 + 80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +9, Wis +6

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +3

Condition Immunities petrified

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Druidic, Primordial (Terran)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The stoneguard is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *goodberry, speak with animals, thunderwave*

2nd level (2 slots): *hold person, spike growth*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stoneguard makes three granite maul attacks. **Granite Maul.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the attack hits, the stoneguard may also immediately cast *thunderwave* as a bonus action. This casting uses a spell slot, but no material components.

REACTIONS

Sentinel. When a creature within 5 feet of the stoneguard attacks a target other than the stoneguard, it can make a single attack roll against the attacker.

Skin to Stone. When the stoneguard is attacked, it may gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks until the end of the attacker's turn.

ASHARI WAVERIDER

The waveriders of Vesrah know firsthand the dangers of the open ocean, and dedicate their lives to protecting seafarers from storms, pirates, and sea monsters. Though they are not warriors, they are accomplished healers and aquatic empaths, using their powers to seek out and rescue survivors of marine disasters, sometimes returning critically wounded survivors to Vesrah itself. The isolationist water ashari condemn this practice, fearing that the refugees threaten their way of life. The waveriders take their peers' scorn in stride, for they would rather be righteous than popular.

A waverider turns to violence only as a last resort, and prefer to fight in fishform than with their fishing harpoon, using hit-and-run tactics as a shark or their octopus form's natural camouflage to harry opponents. When patrolling the open seas, waveriders skim across the water on personal waveboards with folding sails, similar in function to the *skysails* of the Zephrah.



ASHARI WAVERIDER

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral good

Armor Class 14 (*hide armor of cold resistance*)

Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +6

Skills Athletics +8, Nature +3

Damage Resistances cold

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Druidic, Primordial (Aquan)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Fishform. As a bonus action, the waverider can transform into a **hunter shark** or **giant octopus**. While in this form, the waverider cannot cast spells, but can expend a spell slot as a bonus action to regain 1d8 hit points per level of the spell slot expended. When the waverider is reduced to 0 hit points, falls unconscious, or dies in this form, it reverts to its humanoid form. It can remain in fishform for up to 3 hours, and can enter fishform twice, regaining expended uses after completing a short or long rest.

Healing Tides. Whenever the waverider casts a spell of 1st level or higher that affects a nonhostile creature, that creature regains 3 hit points (in addition to any healing the spell may provide).

Marine Empathy. The waverider can speak with and understand aquatic plants and animals.

Spellcasting. The waverider is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, poison spray, resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, create or destroy water, healing word*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, enhance ability, lesser restoration*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals* (aquatic beasts only), *water walk, water breathing*

4th level (1 slot): *control water*

ACTIONS

Harpoon. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. Attacks with this weapon while underwater are not made with disadvantage.

ASHARI SKYDANCER

Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 63 (14d8)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (with *skysail*)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7

Skills Acrobatics +7, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Druidic, Primordial (Auran)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If the skydancer is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the skydancer instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Flyby. The skydancer doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Skysail. The skydancer flies with a special ashari weapon called a *skysail* (see pg. 45). While the *skysail's* wings are extended, the skydancer can cast *levitate* at will, and can spend an action to cast *fly* on itself (no concentration required) for up to 1 minute once per day. This use of *fly* instantly replenishes when in an area of powerful air elemental magic, such as the Rift of Air in Zephrah.

Spellcasting. The skydancer is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud, entangle, jump*

2nd level (2 slots): *gust of wind, skywrite*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skydancer makes two *skysail* staff attacks.

Skysail Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the skydancer makes this attack while *flying*, the target must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) lightning damage on a failure or half as much damage on a success.

REACTIONS

Slow Fall. When the skydancer takes falling damage, it may reduce the damage by half.

ASHARI SKYDANCER

Zephrah's location in the Summit Peaks has shielded the Ashari from countless hardships; few infringe upon their isolated home, and this safety has bred a certain recklessness within the Zephrah people. Though they guard their elemental rift as closely as the rest of their kin, their lack of stoicism and restraint often earns them the scorn of the Terrah, the only other Ashari tribe in Tal'Dorei.

Air Ashari children learn to fly before they learn to walk, accompanying their parents through the snow-fattened clouds on Ashari-craft *skysails* (see pg. 45). While all in Zephrah love the sensation of flight, few hone their skills as rigorously as the skydancers. These graceful masters of the wind are at once artists, performers, and warriors; they are beloved heroes of their people, both defending them in times of danger and bringing them happiness in times of peace.



CINDERSLAG ELEMENTAL

Cinderslag elementals are pure manifestations of the hatred and furor of the deceased Cinder King, Thordak. Even in death, Thordak's fires manage to ravage Emon, as places scorched by his corrupting flames are transformed into vitriolic pits of slag and ash, spawning these mindless engines of destruction. Most notably, Thordak's Crater in Emon's Cloudtop District is a spawning pit of cinderslag elementals, though they cannot—or at least, do not—leave the crater. Beyond Thordak's Crater, the Scar of the Cinder King is a breeding ground for more of these mindless elementals, as are the ruins of Serpent's Head in the Cliffkeep Mountains, and the Ashen Gorge in the Stormcrest Mountains.

A cinderslag's molten gaze is a weapon of incredible power, capable of melting steel and stone with a single glance. If an elemental's gaze were focused on buildings over the course of a few hours, or if several elementals worked in unison, entire cities could be leveled in a tide of molten stone. Fortunately for the people of Emon, Thordak's elemental spawn are mindless and incapable of unified action—but what if someone were able to bend them to their will?

"Furthermore, don't you believe that nonsense about rare metals, already refined, found in the remains of a cinderslag. That's so much old smelters' tales! You go seeking a cinderslag, and ye'll get yourself murdered and set on fire, and if ye're very lucky, t'will happen in that order!"

—Master Smith Drunneq Bronzegrip, fed up over smoke-brained tavern tales

CINDERSLAG ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Molten Form. The elemental can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the elemental or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage. In addition, the elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage and must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw, becoming restrained on a failure. When the begins its turn while restrained in this way, it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet that elemental moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 cold damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (3d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Molten Gaze. Ranged Spell Attack: +8 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (6d6) fire damage and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, one nonmagical item the target is carrying instantly melts or burns to cinders.

THE CLASP

For all its notoriety, the Clasp is largely a business empire run by smaller pocket families of "spirelings" who oversee local illegal business and contracted work. Some Clasp are merely messengers, or thrive on intimidation. If conflict arises, and the problem can't be quelled, then the heavy hitters/assassins are brought in to "clean up the mess."



CLASP CUTTHROAT

Medium humanoid (any race), any nonlawful alignment

Armor Class 14 (leather)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dexterity +5
Skills Deception +3, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the cutthroat can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The cutthroat deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the cutthroat that isn't incapacitated and the cutthroat doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cutthroat makes two shortsword or dagger attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that the cutthroat can see hits it with an attack, the cutthroat takes half damage instead.

CLASP CUTTHROAT

When the thieves and assassins of the Clasp need to “acquire” additional funds or “relieve” specific people of their possessions, their cutthroats are the first to be called. Clasp cutthroats can also represent any number of different rogues within the thieves' guilds of Tal'Dorei.

CLASP ENFORCER

The Clasp prefers to operate within the shadows, but sometimes targets of blackmail need a little “convincing.” Whenever scare tactics and brute force are needed, the Clasp's musclebound enforcers make quite an impression.

CLASP ENFORCER

Medium humanoid (any race), any nonlawful alignment

Armor Class 16 (half plate)
Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +8
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

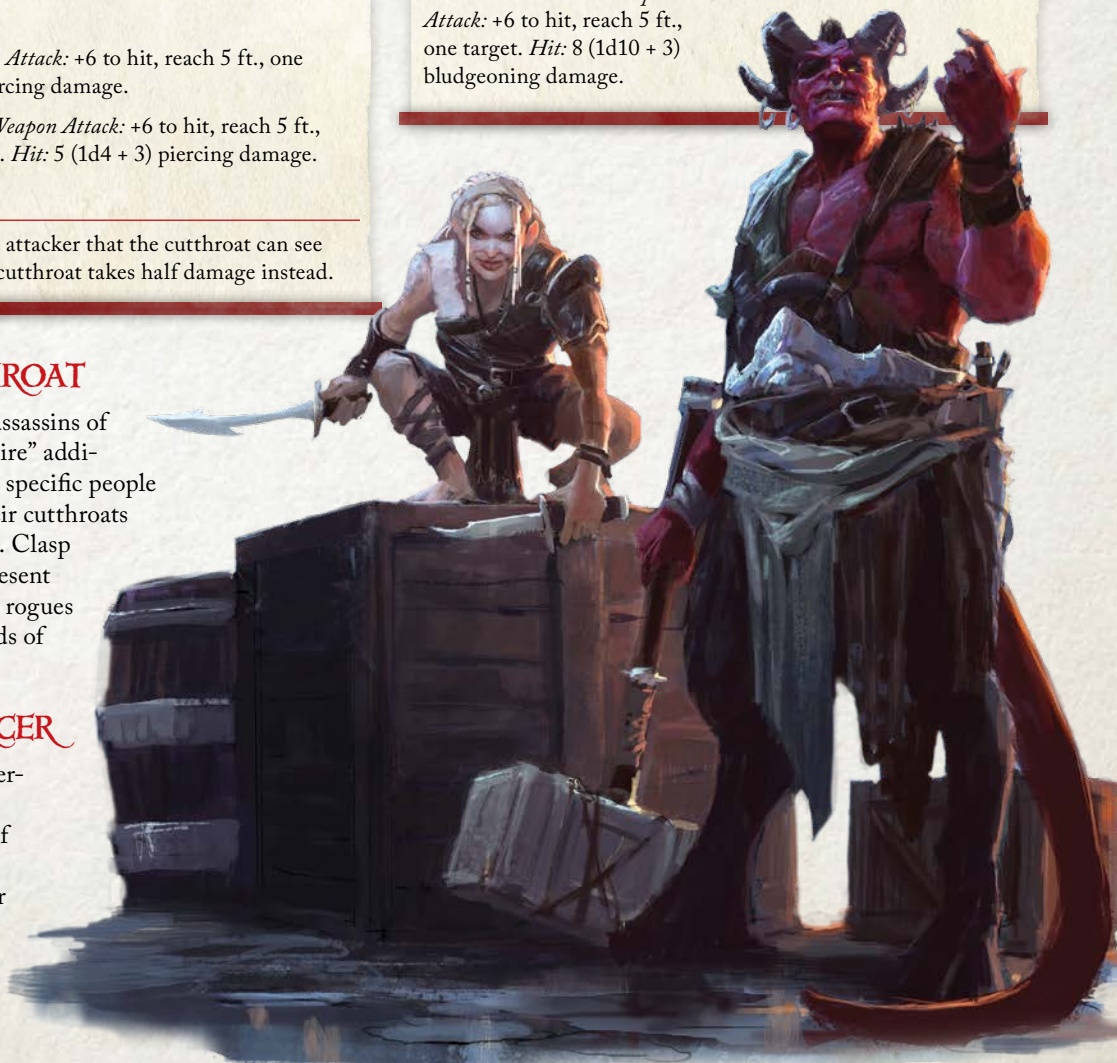
Intimidating Presence. Whenever the enforcer hits with a melee attack, the target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target is frightened of the enforcer until the end of its next turn. The enforcer's allies have advantage on attack rolls against creatures frightened in this way.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the enforcer can regain 12 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The enforcer makes three warhammer attacks.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage.



CYCLOPS STORMCALLER

When a cyclops is born beneath a raging storm, the child is sometimes born different. Smaller than the rest, sickly and weak. Most of these stormborn cyclopes are relentlessly bullied and beaten for their tiny stature, and most die before adulthood. Those who survive do so because of the magic the Stormlord has bestowed upon them—intentionally or otherwise. As cyclopes are a simple-minded and magically-inert people, the power of a stormcaller awes and terrifies them. They believe that a stormcaller is nothing short of a god.

As of late, a cabal of stormcallers have gathered in the Daggerbay Mountains at a time-lost elven temple called the Skyneedle; in elven, *ira' fallai*, in cyclops, “Tall Zap-po-Zappo.” There they conduct strange rituals beseeching an entity called the Eye of the Storm, and with every ritual, their power seems to grow.



NOTORIOUS STORMCALLERS

Efficient raiders and powerful leaders, stormcallers are dangerous enough on their own that several legends of them are told and retold along caravan routes and by any forced to venture too closely to cyclops territory. Some of them are:

THE EYE OF THE STORM

More legend than rumor, the Eye of the Storm is said to be a truly ancient cyclops stormcaller, the first of their kind. It is said that she gave over her only eye for the power of the storm, and now anywhere a storm brews, she can watch the devastation as though the center of that storm were her very own eye.

OLUK WAGONSBANE

A raider infamous for ambushing caravans and stealing their wealth, Oluk commands a force of other cyclopes. His warriors are fanatical in their devotion to him, revering his power and deeds. Each of his followers bears the distinctive scar from a lightning strike, and they proudly show off their scars.

CYCLOPS STORMCALLER

Large giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (chainmail, *ring of protection*, *cloak of protection*)

Hit Points 119 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (storm only)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +1, Con +5, Int +0, Wis +4, Cha +10

Skills Arcana +6

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Elven, Giant

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Poor Depth Perception. The cyclops has disadvantage on any attack roll against a target more than 30 feet away.

Storm Wings. While within 1 mile of a storm, the cyclops gains a fly speed of 60 feet.

Supernatural Focus. The cyclops has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on a spell, and cannot lose concentration because of turbulent weather.

Innate Spellcasting. The cyclops's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). The cyclops can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At-will: *ray of frost* (3d8), *water walk*

3/day each: *ice storm*, *sleet storm*, *wind wall*

1/day each: *control weather*, *storm of vengeance*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cyclops makes two ice claws attacks.

Ice Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 +3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

ELIKKA OF STORMPEAK

Hidden away in some mountain range, Elikka is an oddity among her people: a historian. It is said that her lair holds documents and other treatises on the origins of the cyclops folk, and that she helps new stormcallers come into their power in exchange for keeping her updated on what goes on in their tribes and bands.

GOLIATHS

After the fall of Kevdak and the Herd of Storms, the scattered groups of wandering outsiders took to a slightly less violent way of life, instead focusing on forgotten spirituality and survival in the wake of the Conclave's attack. However, some bands of roving warriors now grow either brash, or desperate, leading to savage attacks and raids on outlying camps and caravans.

GOLIATH STORMBORN

Medium humanoid (goliath), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +6

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +3,

Damage Resistances lightning

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the stormborn can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The stormborn's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 9). The stormborn can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day: *lightning bolt*

1/day: *call lightning*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stormborn makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) lightning damage.

Miss: 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

REACTIONS

Endurance. When the stormborn takes damage, it may reduce the damage by 10 (1d12 + 4). It cannot use this trait again until it completes a short or long rest.

GOLIATH STORMBORN

Countless goliath legends tell of heroes born beneath a raging storm. These stormborn grow to become peerless warriors, blessed with preternatural skill with a blade and the uncanny ability to command lightning itself. As warriors destined to become mythic heroes, stormborn fight with reckless abandon and are often distressingly prideful. Little do they know that destiny is a fickle thing, and that the songs of defeated stormborn (or worse, tyrannical ones) are rarely sung by the bards.



Though the fearsome Herd of Storms was broken at Westruun during the Chroma Crisis, most of the goliaths that made up the herd still roam across the Dividing Plains. Many joined with the Rivermaw Tribe, a vast, nomadic community of goliaths, humans, and other free folk of the plains. What few stormborn remain are now part of the Rivermaw. The next generation of

GOLIATH BRAWLER

Medium humanoid (goliath), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +5, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the brawler is wearing no armor and not wielding a shield, its AC equals 10 + its Dexterity modifier + its Wisdom modifier.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brawler makes three unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the brawler can choose one of the following additional effects:

- **Bruise.** The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, its speed is reduced by 5 feet until it receives at least 1 point of magical healing. A DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check performed as an action can also restore any lost speed.
- **Disarm.** The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding. The brawler may choose which item is dropped, and may choose to pick it up.
- **Suplex.** The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Endurance. When the stormborn takes damage, it may reduce the damage by 8 (1d12 + 2). It cannot use this trait again until it completes a short or long rest.

storm-children, those who lived through the reign of Kevdak and Umbrasyl, have just entered adulthood. They are ready to forge new legends.

GOLIATH BRAWLER

Some prideful goliaths are so assured in their own strength that they refuse to use weapons. Most goliaths learn how to fist-fight from a young age, but goliath brawlers go so far as to eschew weapons even on the battlefield. Goliath brawlers loyal to the Rivermaw Tribe usually lead the charge on the battlefield, using their exceptional speed and brute strength to throw the enemy vanguard into chaos.

Beyond the Dividing Plains, goliath brawlers can be found within criminal organizations as muscle, in underground fighting rings, and as personal bodyguards. In Emon, the most famous goliath brawlers have made a name for themselves within the Gods brawl Ring, representing the Stormlord in the annual holy tournament.

KRAGHAMMER GOAT-KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral good

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 25 ft., mounted 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +1, Con +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +4

Skills Nature +3, Religion +6

Damage Resistances poison

Condition Immunities diseases

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Aura of Protection. Whenever the goat-knight or a friendly creature within 10 feet of it makes a saving throw, the creature gains a +2 bonus (included above). The knight must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Dwarven Resilience. The goat-knight has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Spellcasting. The goat-knight is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The goat-knight has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, protection from evil and good, sanctuary, shield of faith*

2nd level (2 slots): *branding smite, lesser restoration, locate object, zone of truth*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The goat-knight makes two warhammer attacks.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

“Well and damn me if I don’t tell you the secret to real joy in this League, me lad: Find yourself a fight with one o’ them goliaths what favor fisticuffs. Dead silent, like boulders brought to life—none of the roaring and grunting of other fighters. Quiet enough to hear the crunchin’ when them fists the size o’ hams slam into their opponent. Nothing gets a crowd cheerin’ and bettin’ quite like that does, I tell you!”

– Grogan the Bookie, of the Brawler’s League, to his apprentice

KRAGHAMMER GOAT-KNIGHT

The sheer cliff faces and winding winding mountainside roads of the Cliffkeep Mountains are nearly impossible to traverse by normal means with any speed. However, the Peakclimber Knights of Kraghammer—commonly known as the goat-knights—are enforcers of peace and justice across the mountain range, and their giant goat steeds can easily traverse the harsh mountain slopes and climb nearly vertical slopes at their full pace. These knights are in service to the Allhammer, and often find themselves at odds with enforcing the laws of Kraghammer and upholding the edicts of their god.

Travelers lost within the mountains are sometimes saved by a traveling goat-knight, who is able to lead them through dangerous-but-traversable mountain roads.

GOAT-KNIGHT STEED

Large celestial, unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 40 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	6 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Dwarvish (comprehends, but cannot speak)

Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Charge. If the goat-knight steed moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes a extra 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sure-Footed. The goat-knight steed has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Rider and Steed. Any spell with a range of Self cast by a goat-knight rider who is mounted on a goat-knight steed also targets the goat-knight steed.

Divine Provenance. When the goat-knight steed drops to 0 hit points it disappears, leaving behind no physical form. A goat knight can also dismiss his steed at any point as an action, causing it to disappear. In either case, the same steed is summoned when the goat-knight casts *find steed*.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.



RAVAGERS

Whether driven by resentment for being shunned by the fairer folk, or consumed by the burning fury that still drives them since the corruption of the Ruiner's blood in the Calamity, most orcs are a chaotic force of destruction. They are a threat to civilization, to be sure, but more a mindless force of nature than a coordinated menace.

However, with each generation, some orcs grow smarter: more organized, learning from their foes, and understanding the might in well-led numbers. This growing horde of calculating, ruthless murder is known as the Ravagers, and with each defeat, they learn. And grow stronger still.

RAVAGER SLAUGHTER LORD

Nearly every orc tribe of the Dividing Plains has joined the Ravagers, and most do so willingly. Orc warchiefs, hungry for recognition in the single burning eye of their god, turn to the Ravagers as a way to fight greater battles, kill stronger foes, and win bloodier spoils. The few war chiefs whose deeds live up to their ambitions soon find themselves leading an arm of the Ravagers—and honored by the title of Slaughter Lord. A Slaughter Lord craves combat like it craves food, and leads Ravager raids as often as possible, but is frequently forced to remain at its stronghold because of its strict regimen of alchemical treatments.

A small army of shamans and alchemists attend to the Slaughter Lords in order to artificially enhance their already-tremendous strength. The blessings and concoctions crafted by the orc-lords' lackeys grow their muscular forms to mountainous size, sharpen their tactical reasoning, and bestow upon them the divine protection of the One-Eyed Ruiner. While their unnatural size is a Slaughter Lord's most obvious martial advantage—it dual-wields weapons most humans could only wield with two hands—the Ruiner's blessings grant it tremendous divine magic. Rumors abound of brave warriors being slain or blinded by a single guttural utterance.





RAVAGER STABBY-STABBER

Small humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Wis +1

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Stabby Frenzy. When the goblin hits with a melee attack, it may attack again. It can continue making additional attacks until it does not hit. The goblin cannot move between attacks made with this trait.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

The people of the Dividing Plains do not know exactly how many Slaughter Lords command the Ravagers. Some reason that there are four major arms of the barbarian horde, and that each arm is commanded by one of these monsters. Inside the walls of the margrave of Westruun's keep, however, Margrave Zimmerset and his councilors worry over a graver matter: the Ravagers are too well-organized to be led by war-crazed, drug-addled orcs. Who, or what, is commanding the Slaughter Lords from the shadows?

RAVAGER STABBY-STABBER

Tales of the bloodthirsty Ravagers have spread from Kymal across Tal'Dorei. Most adventurers and mercenaries take up arms against the Ravager after hearing stories of muscle-bound orcs terrorizing the free people of the Dividing Plains. They are prepared for single combat with great foes. They are not prepared for the Ravagers' most terrifying weapon: the stabby-stabbers. Fresh-faced warriors from Emon laugh at the name when they first hear it in Kymal's taverns, but veteran mercenaries close their eyes and hastily bury their face in their tankards.

Goblins only join the Ravagers as slaves; spoils from orcish raids of goblin nests. Those that show exceptional skill are brought before their Slaughter Lord and forced to drink a terrible brew the orcs call skullfire. The concoction burns what little reason

RAVAGER SLAUGHTER LORD

Large humanoid (orc), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (armor name)

Hit Points 152 (16d8 + 80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9, Wis +7

Skills Intimidation +11, Religion +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the Slaughter Lord can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature it can see.

Blessings of the Ruiner. The Slaughter Lord has been showered with a cocktail of divine blessings, and can call upon them at any time. Its innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). The Slaughter Lord can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *thaumaturgy*

3/day each: *flame strike, spirit guardians*

1/day each: *control weather, divine word, fire storm*

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the Slaughter Lord fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Unarmored Defense. While the Slaughter Lord is wearing no armor and not wielding a shield, its AC equals 10 + its Dexterity modifier + its Constitution modifier.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Slaughter Lord makes four attacks with its greatswords or three attacks with its spear.

Dual Greatswords. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage, or 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage if used with both hands to make a melee attack.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Slaughter Lord can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Slaughter Lord regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The Slaughter Lord makes a spear or greatsword attack.

Move. The Slaughter Lord moves up to half its speed.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). The Slaughter Lord casts an innate spell.

the goblins had away, turning them into perfectly obedient, flesh-hungry monsters. In battle, stabby-stabbers swarm like rats, eviscerating fleeing innocents and warriors alike in seconds.

REMNANT FAITHFUL

Empowered by the essentially never-dying essence of their lord, the Whispered One, those who remain under his sway and fulfill their part in his unknowable schemes are granted secret knowledge and powers that strip away the perceived fallacies of society and the world around them, baring the terrible truths that only aid to further indoctrinate the faithful.

REMNANT CULTIST

All cultists of the Whispered One endure horrific rites of initiation that forever shackle them to the will of the cult leaders. Every cultist can feel the presence of their foul god just beyond the fabric of the physical world, and many claim to hear him speaking to them when the rest of the

world is silent, urging them to prepare for his resurrection, either by secretly molding society to accept his return, or by concocting rituals that hasten his rebirth.

REMNANT CHOSEN

All followers of the Whispered One are zealous followers of their god-to-be. Every cultist spends hours in silent meditation, hoping to hear their long-dead master whisper a commandment from beyond the veil. For most, this meditation is fruitless.

But some do hear the whispers. In the silence of their meditation, the spectral voice of the Whispered One worms its way into their emptied minds, filling their heads with words of power. Fragments of the Whispered One's ancient arcane might boils within their blood, granting them spells unseen since the Age of Arcanum.





REMNANT CULTIST

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Skills Deception +7, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances psychic, necrotic

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The remnant cultist is an 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The cultist has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, message, minor illusion, prestidigitation, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, hideous laughter, mage armor, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fear, vampiric touch*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, phantasmal killer*

5th level (2 slot): *dream, mislead*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*

Unknowable Secrets. Any attempt to form a mental link with the remnant cultist, sry the cultist, or cast *speak with dead* on a cultist instantly fails, and the creature that initiated the attempt takes 6d6 psychic damage.

One-Eyed. The cultist has disadvantage on any attack roll made against a target more than 30 feet away.

ACTIONS

Dagger of Wounding. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. Hit points lost to this weapon's damage can be regained only through a short or long rest, rather than by regeneration, magic, or any other means.

Once per turn, the cultist may choose to wound its target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each time the cultist wounded it, and it can then make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success. Alternatively, the wounded creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it, can use an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, ending the effect of such wounds on it on a success.

REMNANT CHOSEN

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Cha +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +11, Deception +9

Damage Resistances damage from spells

Damage Immunities necrotic

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Infernal, Abyssal

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

All-Seeing Eye. As a bonus action, the Chosen may select a creature or object affected by an illusion spell of 4th level or lower. One illusion of the Chosen's choice affecting that creature is instantly dispelled.

Magic Resistance. The Chosen has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. The Chosen is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The Chosen has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, message, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, expeditious retreat, mage armor,* shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, darkness, detect thoughts*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, hypnotic pattern*

4th level (3 slots): *confusion, greater invisibility**

5th level (3 slots): *dominate person, scrying, seeming*

6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slot): *power word stun*

9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

*The Chosen typically casts these spells on itself before combat.

ACTIONS

Withered Hand. *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (5d6 + 20) force damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it is *disintegrated*.

“Cycles within cycles, turning evermore. Do not think that the One-Who-Whispers is gone, and shall return again. That is an ignorant understanding of the Cycle of Inevitability. Instead understand that the Holy Susurrus ebbs and recedes like the tide. When the Tide of Whispers has withdrawn, the initiated are invested with a sacred charge: to prepare the world for the turning of that Tide, for the return of the Whispered One. When that sacred and holy day is upon us once more, the Ineffable Whispers will be heard not just by the sanctified, but by all thinking creatures, and woe, woe betide those who do not fall down in worship.”

—From the Murmuring Canon, a blasphemous text propagated by the Cult of the Whispering One

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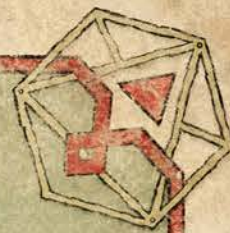
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