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TAL'DOREI
CAMPAIGN SETTING
REBORN



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Preface

Inspiration can come from anywhere: a musician's song, the advice of a close friend, or just the trust that another being places in you. In my experience, few things can compare to the surge of joy and motivation that being inspired gives.

I have often found inspiration in fantasy worlds and books of adventure, mystery, and magic. I grew up devouring every novel I was handed, seeking to lose myself in the words of another mind, channeling the images they evoked in my mind into my sketchbook. But it wasn't until I discovered tabletop roleplaying games that I felt truly empowered to create my own worlds, places like the ones that I so often found myself lost in. Even better, it let me share all the ideas in my head with my friends, and they could do the same with me. I was spellbound.

It's been about twenty-five years since my first game. Since then, I've drawn endless inspiration from the imaginations of my friends and loved ones as we tell heroic stories around a table with dice and paper. I've found a circle of friends who share my love of dramatic storytelling, my belief that failure in games is just as exciting as success (maybe even more so), and my delight in being inspired by moments of improvisational brilliance. It's still surreal that we found a way to share that with the world; *Critical Role* has become a phenomenon that's surpassed my wildest dreams. Over the past few years, we've built the magical world of Exandria together, warts and all, and somehow it's become a world that millions of others have engaged with and invested their imaginations in. I hope it's inspired you to create your own adventures, stories, and joyful memories. Through Vox Machina's epic tale, the land of Tal'Dorei became a landscape rife with intrigue, conflict, and endless possibility...and we wanted to share it with you.

Years ago, I had an opportunity to bring Tal'Dorei to the page and invite the world to tell their own stories in Exandria. The thrill of the opportunity was incredible, but the immense pressure and fear of failure (given my absolute lack of experience doing something like this) made it a strenuous journey on an incredibly short timeline. I was incredibly blessed to have become friends with the immeasurably brilliant James Haeck around that time, and I asked him to join me in this task. My good fortune found him agreeing, and with his help and inspiration, it somehow came together. With that, a limited run of the *Tal'Dorei Campaign Setting* went into the world.

Time has passed, both in our world and within the world of Exandria. Vox Machina's greatest adventures came to a close. Looking two decades later (within Exandria), we embarked on a new adventure with the Mighty Nein in the land of Wildemount...but Vox Machina and Tal'Dorei remained deeply dear to my heart. The question arose: what would Tal'Dorei look like these two decades later? What changes would have taken place in the recovery following the Chroma Conclave and the ascension of the Whispered One? How would the legendary heroes of Vox Machina have adjusted to life after the end of their story? What dangers and threats, both old and new, would the next generation of heroes need to rise up against?

Inspiration struck once more, and now that *Critical Role* had the means to do so...we needed to answer these questions for both ourselves and the numerous Critters who often conjectured as we did. "Who is on the Tal'Dorei Council?" Well, we can finally answer that! I immediately called James Haeck back to the fray, and we were joined this time by the extraordinary mind and talents of Hannah Rose to elevate these ideas into something better than I could have hoped. Between us, Tal'Dorei was Reborn. We invite you to get lost in this world, learn of its intricacies and secrets, and, I hope, be inspired to make this world yours as well.

Matthew Mercer,
Game Master of *Critical Role*



CHAPTER 1

Welcome to Tal'Dorei

Tal'Dorei is a land of epic adventure, filled with heroes who do great deeds for love, for justice, and—maybe more often than not—for gold and their own egos. Villains are draped in shadow and draw upon the power of cruel gods—but they are just as motivated by love, their own twisted concepts of justice, and their hunger for gold, power, and glory.

Tal'Dorei is a land created by Matthew Mercer to introduce his friends to fantasy roleplaying games, and he filled it with the greatest high fantasy tropes and played them to the hilt—and then twisted them, defying his own clichés when it would hit the hardest.

This book is for Game Masters who wish to run fantasy roleplaying game campaigns set on the continent of *Critical Role*'s first campaign, and for the players who will create characters for those games. The game mechanics in this book use "fifth edition rules," but it also includes enough lore about the world to form the foundation for a game using the rules of any fantasy RPG.

Lands of Tal'Dorei

The name Tal'Dorei refers to three things throughout this book. Most often, Tal'Dorei means the continent that is home to all of the people, locations, monsters, magic items, and more within these pages. It is one of four major continents on the world of Exandria. Tal'Dorei can also mean the Republic of Tal'Dorei, the largest nation on the continent. And finally, Tal'Dorei was first the surname of a mighty hero who lent her name to the land that she helped liberate from evil.

See "A History of Tal'Dorei" later in this chapter for more details about the heroic Zan Tal'Dorei, the land she founded, and her descendants.

The continent of Tal'Dorei encompasses several nations and independent city-states, all of which are home to diverse peoples who view the world in ways influenced by their cultures and the lands they call home. The most significant nations of Tal'Dorei include:

The Republic of Tal'Dorei. From the great city of Emon in the west, across the vast Dividing Plains, and even as far as the isolated city-state of Whitestone in the northeast, the Republic of Tal'Dorei spans the breadth of the continent that bears its name. It is ruled by a council of elected representatives and is cordially allied with all other nations on the continent.

The Ashari. The elementally attuned Ashari people are reclusive and dedicated to their mission of safeguarding elemental rifts across the world. Two of the greatest rifts exist in Tal'Dorei, and the Earth Ashari of Terrah and the Air Ashari of Zephrah keep watch over them from their secluded homes.

The Deep Halls of Kraghammer. Deep beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains is Kraghammer, the ancestral home of Tal'Dorei's dwarven people. Though Kraghammer is home to people other than dwarves, its dark and claustrophobic halls act as a deterrent to non-dwarven residents—as does the dwarf clans' famous inhospitality.

The Verdant Enclave of Syngorn. In the heart of the trackless Verdant Expanse is a city of elves who hid in the Fey Realm from a war that nearly annihilated all life on Exandria. Syngorn is welcoming to all who brave the Verdant Expanse to reach them, though there is an expectation that those who visit take pains not to flaunt the strict and ancient rules of Syngornian society, lest their stay come to a swift and unceremonious end.

The Iron Authority. This imperial force rules the Beynsfal Plateau in the southernmost reaches of the continent. There they train legions of soldiers in an endless campaign to conquer the entire Rifenmist Peninsula. The other powers of Tal'Dorei are just beginning to take notice of the movements of the Iron Authority, but most of their knowledge is based in rumor. The Tal'Dorei Council has little interest in drawing the authority's ire while it is preoccupied with its conquest of Rifenmist.

What's in This Book?

Chapter 1 is an introduction to Tal'Dorei's lands and history. It also describes certain fundamental details about the world of Exandria as a whole, including its calendar, the planes, and the cosmos. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of Tal'Dorei's society today—and the brewing tensions and secrets that Game Masters can use to plot their own campaigns.

Chapter 2 describes the allegiances player characters and non-player characters (NPCs) may have to deepen their connection to the world. Their allegiances may be to factions, such as governments or guilds, or to the gods. These divine beings can only affect the Material Plane through their mortal followers, or occasionally supernatural messengers like celestials or fiends.

Chapter 3 is the Tal'Dorei Gazetteer, a detailed look at all of Tal'Dorei's regions and cities, their



points of interest, the people who reside within them, and the quests that heroic adventurers might undertake there.

Chapter 4 contains new options that players can use to build their characters, including story descriptions of the different ancestries; new subclasses, backgrounds, and feats; and a handful of optional rules for the whole table.

Chapter 5 contains advice to help Game Masters create exciting and compelling campaigns in Tal'Dorei, and magic items that you can give your players as treasure during their perilous adventures—including the unstoppably powerful Vestiges of Divergence.

Chapter 6 presents game statistics for monsters and NPCs that you can use to challenge your characters or aid them in a pinch. Among them are the legendary heroes Vox Machina, some twenty years after the conclusion of their greatest adventures.

Calendar, Time, and the Cosmos

The world of Exandria is a planet with regular seasons and a wide variety of climes, ranging from frigid ice caps to arid deserts, temperate forests, windswept plains, sweltering jungles, and storm-tossed oceans. It orbits a single sun, is orbited in turn by two moons, and is surrounded by distant stars that twinkle in the evening skies.

The ancient people of Exandria told time by these celestial bodies, and the elves created a calendar based on their movements.

Calendar

The calendar year of Exandria runs a total of 328 days, grouped into seven-day weeks over the course of eleven months. These months are outlined below in the order of their arrival within the calendar year, along with their respective number of days and holidays common throughout Tal'Dorei (many of which are detailed within the "Pantheon of Exandria" section in chapter 2).

Counting Years

In Exandria, the years are most commonly counted by a reckoning known as "Post Divergence," with year 0 being the fateful year that the Prime Deities ended the Calamity by sealing all the gods behind the Divine Gate. This book describes the world as it is in the year 836 P.D. If you're familiar with the *Critical Role* campaigns, this year is twenty-four years after the end of Campaign 1 (Vox Machina) and toward the end of Campaign 2 (The Mighty Nein).

Months and Seasons

The names of the months and days of the week vary between cultures, but the elven calendar described here is the standard means of reckoning dates in Tal'Dorei—as well as in most nations around the world, for ease of international trade and diplomacy.

Just as in our world, there are four seasons, and the year ends and begins just after the winter solstice.

The first blush of spring in Tal'Dorei is felt as new flowers bloom on Wild's Grandeur, a holy day on the 20th of Dualahei. The official start of the season, however, is observed a week earlier and celebrated with games, music, and just-ripened food at the Renewal Festival. Summer brings hotter days toward the middle of Unndilar. The noonday sun of the 26th day is called the Zenith, and this solstice is considered the first true moment of the summer.

The colors change and winds cool as autumn begins 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 on Barren Eve, the 2nd of Duscar, a nighttime celebration and remembrance of those who fell in battle.

The seven days of the week are named Miresen, Grissen, Whelsen, Conthsen, Folsen, Yulisen, and Da'leysen. Each day is 24 hours long, and most city-dwellers in the Republic of Tal'Dorei are expected to work eight hours of that day—except for Yulisen and Da'leysen, which comprise the weekend, and on holidays.

These social rules don't necessarily apply to cultures where sleeping patterns are different (such as in Syngorn, where most of its people are elves who trance a mere four hours of the day), or to people outside of cities—such as farmers, who rise with the sun, and traveling merchants and adventurers, who work highly unusual hours.

Using a Calendar

The Exandrian calendar is intentionally quite different from our own. The creation of calendars is a messy and often illogical process, with strange artifacts of their making that linger on only because of tradition—and because it would be too much of a hassle to get the entire world to change their way of counting time and days.

You don't need to bother with the Exandrian calendar in your home game. It's perfectly reasonable for you to use a nice, simple seven-day week, thirty-day month, and twelve-month year. You may even use our names for the months and the days of the week so that when an NPC tells the party to meet them at noon on "Grissen, Misuthar 7th," they're basically talking about "Tuesday, February 7th."

However, if you want to immerse your players in the fantasy world of Exandria, using this unfamiliar calendar may help you on your quest.

Exandrian Calendar

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

Catha and Ruidus

When the people of Tal'Dorei gaze into the morning sky, they see the sun, a blazing disc the size of a gold piece, looking back at them. It is the domain of the Dawnfather, a god of life and light honored politely by nearly all the realm's denizens.

At night, the skies are filled with countless distant stars, a gleaming silver-white moon called Catha, and occasionally, a dim, ruddy moon called Ruidus that is nearly half Catha's size. Both moons are the domain of the Moonweaver, a capricious god of trickery and illusions, but there are sects throughout the world that believe only Catha represents the Moonweaver's cunning and grace. Catha's pearly glow is said to bless the just with cunning and caution, and to make hidden the goodhearted when they require stealth and subtlety.

Ruidus, on the other hand, is so surrounded by disquieting rumors and folkloric tales of misfortune that some believe another unknown god or power rules this small, reddish-brown moon. Cultures around the world tell countless legends of prideful rulers who made grand plans or attempted deeds under the moon's full light—when it shines a brilliant vermilion rather than its usual ruddy color—and were forced to

watch in horror as their endeavors fell to unforeseen misfortune. It is said those who fall afoul of Ruidus failed to give it the deference it is due—and so superstitious folk rarely dare to make plans while the full light of Ruidus shines above, let alone enact them.

Worse yet, some tales forebode dark fortunes for those born under the light of a full Ruidus, a curse of ill luck that will follow them throughout their lives. Though the cruel practice of moon-sacrifice is no longer permitted in any of Tal'Dorei's cities, some far-flung settlements still secretly sacrifice children born under a full Ruidus to "save" them from a cursed life, and to appease the dark and unknowable appetites of the red moon.

Fortunately for the superstitious, Ruidus is rarely full. While its cousin, Catha, completes a full cycle approximately once a month, Ruidus's haunting, half-year orbit, combined with its eerie and unexplainable tendency to simply not appear in the sky on certain nights or glow with unknown light, creating an unexpected full moon, has only added to its mythic reputation as an omen of ill fortune.

Prologue to the Song of Alyxian

O Ruidus, grant humble chorus leave
To sing the song which hails the zenith of
Your accurséd, thrice-blessed Apotheon;
Remember'd best by deeds in war, and yet
Whose acts were driven oft by fate most foul.

His kindly brow bore gifts from gods
of change,
And art, and moon, yet in his soul was pain,
The suffering of your vermilion light
Drove the Paragon to a desert realm
Bestrewn with blades and drenched
in crimson blood.

So hear, O moon of curséd deeds and fates!
The song of he who rose above your great
And mighty pow'r, to save Exandria.
From flames of war fanned by the Ruiner's blade.

Planes

Though this book concerns itself mostly with the world of Exandria, and specifically the continent of Tal'Dorei, high-level adventurers may eventually gain magic that allows them to travel to other planes of existence beyond the material world in which Exandria resides.

The planes surrounding Exandria are similar to the planes presented in fifth edition lore. Below are brief descriptions of some of the planes that a party of powerful adventurers may travel to. These planes go by many poetic and fanciful names.

Material Plane

The Material Plane is a land where natural laws work as we expect. It is a place of all four elements, and of plants, animals, and minerals. Exandria is but one of many worlds on the Material Plane—though none but the most accomplished astronomers have become aware of this fact, much less devised a way of traveling between material worlds.

Elemental Planes

When the Protean Gods discovered Exandria, it was like a barren ship adrift in a sea of churning, chaotic elements. As a part of their creation, the elements were thrust away from the world. Some theorize that the Elemental Planes were created from this banished chaos, while others believe the elemental chaos seeped into the Material Plane from tears in the fabric of the planes.

The latter may be more likely, as rifts between the Elemental Planes can be found across Exandria. The largest of these rifts are tended to by the four Ashari civilizations, and any who gaze within find wild wastelands of pure elemental power: roiling seas of fire, towering mountains of gnashing stone, infinite skies filled with cloudtop settlements, and endless, stormy oceans of water.

Faerie, Shadow, and Ether

Parallel to Exandria are odd reflections of its reality. The Fey Realm is a plane of natural beauty and ferocity, inhabited by fey folk. The Plane of Shadow is a dour, sinister mirror of the world that is. And the Ethereal Plane is a hazy film across the material world, as if it were viewed through an old, cloudy mirror, inhabited not only by restless spirits, but also by predators that target those who cling to the world of the living.

Astral Plane

All the prior planes exist directly adjacent to the Material Plane, buttressing and occasionally comingling with its inhabitants. All the planes that follow are separated from the material world by a vast sea of starlight, barren asteroids, and misty nebulae of unpredictable magic. In the ancient past, arcanists had to craft vessels to sail the treacherous sea of stars to travel between their home plane and the mysterious Outer Planes.

These days, magic such as the *plane shift* spell has allowed planar travelers to bypass these methods, but there are still a number of strange creatures and forgotten, imprisoned demigods who float eternally through the Cosmic Sea.

Outer Planes

The Prime Deities imprisoned the Betrayer Gods in prison planes after the Founding, and retired

to planes of their own creation after the Divergence. Over time, the divine beings on these planes reshaped their new homes in their own image, creating places where natural laws don't function as one native to the Material Plane might expect.

All of these planes are strongly aligned to one or more cosmic principles of good, evil, law, and chaos, based on the divine powers that reside there. Because of the Divine Gate established after the Divergence, no divine powers can depart these planes, for the sake of all Creation. The gods' supernatural creations can pass through the Divine Gate, though the more powerful they grow—and thus, the closer they come to divinity—the harder it is for them to pass through. However, mortals and lesser supernatural beings who possess magic to travel between the planes can travel to and from Outer Planes like the Hells, the Abyss, Elysium, and Pandemonium unhindered by the Divine Gate.

Realms Beyond

Far beyond even the divine Outer Planes is a realm where all laws of nature break down completely. Mortal senses have no way of properly perceiving the nature of these far-distant realms, and most minds that try to comprehend them snap under the strain of so much unfamiliar stimulus. These maddening realities and the alien horrors that live within them are mercifully kept away from the known multiverse by the unimaginable distance of space.

Some creatures of the beyond have lurked on the Material Plane since ancient times, perhaps at the invitation of the Chained Oblivion itself, or because the divine powers unleashed in the Calamity punched holes in time and space that allowed such aberrations to slither into Exandria unimpeded.

Major known locations of aberrant activity in Tal'Dorei include Yug'Voril beneath Kraghammer, the Crystalfen Caverns beneath Emon, and the realm of Ruhn-Shak beneath the Stormcrest Mountains.

Demiplanes

Massive, infinite spaces such as the Material, Elemental, and Outer Planes are not the only types of reality. Through the use of powerful magic, arcanists can create stable demiplanes—finite pockets of extraplanar reality that they can shape to their whims. These "pocket dimensions" exist as bubbles of floating color within the Cosmic Sea, and can only be traced or penetrated by extremely powerful, lost magical arts.



...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

A History of Tal'Dorei

Where did Tal'Dorei come from? The origin of this land is a time-shrouded question that everyone has pondered in some way, from the most exalted, world-traveling hero to the common farmer who has never traveled three miles beyond their village. Everyone has their own ideas on where Tal'Dorei, and all of the wide world of Exandria, came from. These varied thoughts all have some things in common, since they are all born of jumbled misunderstandings of ancient myths told orally from bard to bard, then passed from father to daughter, and eventually codified into religious rewritings of history that favor the teachings of a given deity.



To speak a full and accurate truth of Tal'Dorei is an impossible task, yet Tal'Dorei is known for creating folk who regularly do the impossible. What follows is the Myth of Exandria, an account based on the investigations and best efforts of Tal'Dorei's foremost scholars—the homegrown Alabaster Lyceum of Emon, and the international knowledge-seekers and anti-propagandists of the Cobalt Soul. These two organizations have assembled this history by digging beneath the layers of dust and decay that hide battles long past, unearthing texts long thought burned and censored, and exhuming historical treasures from tombs of heroes long forgotten. The details are often debated, for the question of the land's origin remains—consuming the curious, calling those hungry for purpose, and fueling the business of adventuring to delve into the tantalizing unknown places of the world.

Myth of Exandria

Before the history of the lands of Tal'Dorei can be explored, its context in the history of Exandria itself must be thoroughly established. The world of Exandria is home to four major continents, dozens of nations, and untold tiny pockets of civilization amid a wondrous, dangerous wilderness. Every civilization, from the largest empire to the tiniest nomadic clan, 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, life ever seeks to understand its inception. In this report, the collected minds of the Cobalt Soul and Emon's Alabaster Lyceum can say, with only the most trivial of doubts, that the city of Vasselheim in Othanzia truly deserves its title of the "Dawn City." It is here, to our researchers' best understanding, where the stories of all mortal peoples begin. Vasselheim became Exandria's oldest surviving city by virtue of not just being built long ago, but by enduring the Calamity (which shall be elucidated presently), a miraculous feat that few other charted settlements can claim to have accomplished.

In short, Vasselheim houses the earliest known temples to the gods, and the earliest known records of history that survived this catastrophe. It is these sources that this joint research initiative treats as its primary documents, though great effort has been made to corroborate their claims through later sources. It is in the chronicles of Vasselheim that the earliest account of the myth of the Founding is recorded—and indeed, this history is the most commonly accepted origin of the world in the Republic of Tal'Dorei. Though countless regional variations muddy the historical record, the broad strokes of this mythic history are undeniable.

The Founding

Long ago, this world was one of tumultuous and chaotic forces, naught but unbridled fire, seething oceans, and churning, gnashing rock. Through the ashen skies of Primordial Creation, the gods arrived from an unknown realm located beyond the ether. These ambitious divinities—young and still formless—looked down upon this roiling realm and saw potential for great strength and outstanding beauty, and the chance to learn their own place in creation.

From the divine hands of the Arch Heart sprung forth the First Children, the elves. It is thought that they were made in their creator's image, yet it is just as likely that the Arch Heart, and all the gods who shared their ideas with them, actually adopted forms inspired by the image of their creations. The First Children walked the lush Green and gazed upon the heavenly Blue as the gods tamed Primordial Creation around them.

Not long after, in the scale of the cosmos, a second mortal creation was wrought by the divine All-Hammer: the dwarves, a hearty people imbued with the desire to continue the gods' work—taming a primordial world filled with the craft and invention of the divinity that lay beyond the ashen void. In their turn, a third people were given life by the passionate lovers of Order and Chaos, the Lawbearer and the Wildmother. Their children were the humans, endowed with hearts of passion to bring meaning to the world as it assumed an orderly form. Yet in their hearts burned a spark of chaos, cursing them with short life just as it blessed them with the unquenchable ambitions, mirth, and curiosities of the gods that crafted them.

As a note from the High Curator of Emon's Cobalt Reserve, the chronicle of Vasselheim states that the gods were given form and name only when the peoples of Exandria began to worship them—yet many of the various races of the world ascribe their creation to a single god or group of gods. It would be remiss to not at least conjecture that while the Protean Gods lacked distinct form, they still had unique thoughts, emotions, and motivations that were later codified through the worship of the people.

As inspiration flowed from the Protean Gods, other creations followed, giving life to Exandria's many peoples. Here the mythic record of Vasselheim grows unclear, for while the elves, dwarves, and humans were undeniably Exandria's first races, the identities of the many Children of Creation that followed were left unrecorded by the Dawn City's chroniclers.

These myriad young races explored their freshly founded world. As their knowledge grew, they attempted to build. But the land was fierce and treacherous, and the lives of the children were extinguished mercilessly by the still-chaotic world. Sorrow is said to have filled the hearts of the gods as they watched their children struggle against a land that rebuked them. The gods ultimately lent their children tiny fragments of their own power, gifts with which they might shape the world around them.

This small mercy of the gods was the birth of magic, and with it the people of Exandria learned to bend the angry earth to their will, to temper the wrath of its explosive mountains, to tame its unyielding floods, and to make the hard earth soft and bountiful. Wandering peoples settled, language became commonplace, survival gave way to art, and governance replaced anarchy. The Protean Creators, the divinity beyond the ashen skies, saw progress and saw that it was good—but fragile, and in need of guardians.

Thus were born the First Protectors: the Dragons Metallic of Tal'Dorei. These Protectors pledged themselves to defend the weak against tyrants. It is here that the mythic tales connect to the oldest, most fragmented passages of recorded history as civilization's reach stretched across the world. The people praised the gods for their newfound safety, and their prayers gave them forms, names, and purpose.

Wrath of the Primordials

Yet the realm refused to be tamed. Quaking cliffs roared in defiance of mortalkind's magical gifts. Seas swelled and seethed. Flames erupted from below with greater intensity than any had seen before. Beneath the elements, unknown to the Creators beyond the ashen skies, lived ancient beings who were born in the primeval chaos of the world the gods had found: the Primordials. These elemental titans that once dwelt deep within the land now rose from their unseen domain to sunder it once more. The gods watched as their children were crushed between gnashing rocks and fed to formless terrors unleashed in the wake of the destruction. Thus were the seeds of Exandria's greatest cataclysm set into motion.

Some gods were so full of grief and anger that they wished to abandon this world for another. They tried to convince their divine kindred to join the Primordials in reclaiming the realm for chaos, so that they could move on to start anew. Others wished to prove they could tame the world for their beloved children. This caused a divide among the gods. The schismatic deities, known today as the Betrayer Gods, joined their songs and swords to those of chaos and destruction, taking and twisting their children into the image of their intent.

The cosmos itself seemed to recognize the magnitude of the battle on Exandria, and beings of Order and Chaos spilled forth from the still-young multiverse. Creatures of chaos emerged from a formless void that Exandria's peoples came to call the Abyss.

These demons fed upon the suffering of the wounded and the dying, and grew cruel. Sentinels of order emerged from a distant realm of celestial harmony. The Prime Deities beseeched these celestials to aid them. In turn, the Betrayer Gods forced order upon the demons and made them devils, perfectly lawful soldiers who lived only to cause harm.

As the clash of gods and Primordials spiraled out of control, the desperate mortal races sought their own way to defend themselves from the rebellious elements. Seeing that their creations still suffered, the Arch Heart taught them the secrets of making magic themselves. The most intelligent and inquisitive mortal minds followed the path the gods had revealed to them, and created incantations and formulae to create new spells on their own terms, without the aid of divine power. These people called themselves arcanists, for they were masters of the arcane secrets of magic.

With their potent new magics, these resourceful mortals subdued the Primordials long enough for the Prime Deities to banish their traitorous kin to secluded prison planes. With the Betrayer Gods locked away, the gods were overjoyed to see the resourcefulness of their children. The defeated Primordials were destroyed, and from their ever-enduring essences, the gods channeled their wild and destructive powers into the Elemental Planes that surround the material world of Exandria.

For the first time since the Creation, Exandria finally settled into an idyllic peace. From this peace was born the first enduring mortal civilization, the heart of which was a grand city called Vasselheim, the Cradle of Creation and 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.

Age of Arcanum

Ages passed, and society flourished. Great kingdoms sprung 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.

Yet, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the very magic which allowed mortalkind to prosper also instilled a deep rot within their civilizations. The arcanists of the world grew arrogant. They came to see their arcane gifts as proof that the gods held no sway over their fate, and that with a sophisticated enough command of magic, they could become as powerful as the gods themselves. Though this hurt and surprised the Prime Deities who had imprisoned their kin for the sake of their children, they sought to sympathize with the willfulness of their creations, remaining out of love and hoping that the mortals would learn the error of their ways.

The foremost scholars of our day would make it seem an indisputable fact that the gods created Exandria. That they blessed us with the bounty that all peoples of the world now make use of. So too, they say, was magic their gift to us. But such zealots ignore the fact that there is another likelihood: that the gods did not create mortals, and their world—but the opposite. That the dreams of mortals mingled in the wild magic of the young world, and gave that magic form and order: divinity. Of course, the dogmatic zealots of our day will dismiss such ideas as heresy—but not you, reader! The avid mind feeds not on dogma, but on new ideas!

—Fragment of a scholarly essay on divinity dating back to ancient Vasselheim, anonymous



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. Rather than universal goodwill and comfort for all, the Age of Arcanum came to be defined by endless petty squabbles over wealth and power among the elite, while those without magic hunted for their scraps. Tantalizing rumors of a path to immortality slithered through the most decadent circles of magi and nobility. One mortal mage, her name lost and presumed to be struck from history, crafted now-forbidden rites to challenge the God of Death, felling him and taking his place among the pantheon, making of her the first and only living mortal to ascend. The name of this original death god was likewise lost to history. Only the title of his now-godly successor, the Matron of Ravens, survives.

Her victory over divinity was a catalyst for many of the horrors of the Age of Arcanum. An archmage named Vespin Chloras, renowned throughout ancient Vasselheim for his wealth, skill, and cruelty, was inspired by this display. 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, these Gods of Hatred and Despair had warped their prisons into reflections of their depravity. The Abyss, once a formless place of chaos, a byproduct of the gods' Creation, was twisted into a place of evil. Countless other planes of cruelty were born from the Betrayer Gods' hatred, and those realms' evil depths endlessly churned forth horrors that lived only to transform peace into suffering, and righteousness into arrogance and greed.

Released unto the mortal world once more, the Betrayer Gods' urge to ruin was supplanted by the desire to dominate, and they turned their sights first to the archmage who had freed them, making Vespin the first of their many mortal thralls. Records of diabolical texts safeguarded within the libraries of the Alabaster Lyceum suggest that Vespin, now long dead, serves the Betrayer Gods to this day—now as a devil at the left hand of the Lord of the Hells. These corrupt gods sought out the shattered remnants of the devils they had crafted and the demons they conscripted, and secretly created with them a fearsome new kingdom on the far end of the world, the capital of which was named Ghor Dranas, the Gathering of Shadows.

In this land, where the twisted power of the Betrayer Gods' corrupted planes seeped into the world, the lords of evil welcomed mortals whose heartlessness and lust for power made them susceptible to the gods' grand promises. The most fertile soil of all for these noxious seeds lay in mortal hearts obsessed with the infinite power of the arcane. With a legion of the damned behind them, the Betrayer Gods soon made their presence known to the world with a surprise assault on Vasselheim itself.

Though much of the city was reduced to rubble, Vasselheim weathered the initial assault, saved by the intervention of their protectors, the metallic dragons, and even a number of the Prime Deities themselves. The creators descended to trade blows with their former brethren. The battle, which pitted gods against mortals and heroes against demons, raged ceaselessly for twenty days and nights, until the dark forces were forced to retreat, their surprise attack thwarted.

Yet this victory was a tainted one. Evil had been repulsed momentarily, but the revelation of such a terrible foe incited an arcane arms race. Trust was shattered indefinitely: if mortals could fall under the sway of the Betrayer Gods, who could be true allies? If ruin like this could be unleashed under the watchful eyes of divinity, what value did mortal lives hold? Fearing all powers but their own, the most self-interested and singular human arcanists warped their greatest creations, magical instruments of prosperity and joy, into arms and armor of horrific power. 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 before seen.

For the first time since the awakening of 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

Few records remain of the terrible war that followed, but its effects are still felt today. Most tales that remain are of great champions who the Prime Deities blessed with their power. Some deities created warriors of their own from light and holy fire. Others imbued fragments of their power into the weapons now called Vestiges of Divergence. More still bestowed blessings upon mortals and called them champions. One tale even tells of a champion blessed by three of the gods in their times of greatest need. Now all but forgotten, this Apotheon was forced by fate into terrible battles across the world.

The sheer magnitude of the energies unleashed in the ensuing battles of gods and mortals frayed the boundaries holding back the elemental chaos, spilling unbridled destruction into the world and bringing utter annihilation. Even the ley lines that direct the flow of magic across Exandria like veins direct blood

through the body show signs of being warped by the raw power that the Calamity unleashed. Some well-preserved ruins of the ancient civilizations remain, such as the Drowned City of Cael Morrow in the lands of Marquet, but for the most part, all traces of the old world were erased from the face of Exandria.

So great was the loss of life during the war that even liberal estimates suggest no more than a third of Exandria's population survived it. This unthinkable devastation inspired some civilizations to flee Exandria entirely and seek refuge on other planes, scattering the Children of Creation across the multiverse. By the war's end, the only bastion of civilization left on the face of Exandria was the Dawn City itself: Vasselheim.

The Divergence

In the wake of the Calamity, the victorious Prime Deities once more banished their traitorous kin to their realms of deception and hate. The world entered a long, dark period of recovery, as history had to be recovered and purpose restored, and the threat of the Betrayer Gods still loomed heavily upon the minds of all. Even the Prime Deities felt guilt for their role in the conflict, for it was the unrestrained clash of divine power that had unleashed such horror upon the world.

The records of the Scalebearers assert that the Platinum Dragon and the Lawbearer descended upon Vasselheim and spoke a decision: the Prime Deities would depart from the world and establish a Divine Gate that would forever prevent any god from ever acting directly upon Exandria again. This proclamation shocked the other Prime Deities and the beleaguered survivors of the war in equal measure, but while mortals railed against this announcement, the other gods quickly realized that the decision of the two most dutiful and self-sacrificing of their number was unimpeachable and just.

Thus, in hopes of ensuring such ruin would not befall Exandria again, they left their children to rebuild civilization anew within the walls of Vasselheim and beyond. The Creators returned to their own realms, sealing all divine powers behind their newly constructed Divine Gate. Only in this way could they prevent their corrupted brethren from physically returning to the Material Plane.

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 worshipers, but the path of mortals is now their own to make. New cities, kingdoms, and cultures have retaken the world, building 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—and of mistakes that should never be repeated.

Names of the Divergence

Of these many formative events, the tale of the Divergence is the most oft-told among the many faiths and civilizations of the world. When seeking the truth of this event, the researchers of the Cobalt Soul found that it was called by many titles around the world, for many different reasons.

- **The Second Spark.** This name is most often used by those who study the arcane, for it was the gods giving them a second chance to use magic for the betterment of the world.
- **The Penance.** Priests, clerics, and religious scholars across Exandria refer to the departure of the gods by this name, for they see it as a self-imposed atonement for the gods' role in the ravaging of the world.
- **The Divergence.** The most common name for this event, the Divergence, is used by people of all classes and creeds. This descriptive name simply refers to the gods' final act of divergence from the mortal world.

Origins 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 had its own rebirth following the terrible destruction of the Calamity, the continent that now bears the name of this setting shall remain the focus.

The modern calendar began in the year 0 P.D. (Post-Divergence), over eight hundred years before the writing of this text. Though the modern nation-state of Tal'Dorei did not emerge for some time after year 0, the history of Tal'Dorei truly began with the founding of Gwessar.

Gwessar

At the dawning of modern history, what is now known as the continent of Tal'Dorei housed the germinating seeds of civilization. It was the hardy, dependable dwarves who best weathered the war between gods and mortals, beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains. Dozens of dwarven redoubts rose and fell in the tumult of the Calamity and the uncertain era that followed it. For many years, dwarves lived in the tunnels beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains, leaderless and chaotic, until the various clans unified to form the subterranean city of Kraghammer. Proud of their grand new home, the dwarf clans were content to remain beneath the earth. They saw the war-scarred surface world as a source of naught but misery and death, and their new underground

domain as a place of undiscovered prosperity. This city was dug underneath the mountains, and its deep roots, though young, survived where more ancient ancestral halls were annihilated. Clan Jaggenstrike were the architects of Kraghammer's hardy, unassailable redoubts, and easily became the first ruling clan of the Kraghammer dwarves.

While the dwarves busied themselves excavating the world below, a group of elves appeared suddenly in the south. At the outset of the Calamity, a society of elves used a powerful, obscure ritual to transport many of their people to safety on another plane: the Fey Realm, a plane of primordial beauty where elven legend says the Arch Heart lovingly fashioned their people before placing them upon the face of Exandria. They returned at the turning of the ages under the guidance of an elven sorceress named Yenlara Alderwreath.

The elves rallied around her both for her defiant strength and for her compassion in the face of adversity. It was under Yenlara's wise rule that elven society once again began to reform. Upon returning to Exandria, Yenlara led her people westward to the Verdant Expanse, an untamed forest born from the residual elemental power that lingered after the end of the Calamity.

So beautiful was the forest they settled in that Yenlara's people were the first elves known to bear the now-widespread name of syn'alfen—wood elves, in Common parlance. Likewise, the beauty of their forest home inspired the name of their first settlement: Syngorn, the great elvenhome that stands proud within the Verdant Expanse to this very day.

As Yenlara's people began to explore beyond the forest, they found vast fields of grass emerging from the ash-darkened ground, with tall, snowcapped mountains visible on the horizon. Overwhelmed by the beauty of the restored world, the syn'alfen called their new land Gwessar, the Fields of Joy, a name by





which elves (and those enamored with elven culture) still call the continent of Tal'Dorei 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. Humanity was not so fortunate. Human histories, written by wasteland warlords in fading ink on waterlogged parchment and vellum, did not survive the years. Yet, somehow, 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 Gwessar's western coast from the continent of Issylra, though whether or not they came from Vasselheim itself is unknown.

These people had the sea in their blood, and leapt from island to island for generations, but something called them to Gwessar. The ruins of their first settlement—the port city of O'Noa—still stand today. From O'Noa the seafarers expanded outward, until all of the western shores flew their banner. In the north, they found fertile fields protected from the salt of the sea, and 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 the city of Emon.

The Iron Rule of Drassig

The rise of human colonies irritated the elves of Syngorn. Forests that had stood for centuries fell under the axes of rash, short-lived beings who sought to exploit, expand, and propagate thoughtlessly. These tensions did not build to war, for long were the memories of the elves, but humanity remained a thorn in the side of elfkind, chafing at their hard-won efforts to protect their society and threatening to encroach upon their sacred woodlands.

As the first human civilization on this part of the world after the Calamity, Emon gave rise to a handful of self-entitled noble houses who went on to establish civilization in the name of the Lawbearer—but those who wrote 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 drove Syngorn to arms, and the continent erupted into a terrible, protracted 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 recalled in bardsong as the Time of Shrouds. The war spanned the Cliffkeep Mountains and parts of the Verdant Expanse, with the human colonies spread throughout the soon-to-be-warring territories. King Drassig encountered little resistance as he conquered each village, town, and city in turn, giving these isolated settlements no way of warning one another of the warlord's advance.

No common warmonger, Drassig was a cunning, heartless master of psychological warfare. Weeks in advance of his armies, he seeded spies throughout the land. They traveled swiftly through the secret dwarf-tunnels that crisscrossed the Cliffkeep Mountains, and infiltrated settlements throughout the region, turning the people of each settlement against their own leaders, eating at them from within, poisoning them against one another. By the time Drassig's armies reached their targets, they were already poised to fall. The lights of human towns and elven groves were snuffed out with equal savagery.

Yet, a mere nine years after the war began, King Warren Drassig died.

It happened at Torthil, an abandoned village in Gwessar's heartlands. For years, rumors had grown that Torthil was a haven for war refugees. The king and his soldiers fell upon the village with a vengeance, seeking survivors to slaughter. As they regrouped in the town square, Drassig stood among them, blade raised, eyes wild, and voice booming, to rally their bloodthirsty spirits. It was at the height of his wicked speech that the first arrow struck, followed shortly by a volley that clouded the sky. After nine years of suffering, Yenlara's wood elves and the rebellious humans of the scattered colonies had joined forces and formed an alliance against their common enemy.

After Warren Drassig fell, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Neminar Drassig. Neminar shunned the crude, brutal methods of his father, instead finding his interests in more sinister powers. He became known as "Neminar the Black-Fingered," as his forays into necromancy left one arm withered and tainted. Nevertheless, his weaponization of forbidden magic elevated the threat of Drassig's war machine. King Neminar, bent on bloody-minded vengeance, led his army back to Torthil, where the corpses of the elven and human traitors were piled high upon the outer walls. Their pyres ignited the night as the entire city was reduced to rubble. And so the Scattered War continued, unabated by the death of Warren Drassig.

The rule of Neminar marked the darkest days of the war. He introduced tactics and magic that drove his soldiers beyond human limits, leaving their bodies altered and mutated by foul necromancy. Their warped minds craved bloodshed and domination, and their bodies needed no sustenance to fuel their bloodlust. Drassig's forces became the perfect weapons of war, their ranks blessed by the divine touch of the Strife Emperor—the first Betrayer God to extend his power to mortals beyond the Divine Gate. All the gods soon learned that though they could not walk upon Exandria themselves, they could still grant magic to their faithful.

In the face of such terrible power, the alliance of humans and elves bolstered their ranks with vengeful orphans and eager heroes of all ancestries who suffered under Drassig's tyranny. One such hero who came to be instrumental in the coming conflict was Zan Tal'Dorei. A human who rose from the harried streets of Syngorn, Zan quickly showed her mettle as both a warrior and an inspirational leader. Rallying the broken ranks of the resistance, Zan lured Neminar and his lead forces into the Verdant Expanse.

Neminar's undoing was an arrogant attack upon the Shifting Keep, a Syngornian outpost protected by the slippery magic of the Fey Realm. The illusory fortress vanished, leaving the Drassig army without a target and vulnerable to ambush. The forest itself seemed to lend its fury to the weapons of Zan's warriors, and Neminar and his blighted soldiers were crushed in one swift stroke.

Word of Neminar's defeat and death spread like wildfire across Gwessar, and the banner of Zan Tal'Dorei's rebel army became a symbol of hope for all of the oppressed peoples of the realm.

Even so, the last years of fighting were still ahead of them, for the late King Warren Drassig's youngest son still stood to take power, and swore to avenge his family.

Battle of the Umbra Hills

King Trist Drassig, second-born son of the despotic Warren Drassig, took the throne with unearned confidence. So enamored was he with arrogant visions of victory that he ignored the truth of his tenuous rule: he was neither as brilliant nor as charismatic as his father, his armies were stretched thin, and his people rioted. The rebels, led by the young warrior Zan Tal'Dorei, won battle after battle, and before long, King Trist found his army backed against the imposing base of the Cliffkeep Mountains.

In the wake of certain victory, Zan and her rebels, allied with the elves of Syngorn, pursued Drassig to this valley, but were met with fiends amidst the ranks of their enemy. King Trist had a secret weapon—through his family's dealings with the Strife Emperor, the spawn of the Betrayers had returned to the world. They spilled into the battlefield like a river of nightmares, and in minutes, the surrounding hills ran dark with blood and ichor, and the bodies of humans and demons alike littered the battlefield. Yet, despite all odds, the hero Zan defeated King Trist, ending the Drassig bloodline—and with it, the demonic pact the Drassigs had made. It is said that the grass and flowers of the Umbra Hills grow black and burnt as an echo of this battle, their sap coursing with the fiendish blood that was spilled that day.

Tal'Dorei Ascendant

Society had all but collapsed once more amidst the Scattered War. Within the Verdant Expanse, the triumphant rebels assembled a council of trusted and proven minds, but the people were accustomed to a singular leader, a king. In the hearts of the people, it was not the crown that had failed them, but the bloody-minded family that wore it. The council assented to the will of their people, and nominated the war hero Zan Tal'Dorei to take the throne. She humbly accepted the role, but refused to take the title of king or queen. Her name, she asserted, was Zan. After some debate, she eventually relented to being called Sovereign Tal'Dorei, if such formality was required.

Again in spite of Zan's protestations, the council unanimously agreed the realm should be renamed Tal'Dorei in her honor. Power was divided between the sovereign and the council, both of whom ruled from Emon. From there, Emon's leaders expunged any remnants of Drassig's reign from their city, while the allied armies of Tal'Dorei and Syngorn did the same throughout the realm. The leading clans of Kraghammer pleaded for clemency, claiming they were coerced to serve Drassig. They spent many years paying reparations and making amends, but the fractured trust between Gwessar's peoples took generations to heal.

"A king should not stand apart from their people. A ruler must know sacrifice, for how else are they to know those who till the fields, who tend to the cattle, and who raise our children? A ruler should know pain and sorrow, for war is bloody and cruel. A ruler who asks their people to fight is one who asks them to die, and no person should die for a selfish king or an unjust cause. A ruler should know justice, but also mercy, for not all crimes are committed with evil intent, but rather in grief and shame. I am no king. I am the peasant in the fields. I am the painter at the easel. I am the young soldier donning their father's rusted armor. You will not find me sitting upon a bejeweled throne disdaining my supplicants, but working beside your mothers and fathers, fighting beside your valorous children, and aiding those who have suffered in the name of unjust kings.

"Henceforth, Tal'Dorei shall not be just a name: it is a principle. From this day, 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 declare with honor as you stand side-by-side with the people of Tal'Dorei as kin. 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 refuse the title of king. If you wish me to rule, I shall do so as a sovereign of the people—and if you permit 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

The Icelost Years

Not two years into Sovereign Zan's reign, a cataclysmic evil tested her mettle and the skill of the council. A creature from the Elemental Plane of Ice slunk into the Material Plane through a hitherto unknown rift between the planes. It appeared in a mystical forest of eternal winter known today as the Frostweald. From its hibernal abode, this elemental spirit spied upon the untested realm of Tal'Dorei and saw an opportunity. The spirit dove back to its extraplanar home and informed its master of a land ripe for conquest. Errevon the Rimelord, a cruel elemental so mighty that he is speculated to have been a scion of the Primordials, one that escaped the gods' wrath in the Founding, seized this opportunity.

On the next winter solstice, Errevon tore wide the Frostweald rift and commanded the endless blizzards of his home plane to ravage the prosperous land around it. Tal'Dorei's southern reaches, thus weakened, were easy pickings for the Algid Legion, a mighty army of frost giants and animate blizzards led by the Rimelord himself. Their relentless advance covered all they touched in snow and death.

Countless brave warriors and civilians alike fell to the invaders' gelid weapons, for they were unprepared for such an onslaught so soon after the Drassigs' protracted war. The storm of ice widened year by year, consuming the Tal'Dorei heartland as Errevon claimed all lands that fell beneath the

ice as his own. North of the rift, he built a towering citadel of frost, forcing those he conquered to swear fealty in exchange for warmth and liquid water. The Rimelord's tyrany lasted for three long years as the nascent Council of Tal'Dorei struggled to convince Syngorn and Kraghammer to ally for the sake of the realm. This monumental diplomatic mission completed, the combined might of Tal'Dorei, Syngorn, and Kraghammer assaulted Errevon's Citadel and forced the Rimelord back to the rift from whence he came. It was in this time of need that the druidic Ashari people first revealed themselves to the people of Tal'Dorei, and used their unrivaled elemental magic to seal the rift once and for all. The snow began to melt, the fortress toppled into the nearby Foramere Basin, and the people celebrated their freedom from the oppressive cold. This victory is now celebrated annually throughout Tal'Dorei as the Winter's Crest festival.

Thordak, the Cinder King

Zan Tal'Dorei passed peacefully after a long and happy rule, and was succeeded by a long line of her descendants. Many generations of peace ensued, and the Tal'Dorei Empire formed as dozens of tiny city-states across the Dividing Plains flocked to the stable rule and heroic reputation of Tal'Dorei in the wake of the Icelost Years.

The adroit statecraft of the Council of Tal'Dorei maintained cordial alliances with both Syngorn and Kraghammer, but, despite their best efforts, couldn't keep the elves and dwarves from regressing to hostility over ancient quarrels. In the time of Sovereign Odellan Tal'Dorei, word of a shadow in the south came to the ears of the council. Contact with numerous outlying townships at the edges of the empire halted abruptly, and traders that made circuits from Emon to the Rifenmist Peninsula in the south vanished without a trace. The council was slow to act in defense of territories that routinely flaunted imperial law, but were finally driven to action when allied villages south of the Verdant Expanse begged for protection against a "nightmare of fire and malice." The dour Sovereign Odellan blocked the council's relief efforts, claiming the economic cost of sending a regiment that far south to outsider communities was a misuse of resources, especially without proof of a threat. It wasn't until two years later, when reports of a powerful red dragon reached the ears of the sovereign, that the Council of Tal'Dorei was able to act.

By then, much of the Mornset Countryside had been reduced to ash by a self-obsessed and power-hungry red dragon named Thordak, who preferred the self-styled moniker of "the Cinder King." According to Cobalt Soul records from the Temple of the Mentor in the lands of Marquet, the Cinder King was presumed dead nearly two hundred years prior, killed by the brass dragon Devo'ssa—yet it could not be denied that Thordak survived, and that he sought new peoples to enslave, ones with fewer defenses.

The mighty armies of Tal'Dorei marched finally south, but morale was low. They marched toward fiery, painful death, and soldiers grumbled of a heartless sovereign who luxuriated in his castle in Emon while his people put their lives on the line for the realm. They finally clashed with Thordak and his mercenary armies south of the Stormcrest Mountains, but the forces of Tal'Dorei were soon forced into a panicked, disorganized retreat as the rocky, exposed terrain worked to the advantage of their airborne foe.

The valiant soldiers of Tal'Dorei would surely have been brought to utter ruin were it not for the heroic intervention of a band of young—yet able— adventurers. Led by Arcanist Allura Vysoren, who sits today upon the Tal'Dorei Council, they cornered the Cinder King alone and defeated him—though his power was so great that they could not manage to kill the dragon outright. Instead, Allura and her companions used powerful magic to imprison Thordak within the Elemental Plane of Fire forever. The Fire Ashari of distant Issylra vowed to watch over Thordak's prison until age could consume even him.

The Chroma Conclave

Forever lasted a mere sixteen years. In that time, life returned to mundane quarrels over the price of bread and taxes. During this time of quietude, an old and unexpected ally of Thordak's, a green dragon called Raishan the Diseased Deceiver, found Thordak and conspired to release him from his prison so he could conquer the land that had once rebuked him. Raishan formed a plan and forged an unprecedented alliance with three other power-hungry chromatic dragons: Umbrasyl the Hope Devourer, Brimscythe the Iron Storm, and Vorugal the Frigid Doom.

After infiltrating the Fire Ashari of Pyrah for nearly five years, Raishan finally unlocked the seal between the planes that bound Thordak and set him free. Thordak's physical body was warped by the fiery energies of his prison. Now stronger than ever, he rallied his draconic allies, the Chroma Conclave, to destroy or conquer Tal'Dorei as they saw fit—starting with a retributive assault of catastrophic proportions on Emon. 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. 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 manipulating the course of his rule from the shadows.

The Alabaster Lyceum need hardly introduce the heroes of this story. One by one, the members of the Conclave fell to the might and cleverness of a band of misfit warriors known as Vox Machina, their might bolstered by a number of the lost Vestiges of Divergence, artifacts of incalculable power forged amidst the chaos of the Calamity. After many adventures, these heroes gathered their allies and stormed the capital of Emon, slaying Thordak the Cinder King and freeing its 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 their reign over the land and restoring rule once more to the Council of Tal'Dorei.

A Fledgling Republic

The final act of Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II's life was to abdicate the throne and end the line of sovereigns—permanently. To analyze the historic Last Sovereign's final acts is the duty of biographers, not chroniclers, yet it can readily be surmised that he saw flaws inherent to his station. Uriel was the son of Odellan Tal'Dorei, the sovereign who singlehandedly prevented the council from swiftly handling the Cinder King when first he rose in the wilderness south of the empire.

How could the Last Sovereign not feel that it was his office's immense power to overrule the council that ultimately cost thousands of loyal citizens their lives? How could he not compare the singular power of the sovereign to the abuses of power committed by King Drassig in ancient times?

Regardless of his private feelings, Uriel II's last act as sovereign transformed his family's imperial dynasty into the Republic of Tal'Dorei. Zan Tal'Dorei was reluctant to accept the singular role of rulership at the dawning of the nation, an ideal she had to compromise upon to ensure stability for her fledgling nation. Uriel's relinquishment of power is seen today as a fulfillment of that ideal. It will be the duty of future historians to judge if his decision stood the test of time.

The Time of Regrowth

The Tal'Dorei Council has guided the fate of the nation since Vox Machina slew the Cinder King. For most of the past two decades, the goal of the council has been to rebuild that which was lost—and to assure far-flung territories that the nascent republic is just as stable as the empire ever was.

Recovery has been slow in both Tal'Dorei's heartland and its most distant reaches. Even though cities like Kymal and Stilben were not direct targets of the dragons' rampage, the age of unrest that followed

made these small cities easy targets for ransacking by roving bandits and corrupt magistrates alike. Even today, outlying settlements are slow to trust the good intentions of the Tal'Dorei Council.

Major cities like Westruun and Emon have been the greatest beneficiaries of the Time of Regrowth, for even though they suffered the worst of the Conclave's destruction, the dragons also kept their lairs close by, allowing vast amounts of plundered wealth from their treasure hoards to flow rapidly back into these cities' coffers. Over the last twenty years, these cities have hired legions of arcanists to magically restore much of what was lost.

However, perhaps the one city that can say it directly benefited from the Chroma Conclave's reign of chaos is Whitestone, a formerly independent city-state that is now a member of the republic. Whitestone took in countless refugees from Emon after the Conclave's initial attack, and countless more in the aftermath. Sequestered in Tal'Dorei's cold northeastern reaches, Whitestone is an isolated city, but it has rapidly become a powerhouse of political, cultural, artistic, and economic influence—to the chagrin of some traditionalists in Emon.

Apotheosis Thwarted

The world was troubled by a disturbance in Issylra a year after the Chroma Conclave's defeat, as a lich attempted to achieve godhood and crush the Dawn City of Vasselheim in one fell swoop. His success would have meant catastrophe for the Material Plane, leaving him the sole god on this side of the world's impenetrable Divine Gate. However, beyond hearing news of Vox Machina's involvement in this conflict, few in Tal'Dorei were concerned by rumblings on the other side of the world.

Though the lich's defeat confined him to a remote demiplane, there is no way to strip him of his stolen divinity. Occult worshipers yet scurry throughout Tal'Dorei's darkest corners, seeking the favor of a lich-god known as the Whispered One.

Seeds of Peril

A generation has passed in relative peace. Yet all who have studied history know that each age's conflict sows the seeds of the next. The Republic of Tal'Dorei has proven it can prosper in peacetime, but it has yet to be tested by the pressures of war or a supernatural cataclysm.

After two decades of expensive reconstruction and princely investments in skyship moorings, the Republic of Tal'Dorei is deeply indebted to arcanists across the land. Chief among them is the League of Miracles, a consortium of thaumaturgists who have claimed untold fortunes from reconstruction bounties all over the country.

The simple fact is that the cost of rebuilding Tal'Dorei was far more than the council or local leaders could afford to pay. Far be it from the Alabaster Lyceum to cast aspersions on so beneficial an organization, but there are fears among the Tal'Dorei people that the league has already begun to collect on what they are owed in forms other than gold, as more and more league mages receive preferential treatment from local margraves and even members of the Tal'Dorei Council itself.

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 the land 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. Demons and devils crawl into the world, summoned by occult powers answering fell voices from beyond the Divine Gate. The Betrayer Gods sense weakness within the world. The entropic fury of the Chained Oblivion churns beneath Gatshadow. The lost blade of Neminar the Black-Fingered calls from the Umbra Hills for a new master. The Cloaked Serpent raises armies south of Syngorn. Cults of the now-divine Whispered One spread like poison through the veins of Tal'Dorei's cities.

Yet despite these threats, the legendary heroes of Vox Machina have largely set down their blades, guns, and spells and taken up the mantle of leadership. More than twenty years have passed since their greatest adventures, and though the surviving members of Vox Machina are still canny rulers and cunning warriors, the Tal'Dorei Council can no longer rely upon their skills as readily as they once did. Rumors of the heroes' permanent retirement swirl, inspiring fear and nostalgic sorrow in many of the people—but adventurers across the land see this as an opportunity to rise to the level of Vox Machina and beyond.

Tal'Dorei needs heroes—and this time, Vox Machina alone will not be enough.

Running a Tal'Dorei Campaign

Tal'Dorei is more than just its history; do not treat this book as an encyclopedia, nor as shackles that bind you to portray its characters and environments with perfect fidelity. As you read this manual, 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? You might cherish the bonds of family and love between its many heroic characters. Perhaps you are drawn to the various factions that vie for power over Tal'Dorei's peoples. Or perhaps it's the way that evils

from Exandria's mythic past inevitably rear their ugly heads, always when circumstances are already at their most dire, that most captures your attention.

No matter 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. Create boldly, using these words as a launching point for your own tales.

This section is for Game Masters' eyes only, though GMs are welcome to share tidbits with their players to set the stage for the campaign, or to inspire them to create characters that will dovetail with the GM's story ideas.

Secrets of Tal'Dorei

The world of Exandria is steeped in familiar fantasy themes, with all the elves, dwarves, and wizards you might expect from a fantasy roleplaying game. But it 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 live in self-imposed exile. An unbreakable barrier stands between the mortal and immortal realms. At best, a deity can grant their most skilled devotees a small measure of divine power to enact their will upon Exandria.

However, there are a number of cults who yearn to circumvent this barrier and summon their dark patron onto the Material Plane. Others still seek to unravel the forgotten rites of ascension, just as the Matron of Ravens did in ancient times—just as the Whispered One did in living memory. What would happen if an omnipotent deity somehow managed to arise on the mortal side of the Divine Gate? Or even simply managed to fool the gods into thinking they had done so? Would the gods of good be forced to unleash their powers as one to break the Gate, unleashing 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 heroes are able to help, the realm may fall into anarchy and chaos.

While fantasy politics isn't every gamer's cup of tea, the struggles 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, which may have been planted by any number of this land's power-hungry factions, from the invasive crime syndicate known as the Myriad to the shadowy mages within the Arcana Pansophical who splintered off into a new schismatic faction, the League of Miracles.

Game Masters can also use political elements to flavor or provide a backdrop for their otherwise action-focused games. On a smaller scale, corrupt margraves may hire bandits to pillage their own villages, requiring heroes to step in. On a broader scale, a threat to the stability of the Republic of Tal'Dorei itself may force the characters to stop a megalomaniac bent on conquering the republic from within.

Criminal Shadow War

A criminal syndicate known as the Clasp has lurked in Tal'Dorei's underworld since the foundation of the old Tal'Dorei Empire. It's almost become a cliché, for people across the land know the Clasp as the stereotypical face of organized crime. Novels romanticizing their allure have been adapted into stage plays and bard-song in all corners of the republic.

And perhaps the Clasp has bought its own good publicity. After the Cinder King's famous conquest of Emon some twenty years ago, it was the Clasp that saved countless innocent people and led them to safety through their extensive network of smuggling tunnels beneath the city. It was the organized action of criminals, just as much as Vox Machina's heroic power, which saved Tal'Dorei—and the Tal'Dorei Council knows it. The Clasp has gone mainstream.

However, the Clasp is under threat from the Myriad, another criminal syndicate from the nearby continent of Wildemount. The Myriad sees Tal'Dorei's slow legitimization of the Clasp as an opportunity to seize power in the nation's criminal underground. Violence is on the rise in Tal'Dorei's cities as the Myriad uses local gangs as pawns in their bid to dethrone the Clasp.

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" reduced the city of Emon to slag, but through fear, panic, and malice,

the flames of destruction were spread across the continent by mortal hands. Today, a generation after 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.

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 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 develop new technologies from Percival's research, and other black powder technologies from Marquet. Some of these modern marvels will no doubt help the people of Exandria—but others, if placed in the wrong hands, are sure to enable the deaths of thousands.

Renaissance technologies, especially firearms, are not common in Tal'Dorei. If you want to keep your fantasy purely medieval, it's a simple matter to ignore the tinkerers, gunsmiths, and budding industrialists scattered across the continent.

Uncharted Territory

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

To help you create stories that feel at home in Tal'Dorei, chapter 3 of this book contains a number of story hooks throughout its description of Tal'Dorei's landscape and settlements. See "Creating Adventures" on page 193 for more information on how to turn these plot seeds into full adventures that you can run for your gaming group.

While this book gives insight to one version of Exandria, its lore exists to serve you, not the other way around. Your campaign is your own creation—if you delight in adhering to *Critical Role* canon and delving into its lore, then by all means, dig deeper! If you like subverting expectations, revealing that things believed to be true were nothing but myth and rumor all along, tell that story! And, if you love characters and places from *Critical Role*, but want your stories to go to brand-new lands of your own creation, take inspiration from this book and steer your campaign in whatever direction you see fit. Never forget that you are the creator of your own version of Tal'Dorei. No matter who is playing at your table, even if it's Matthew Mercer himself, no one can tell you that your vision of the world is inaccurate—because it's yours now.





CHAPTER 2

Allegiances of Tal'Dorei

The lands of Tal'Dorei are governed not just by their history, but by factions and faiths striving to achieve myriad goals, fighting for conflicting ideals, and vying for the power to come out on top. The gods of Exandria may be barred from walking upon the land in material form, but they can still put their thumbs on the scales of history through their mortal followers. Such followers include clerics with the power to cast mighty spells, paladins who wield blades alight with idealistic verve, and untold thousands of common folk whose voices can affect the decisions of even the most powerful leaders of the land.

A number of factions hold just as much sway over the daily lives of the people as the gods and their clergy—perhaps even more. These factions range in might and influence from the greatest of the great to the smallest of the small. The Tal'Dorei Council institutes political policies that affect everyone in grand, sweeping, and often inscrutable ways, while the Golden Grin is a group of folk heroes who seek to subvert evil across the land. Whether these factions are governments or just tiny organizations, they can add depth and conflict to your Tal'Dorei campaign.

Pantheon of Exandria

During the Divergence, the Prime Deities created a powerful barrier between the Material Plane and the supernatural realms of the Outer Planes. This gate sealed all gods, including the evil Betrayer Gods, within their respective domains. If the Divine Gate were to be destroyed by the unanimous effort of the Prime Deities, all powers would be unleashed, threatening armageddon. Thus, the gods patiently watch their creations from beyond the veil, aiding their faithful with what small power they can send through the barrier.

Some lesser idols, such as archdevils, demon lords, fiends and celestials of near-divine power, as well as a number of unaccounted-for demigods reside among the planes. They are affected by the Divine Gate, preventing them from crossing it of their own volition, yet are not so bound by it that they cannot be summoned by mortal magic.

The following gods are recommended as the existing Exandrian pantheon, but they are only a recommendation. As long as the GM and the players agree, you are welcome to tailor, alter, or completely change the gods in your Tal'Dorei campaign to fit your needs. The domains listed are the likely choices for followers of that deity, but these are not the only options.

Divine Domains

Most clerics can gain their magic from a single god, or even from a number of gods that share domains or divine provinces. Ultimately, how your cleric serves the gods or their core religious philosophies is for you and your Game Master to discuss. Each god in this chapter has two or three Divine Domains from which many of their clerics are granted power.

Nevertheless, almost all deities can have clerics who gain the power of any domain, if you and your Game Master agree.

Prime Deities

Deity	Alignment	Province
Changebringer	Chaotic good	Change, freedom, luck
Platinum Dragon	Lawful good	Honor, justice
Arch Heart	Chaotic good	Art, beauty, elves
Lawbearer	Lawful neutral	Civilization, law, peace
Knowing Mentor	Neutral	Knowledge, learning, teaching
Stormlord	Chaotic neutral	Battle, competition, storms
Wildmother	Neutral	Seas, wilderness
All-Hammer	Lawful good	Craft, creation
Dawnfather	Neutral good	Healing, sun
Everlight	Neutral good	Atonement, compassion
Matron of Ravens	Lawful neutral	Death, fate, winter
Moonweaver	Chaotic good	Illusion, moonlight, night

Prime Deities

The Prime Deities are the leaders and luminary creators that battled the Primordial Titans and instigated the Founding, forging the mortal races of Exandria. They hold sway over powers that represent a spectrum of sunlight, truth, moonlight, benevolent concealment, protection, love, death, and all other facets of freedom and life in the world. While these gods may disagree and squabble, they are united in an alliance dedicated to ensuring the survival of their creations.

The Changebringer

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. There are few urban temples dedicated to the Changebringer, but her shrines are often found along well-traveled roads and on isolated wilderness hilltops. Many merchants, adventurers, and free-spirited folk worship the Changebringer, and many a gala toast and tavern song celebrate her as a bringer of luck and fortune.

Depiction. 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, ever leading into the unknown.

Divine Domains. Many of the Changebringer's clerics are granted powers of Moon, Nature, or Trickery.

Holy Day. The Changebringer's holy day, called New Dawn, takes place on 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 celebrating 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 up against tyranny. Fight for the freedom of yourself and others when you can, and inspire others to fight when you cannot.



Symbol of the Changebringer

The Platinum Dragon

The pillar of justice, protection, nobility, and honor, the Platinum Dragon is a beacon to paladins of order and good, and is revered by most metallic dragons as the first of their kind. The crest of the Platinum Dragon adorns many halls of high leadership and judgment, invoking his will in all matters of justice. To follow him is to look after those who cannot look after themselves.

Depiction. The Platinum Dragon 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 works of art depict a massive, glittering dragon with vibrant platinum scales and a wingspan that fades into etherealness.

Divine Domains. Many of the Platinum Dragon's clerics are granted powers of Life, Order, or War.

Holy Day. 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 for 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 the persecuted, and protect the ideals of justice and order.



Symbol of the Platinum Dragon

The Arch Heart

Guardian of spring, beauty, and the arts, the Arch Heart is the patron of arcane magic, elves, 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 Arch Heart's hand that the first elves wandered from the Fey Realm, and for this reason, they are considered the Parent of all elves. Those who seek art in all of their work, whether magic or mundane, often worship at the altar of the Arch Heart. They loathe the Spider Queen and her priestesses for leading the drow astray.

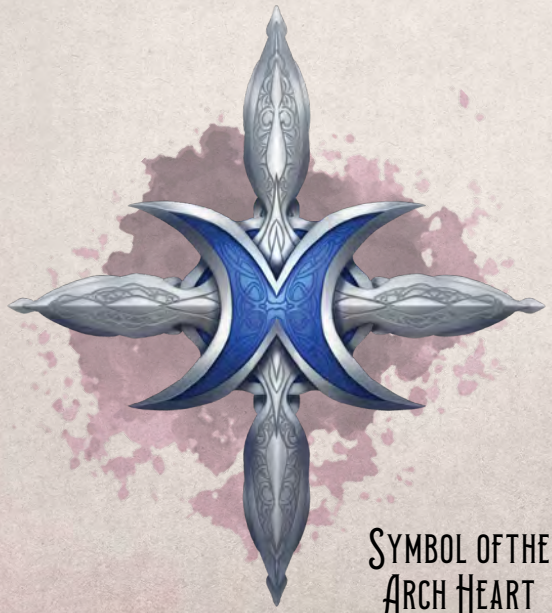
Depiction. Most modern tapestries and tomes depict the Arch Heart as a genderless elf of impossible grace and beauty, androgynous and alluring, framed by long, wavy, golden hair. The Arch Heart inspired many early elven art pieces, and elements of their visage or symbol are included in most elven architecture.

Divine Domains. Many of the Arch Heart's clerics are granted powers of Arcana, Nature, or Light.

Holy Day. The Arch Heart's holy day is called Elvendawn, or Midsummer. It's celebrated on the twentieth day of the sixth month, and commemorates the elves' first emergence from the Fey Realm. In Syngorn, the elves build magical wards, open small doorways into the Fey Realm, and celebrate with uncharacteristic vigor with the wild fey.

Commandments of the Arch Heart

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



Symbol of the Arch Heart

The Lawbearer

The driving inspiration behind many great inventions, the creation of vast cities, and law and order within society, the Lawbearer claims dominion over civilization. Judges and lawful rulers pay respect at her temples, which are central structures in major cities around the world. Peace and order—through structure and law—guide 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. Civil unrest and riots blossom within her beloved cities in these times of imbalance.

Depiction. Illustrations and statues show the Lawbearer as a hooded, armored woman with light brown skin and a strong, lithe body, sitting atop a throne of pillars. Her face is generally obscured or depicted without expression, giving her presence an impartial yet imposing nature.

Divine Domains. Many of the Lawbearer's clerics are granted powers of Knowledge or Order.

Holy Day. 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

- Utilize the company and aid of others. The efforts of the individual often pale against the capabilities of community.
- Strive to tame the wilds 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 settlements, build where inspiration strikes, and expand the edicts of the Lawbearer.



Symbol of the Lawbearer

The Knowing Mentor

Revered by seers, sages, and teachers of all walks of life, the Knowing Mentor guided the growth of civilization throughout the Age of Arcanum like sunlight guides the branches of a tree. Her teachings were silenced when she was grievously wounded by the Chained Oblivion during the Calamity, and though she survived and went into hiding behind the Divine Gate, her followers are hunted by agents of her ancient foes to this day. Her devout now worship in private, spreading knowledge, philosophy, and lore anonymously through traceless channels.

The one exception are the scholars of the Cobalt Soul (see page 58), an international organization of knowledge-seekers, spies, and archivists that seek to reveal the truth at all costs. Most members of the Cobalt Soul aren't zealous worshipers of the Knowing Mentor, but still pay homage to her in some form.

Depiction. Common representations show the Knowing Mentor as a greying, mature woman of welcoming, matronly smile swathed in billowing robes and scarves that fan into books and scrolls. Some call her the Knowing Mistress, revering her as a headmistress of knowledge among the gods.

Divine Domains. Many of the Knowing Mentor's clerics are granted powers of Arcana, Knowledge, or Twilight.

Holy Day. The Knowing Mentor 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 Mentor's faith been publicly resurrected—though her worship by the intellectuals of the city bears little resemblance to that of the knowledge-seekers of old.

Commandments of the Knowing Mentor

- Unmask those who would destroy the Knowing Mentor. 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 without moral cause, for evil folk gain power when their followers obscure the truth. Never stoop to the level of selfish liars.



Symbol of the Knowing Mentor

The Stormlord

Where thunder cracks and conflict rises, prayers to the Stormlord are shouted into the maelstrom. Reveling in all tests of strength, the blessing of the Stormlord finds those that prove themselves on the battlefield. Worshiped by athletes and warriors all across Exandria, he exalts those whose force of spirit and passion 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 to appease him.

Depiction. Within his temples and carvings, the Stormlord is shown as a quintessential warrior, often nude with a beard and short, curly hair. As the epitome of muscle and strength, most art depicts the Stormlord in a stance of dominance, typically asserting his power by wrestling a terrible beast.

Divine Domains. Many of the Stormlord's clerics are granted powers of Tempest or War.

Holy Day. The Stormlord's holy day is the Day of Challenging, and it 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 Godsbrawl 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 own glory on the battlefield.



Symbol of the Stormlord

The Wildmother

The realm of the Wildmother extends to wherever the seas shift and the land grows over. As the keeper of the wilderness, she represents the wild creatures of nature, the rush of the angry rapids, and the heat-heavy stillness of the desert. Hunters, druids, and nomads worship her, seeking her blessing to live in harmony with lands that still bear their wild fangs. Likewise, those seeking safe passage across dangerous waters pray 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 as devastating natural disasters. Clerics of the Matron of Ravens also pay homage to the Wildmother, for the work she begins is the work that their deity must respectfully end.

Depiction. Immortalized through wooden reliefs and carved idols in hidden, overgrown groves and rural shrines, the Wildmother is shown as a beautiful woman with green or deep brown skin nearly swallowed by a wild, tangled wreath of hair, leaves, and vines that envelop her strong, full-figured form.

Divine Domains. Many of the Wildmother's clerics are granted powers of Life, Nature, or Tempest.

Holy Day. 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 honor the Wildmother by journeying 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 wilderness from exploitation and destruction.
- Slay abominations and other mockeries of nature.
- Embrace and respect that which you cannot control in this world. Exist in harmony with it.



Symbol of the Wildmother

The All-Hammer

The patron of craft and creation, the All-Hammer 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. Devotion to the All-Hammer is strongest in dwarven communities, and many of his temples mark the center of a mighty dwarven stronghold.

Depiction. Many guildhalls and workshops contain images of the All-Hammer, a faceless, stout dwarf of immense strength, hunched over a flaming heart clasped within his massive hands. The All-Hammer's dwarven appearance is consistent across Tal'Dorei, with some exceptions. Other cultures that pride themselves on their metallurgy, like the fire giant enclave of Vulkanon (see page 220), depict the All-Hammer as one of their own—in this case, a faceless giant with a flaming mane.

Divine Domains. Many of the All-Hammer's clerics are granted powers of Forge, Knowledge, or War.

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

Commandments of the All-Hammer

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



Symbol of the All-Hammer

The Dawnfather

The Dawnfather rules over sun and summer, and his vigil encircles the ages as the keeper of time. As the lord of agriculture and harbinger of the harvest, he is worshiped by farmers and most common folk, and his priests are welcome in lands all over. Supporter of the needy and destroyer of evil, the Dawnfather is often the patron of paladins and rangers who follow a similar creed. The Dawnfather is mythically renowned for his defeat of the Chained Oblivion and is revered by those who hunt aberrations.

Depiction. Tapestries of old match early texts describing the Dawnfather as a kindly patriarch clad in silver and gold armor, his head a beacon of light and fire so bright that his face can barely be seen. Many statues in holy places use the Dawnfather's head as a brazier, lit with each dawn and extinguished with the dusk.

Divine Domains. Many of the Dawnfather's clerics are granted powers of Life, Light, or Nature.

Holy Day. 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 celebrated with gifts and a festival of lights around the Sun Tree. 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.
- Deliver the light of the Dawnfather where darkness dwells, and do so with kindness, compassion, and mercy.



Symbol of the Dawnfather

The Everlight

God of compassion and redemption, the Everlight bears a divine message of determination and compassion, even in the darkest of times. She believes that the corrupt can be redeemed, a mindset that led to a betrayal by the Lord of the Hells, who decimated her followers during 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, offering voices of reason and empathy in angry and cynical times.

Depiction. Those who rise to bring the Everlight's words back to the light either unearth her image from ruined temples or create new art to inspire others with her message. She is represented as a beautiful, strong woman with dark skin and light hair, rising betwixt a set of angelic ivory wings.

Divine Domains. Many of the Everlight's clerics are granted powers of Life, Light, or Peace.

Holy Day. The Everlight's holy day has long been forgotten, and her followers have yet to decide when her festival should be held, or even 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 be dispatched with swift justice.

The Matron of Ravens

Master of the skein of fate and the mistress of winter, the Matron of Ravens is 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 that the natural transition is undefiled.



Symbol of the Everlight

Mourners at funerals across the land invoke her blessing in hopes that she will protect the deceased from the terrible curse of undeath.

Keepers of ancient lore believe the Matron of Ravens was once mortal herself, and thus the only mortal known to have ascended to godhood—before the rise of the Whispered One, at least. Her rise instantly obliterated the previous, now-forgotten god of death, and in its wake, the other gods quickly and fearfully destroyed the secrets to the rites of ascension.

Depiction. There are very few visual depictions of the Matron of Ravens; many temples simply use the raven as a symbol of her blessing. Rare images, however, portray the Matron herself as 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.

Divine Domains. Many of the Matron of Ravens's clerics are granted powers of Death, Grave, or Twilight.

Holy Day. The Matron of Ravens's holy day is the Night of Ascension, which celebrates 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 Matron's followers believe that the honored dead would rather be venerated with cheer than misery. The Matron of Ravens is also considered by some to be the patron of Winter's Crest, a holiday that celebrates freedom from Errevon the Rimelord and is observed in Tal'Dorei on the twentieth day of the eleventh month.

Commandments of the Matron of Ravens

- Death is the natural end of life. Grieve the fallen, but do not pity them. Exult in the time that they were granted.
- The path of Fate is sacrosanct. Those who pridefully cast off destiny must be punished.
- Undeath is an atrocity. Death is too good a punishment for those who pervert the rightful transition of the soul.



Symbol of the Matron of Ravens

The Moonweaver

The Moonweaver is the god of moonlight and the autumn season, as well as the patron of illusion and misdirection. Widely worshipped in halfling and elven culture, she is also considered to be the deity of love, shielding the trysts of lovers in shadows of her own making. Those who work in darkness and trickery often ask for her blessing.

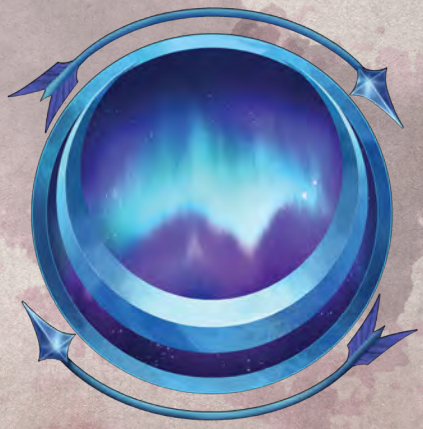
Depiction. Depictions of the Moonweaver are as numerous as the myths and stories of her meddling within simple unions. However, she is most often painted as a young girl of light-blue skin and white hair, with a body and limbs that dissolve into silky strands of silver moonlight, caressing and creating the edges of the shadows.

Divine Domains. Many of the Moonweaver's clerics are granted powers of Arcana, Moon (see page 169), or Twilight.

Holy Day. The Moonweaver has no holy day, but is celebrated by most 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. The wyvern-riding skyswimmers of Lyrengorn, however, venerate the Moonweaver in their own way: with the annual arrival of the Moonweaver's Ribbons, a majestic aurora that illuminates the skies above the Elvenpeaks.

Commandments of the Moonweaver

- Seize your own destiny and pursue your own passions.
- Let the shadows protect you from the burning light of fanaticism and the absolute darkness of despair.
- Walk unbridled and untethered, forging new memories and experiences.



Symbol of the Moonweaver

Betrayer Gods

The Betrayer Gods are the deities who strayed from the ideals of the Founding and embraced the destructive chaos of the Primordials. The Betrayer Gods rarely work together, for they see one another as threats to their own goals. This very weakness allowed the Prime Deities to defeat and banish them, ending the Calamity.

Betrayer Gods

Deity	Alignment	Province
Lord of the Hells	Lawful evil	God of devils and the Hells
Strife Emperor	Lawful evil	Conquest, tyranny
The Ruiner	Chaotic evil	Slaughter, warfare
Spider Queen	Chaotic evil	Deceit, spiders
Chained Oblivion	Chaotic evil	Darkness, destruction
Scaled Tyrant	Lawful evil	Dragon god of evil
Crawling King	Neutral evil	Enslavement, torture
Whispered One	Neutral evil	Necromancy, secrets
Cloaked Serpent	Chaotic evil	Assassins, poison, snakes

The Lord of the Hells

The devil god of the Hells is the master of tyranny and domination, and was the first to instill his despotic will into celestials, creating the first devils. His words are honeyed and carefully crafted, soothing and corrupting the hearts of mortals and immortals alike. The Lord of the Hells rules his domain with an iron fist, and the punishments awaiting those that cross him are the stuff of nightmares. Evil entities pay him tribute right alongside his devils, and many warlocks are drawn to his power.



Symbol of the Lord of the Hells

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

Divine Domains. Many of the Lord of the Hells' clerics are granted powers of Order, Trickery, or War.

Enemies. The Lord of the Hells' enemies are numerous, even among the Betrayer Gods, many of whom only follow him for fear of his immense power. His 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 a bond of unbreakable fellowship.

Commandments of the Lord of the Hells

- Assert dominance and power over others. Show your strength of will in the image of your 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. The weak do not warrant your compassion—compassion itself is a weakness.

The Strife Emperor

Blood-drenched armies of brutal warriors oft crush their foes in the name of the Strife Emperor, the patron of warfare and conquest. To serve his will is to accept the call to conflict, seeking lesser people to break and subjugate. Warmongers 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. During the Calamity, he grew his armies not by rallying demons, but by corrupting noble creatures into monsters and by destroying the wilds to fuel his engines of war.

Depiction. 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 shadows that obscure his helmeted face do not hide his unblinking yellow eyes.

Those who long for conquest often see their own people as superior to all others. Thus, somewhat appropriately, depictions of the Strife Emperor are contentious and myriad: he is usually portrayed as a member of whatever race currently bears his banner. In the Republic of Tal'Dorei, his face most often has

a human cast, for King Drassig's bloodline paid him tribute long ago.

Divine Domains. Many of the Strife Emperor's clerics are granted powers of the Forge, Order, or War.

Enemies. The Strife Emperor's greatest enemy is the Wildmother, who defeated him in Rifenmist during the Calamity. In turn, he is also despised by her beloved, the Lawbearer, for perverting the benevolent rule of law into the manacles of authoritarianism. The Strife Emperor and the Wildmother clashed many times during the war before his final defeat at Beynsfal Plateau. His massive iron armor is still scattered across Beynsfal, and his gigantic helmet has become the seat of a ruthless empire.

Commandments of the Strife Emperor

- Fear is your ally. Conquer your fear, and inspire it in your foes.
- Disorder and rebellion are to be punished severely.
- To kill is life's greatest pleasure, and perfecting the art of slaughter is life's greatest pursuit.

The Strife Emperor is also known as the progenitor of the Curse of Strife (see "Betrayer Curses" on page 39).

The Ruiner

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 lord goad all living creatures to shrug off the oppressive chains of courtesy and civilization and to devour the world around them, giving in to the chaotic and selfish nature of the predator.

As civilization rises, people of all cultures feel the draw of the uncomplicated, primeval world. Some find their way to the loving embrace of the Wildmother and her sects, going on to live in harmony with nature. Others fall into the cruel thrall of the Ruiner and his bloody cults of slaughter. In Tal'Dorei, the worst of these cults are the Ravagers, the scourge of the Dividing Plains (see page 249).

Depiction. Simple clay representations in communities of the Ruiner's followers show him as a hulking, bulbous behemoth of an orc. His missing eye has shifted, the prominent remaining eye now centered in his face like that of a nightmarish cyclops.

Divine Domains. Many of the Ruiner's clerics are granted powers of Death, Tempest, or War.

Enemies. The Arch Heart 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. Likewise, the Ruiner is a dark mirror of the Wildmother, and his hatred for her kindness is surpassed only by his lust for vengeance against the Arch Heart.

Commandments of the Ruiner

- Ruin. Ravage. 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 Ruiner is also known as the progenitor of the Curse of Ruin (see "Betrayer Curses" on page 39).

The Spider Queen

The 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 across much of Exandria, 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.

A mysterious faction of elves from Wildemount, the Kryn Dynasty, escaped this evil god's thrall in ancient times. This civilization's geographical isolation from Tal'Dorei keeps communication between



Symbol of the Strife Emperor



Symbol of the Ruiner

them limited, but a small number of Kryn dark elves have traveled to Tal'Dorei to investigate the subterranean tunnels beneath the Stormcrest Mountains (see page 112).

Depiction. Ancient icons and idols dedicated to the Spider Queen show an alluring woman with deep purple skin and silver hair, her abdomen swelling into the terrifying body of a monstrous spider. Her depictions are highly polarized between her elite devotees and her wretched supplicants. They are either opulent gilded statues, or deranged cave paintings.

Divine Domains. Many of the Spider Queen's clerics are granted powers of Knowledge or Trickery.

Enemies. 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 Arch Heart, whom she claims drove her children below the earth. Despite their shared enemy, the Spider Queen often manipulates the Ruiner's followers into attacking her foes, so that the drow may remain safe. The only being the Queen fears is the Chained Oblivion; she dreads its alien mind and is furious about how its madness has gripped her children.

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, and death to all their allies!

The Chained Oblivion

It is darkness unending, less like a god and more like another world of malevolent, alien intelligence. Life and death do not exist within the Chained Oblivion; only the absolute end of all things. Few minds can comprehend the depth of oblivion. Most who do are so completely lost to nihilistic despair or denial that they devote the rest of their lives to hastening the end of this reality so that it may be swallowed up by the great inevitability: utter, tenebrous cold.

Even the other Betrayer Gods treat the Oblivion with caution. In its endless imprisonment, it dreams 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.

Depiction. Few visual attempts to depict the Chained Oblivion exist, but texts describe a creature of roiling ink and hungry darkness, a spreading cloud of lightless destruction born from a thousand ravenous mouths. Current references show the nightmare constrained by chains of black and gold, barely keeping the dark at bay.

Divine Domains. Many of the Chained Oblivion's clerics are granted powers of Death, Grave, or Trickery.

Enemies. The few remaining followers of the Knowing Mentor, who was gravely wounded by the Oblivion in ancient times, are dedicated to ensuring that the Chained Oblivion is never again unchained. Their goddess led the charge against the all-consuming god's reemergence, and her bravery allowed the other Prime Deities to shackle their enemy, though the victory nearly cost the Mentor her immortal life. Some say the Knowing Mentor can only be fully restored if the Chained Oblivion is fully destroyed—for good.

Commandments of the Chained Oblivion

- Offer light and life into its all-consuming maw so that it may surpass all divinities and be freed.
- Uncover, restore, and exalt forgotten shrines and relics in its honor.
- Ruin and raze the realms to hasten the arrival of the Epoch of Ends.



Symbol of the Spider Queen



Symbol of the Chained Oblivion

The Scaled Tyrant

The evil queen of dragons is a fearsome god of greed, envy, and hoarded wealth. While chromatic dragons are her foremost worshipers, the Scaled Tyrant accepts the worship of any who crave wealth. All chromatic dragons have a fearful 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 devastation that the Chroma Conclave spread across Exandria, the prideful Conclave never considered themselves subservient to the Dragon Queen.

Depiction. Most visual representations of the Scaled Tyrant exist as warnings within sanctuaries of the Platinum Dragon. She is shown as a dragon of frightful size with five vicious dragon heads, each one a chromatic color of her evil children. Massive, leathery wings sprout from her back, spreading clouds of poisonous mist.

Divine Domains. Many of the Scaled Tyrant's clerics are granted powers of Order, Trickery, or War.

Enemies. The Scaled Tyrant's hatred for the Platinum Dragon is as old as the Founding, and her cults are ever-hunted by his justice. For centuries, the zealous paladins of the Platinum Dragon have limited the Tyrant's worship to the chromatic dragons, but sects of humanoid dragon-worshipers appeared in the wake of the Chroma Conclave's destruction of Emon, and have been secretly keeping her faith alive in the generation since the Conclave's defeat. Some Tal'Dorei oligarchs have even turned to the Scaled Tyrant in secret, as their hoarded wealth begins to run dry, sapped by the immense cost of rebuilding what was lost to the Conclave.

Commandments of the Scaled Tyrant

- Amass wealth, but spend little. The gold—and the power that comes with it—is sufficient reward in itself.
- 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 of it.



Symbol of the Scaled Tyrant

The Crawling King

The god of the endless tunnels and caverns beneath Exandria, the Crawling King is patron to torturers, slavers, and jailers across the realms. The furious, molten tears he wept upon his defeat carved a network of infinite subterranean pathways beneath Exandria—and in the vastness of the Outer Planes, his plane of imprisonment is a realm of logic-defying caves and grasping manacles from which few return alive.

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.

Depiction. The Crawling King is rendered as a swollen, malformed worm that slithers through the dark below, with a screaming, hairless human head and three arms carving through the lightless rock.

Divine Domains. Many of the Crawling King's clerics are granted powers of Death or Trickery.

Enemies. The Dawnfather and the Everlight defeated the Crawling King during the Calamity by luring their nemesis above ground. The Dawnfather pierced his tenebrous body with ten thousand lances of sunlight, and the Everlight imprisoned him beyond the boundaries of Exandria within her serene rays. The tears of pain and anger the Crawling King shed burned through Exandria, and his faithful fled into these tunnels to escape their enemies' holy light.

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.



Symbol of the Crawling King

The Whispered One

The pain of defeat is cruel indeed. Twenty-four years ago, a cult known as the Remnants rose up against the world, led by an undead archmage known as the Whispered One. This lich had toiled in secret for years within the Plane of Shadow, constructing the towering citadel of Thar Amphala there, while secretly spreading his poison throughout the storied lands of Issylra. His goal was simple: repeat the lost rites of ascension that the Matron of Ravens used in the Age of Arcanum to become a god—and this time, to be on the opposite side of the Divine Gate, so that he could rule the world.

His ascension was successful, but the new god was ultimately banished behind the Divine Gate by the intervention of Vox Machina. Their victory, though grand, was not complete. The Remnants, though bloodied, still venerate their spited master with offerings of secrets and unwilling souls to gain his favor.

The Whispered One is a god of hidden things, and the occult remnants of his followers prey upon those who harbor dark secrets, stoking their fears and driving them into his skeletal embrace. He also is a patron of undeath, and upon those who lavish him with their worship, he bestows the keys to creating ever-greater monstrosities.

Depiction. The Whispered One is a picture of sepulchral self-mutilation. Those faithful who saw him at Thar Amphala describe him as an unnaturally tall, gaunt humanoid with necrotic skin stretched taut over his bones, wrapped in robes of shadow, and adorned with jeweled talismans.

Divine Domains. Many of the Whispered One's clerics are granted powers of Arcana, Death, or Knowledge.

Enemies. The Whispered One now despises all the gods who stood in his way by anointing members of Vox Machina as their champions. The Dawnfather, the Everlight, the Knowing Mentor, and the Matron of Ravens all contributed to his defeat, and his Remnants are hell-bent on subverting their mortal followings. He also harbors resentment for the Moonweaver, who benevolently blesses the keepers of benign secrets, robbing him of followers.

Commandments of the Whispered One

- Learn all you can, and keep hidden that which you know. Reveal what pieces you must, but never the whole.
- Express and cultivate the evil within yourself, and in doing so, recognize it in others to exploit them for your own benefit.
- Seed the ruin of all who worship other deities, until only those who kneel before the Whispered One remain.

The Cloaked Serpent

A wanderer in the shadows and the creator of snakes and serpentkin, the Cloaked Serpent is the evil god of poisons, assassins, and darkness. The ancient serpentkin worship him over all other deities, dragging screaming offerings to their temples in his honor. Most of the Cloaked Serpent's worshipers were annihilated during the Calamity, and those that 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.

In Tal'Dorei, most of the Cloaked Serpent's serpentkin followers live in arcane suspension on the mysterious Visa Isle (see page 145).

Depiction. Many forgotten temples were once built to worship the Cloaked Serpent, and his image was embedded within much of their architecture. He possesses a humanoid body with six arms and a fanged, serpentine head adorned with a threatening hood. Strands of thick, dark hair sprout from his scaled body, obscuring his form in layers of swirling shadow.

Divine Domains. Many of the Cloaked Serpent's clerics are granted powers of Nature or Trickery.

Enemies. The Cloaked Serpent loathes the Lawbearer and the Wildmother, for he despises life, order, and love above all things. His surviving worshipers relish in using poison and fire to consume



Symbol of the Whispered One



Symbol of the Cloaked Serpent

nature and undermine civilization, hoping to infuriate both goddesses and cast Exandria into chaos.

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.

Betrayer Curses

The malign powers of some Betrayer Gods linger in Exandria, both as myth and reality.

Curse of Strife

The insidious voice of the Strife Emperor, both damnable and damning, invades the minds of countless people across Tal'Dorei who have been afflicted by the Curse of Strife. The curse is especially prevalent in Rifenmist, where the Strife Emperor's faithful clerics bestow it upon their soldiery, transforming them into perfect weapons of war. The curse acts in unpredictable ways, turning some into chaotic berserkers, others into obedient legionnaires, and others still into selfish, isolationist thieves. Cultists of the Strife Emperor also use their power to covertly spread the curse throughout hospitable and kind communities across Exandria, aiming to destroy them from within and make them more susceptible to conquest.

Origin of Strife. Such transformations are the result of the Strife Emperor's torment, which whispers constantly in the victims' minds. The free goblinkin of Tal'Dorei regard those who spread the curse with special contempt—and those who suffer from it with immense pity.

For centuries, small-minded people in Tal'Dorei have feared goblins because they are the children of the Strife Emperor. But while the first goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears were created in the Calamity as soldiers for this fell god, the curse does not linger in their blood—it spreads via those who pledge their souls to the Strife Emperor. Clerics of the Strife Emperor can use the *bestow curse* spell to inflict the Curse of Strife.

Curing the Curse. Creatures who experience kindness or suffer near-death experiences can have epiphanies that allow their true self to tear through the bloody shroud of the Strife Emperor's lies. A curse-afflicted creature who spends one week being treated with love and compassion instead of hatred and fear can make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, breaking the curse on a success. The *remove curse* spell also immediately ends the curse—and many reformed clerics of the Strife Emperor have united with clerics of other faiths to loosen the bloody god's grip on their families.

Curse of Ruin

Countless legends invoke *hgar'Gruum*, the Curse of Ruin. Great orc warriors have been laid low when bloodlust overtook their reason. Mighty mages driven by a foolhardy ambition forsook caution and delved furiously into knowledge no mortal eyes should behold. The Curse of Ruin is said to be the birthright of all orcs—a deadly taint carried in the blood of the Ruiner that forged their people during the Calamity.

Truth of Ruin. The truth is that the Curse of Ruin is a myth. The blood of the Ruiner granted orcs physical strength and superhuman endurance, but it imparted none of the Betrayer God's evil. The power of the myth, however, is more ruinous than any magic.

Consequences of the Myth. Countless superstitious folk across Exandria—including many orcs themselves—believe in the Curse of Ruin. This belief doesn't make the curse any more real. The myth's existence is a convenient way for any one orc to ignore the real consequences of their mistakes, or of any act of thoughtless harm—the curse takes the blame. Even worse is when this "birthright" is leveled at wise, even-tempered orcs who have done nothing wrong, and their frustrated reactions are then taken as proof of the curse's existence.

Lesser Idols

Though the gods still make their wills known upon the world by granting power to mortal clerics and by delivering edicts through their celestial or fiendish servitors, the Divine Gate inhibits them from exercising their full powers over the fate of Exandria. The same is not true for the lesser idols, beings of demigodly power that have, in the absence of true gods, used their splendid and profane forms to amass their own cult followings.

Dozens of these powers are worshiped in relative secret across Exandria. Some are supernatural beings like archfey or archfiends that have taken up near-permanent residence on the Material Plane. Others are unknown fragments of the power of primordial Creation, given form. Most are mortal champions that have gained near-divine power through magic, the blessings of the gods, or through mythic effort and training. In all of these cases, the worship of mortals elevates these beings to something greater than they were before, imbuing them with fragments of divine power— and allowing them to grant scraps of that power back to the mortals in whom they take an interest.

Lesser Idols

Deity	Alignment	Province
Azgrah	Lawful neutral	Undying
Galdric	Lawful good	Celestial, Undying
Graz'tchar	Chaotic evil	Fiend, Hexblade
Khedive Xundi	Chaotic neutral	Genie
Lost Beacon	Neutral	Celestial
The Observer	Neutral good	Archfey, Celestial
The Sightless	Chaotic evil	Great Old One
The Traveler	Chaotic neutral	Archfey
Vesh	Neutral evil	Archfey, Undying

Azgrah, Lord of the Deep Dwelling

The underground citadel of Emberhold, along with the subterranean territories surrounding it, pays fealty to the Crawling King as master of the underground. However, for all but the King's most faithful, the homage they pay to him is a distant second to their veneration of Azgrah, Lord of the Deep Dwelling. This mighty champion is a duergar warrior who completed six heroic labors in his prime, all of which have been frequently enshrined in bardsong, from the wooing of Prince Lhebeno to the Conquest of the Amber Worm—in which he defeated a servant sent by the Crawling King to punish the present Queen of the Emberhold for her impiety.

Azgrah has enjoyed an incredibly long life, even for a duergar, and now lives in isolation in a temple deep within the Amber Worm's writhing tunnels. He is tended to only by his most trusted warlocks, and is venerated by all as the Lord of the Deep Dwelling, and as the dwarf who will emerge in the Emberhold's hour of greatest need.

Galdric, the Moonlit Wolf

Given purpose and power as the companion to Purvan Suul, champion of the Matron of Ravens during the Calamity, the black wolf Galdric was sealed within a *raven's slumber* (see page 197), one of several such relics made in the Matron's honor, and interred with his master in a tomb under the Marrowglade Loch in the distant land of Othanzia.

Over twenty years ago, Vaxil'dan of Vox Machina was named champion in Purvan's stead, and 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, with the people crafting new legends about their bestial sentinel. On moonlit nights, some say you can see Galdric wander through the Greyfield, headed to the Matron of Ravens's shrine for communion.

Other Secluded Champions

A handful of other mortals exist in Tal'Dorei who have risen to nearly divine power through destiny or sheer will. Much like Azgrah, the vast majority of these champions live out their lives in seclusion—and perhaps it is their seclusion that grants them the ability to lend their powers to others, while they await the day that their full strength is at last needed to defend their people.

All have their own stories, but no matter their tales, whether they are honored or despised by their kinsfolk, they are all mythic iconoclasts. Other secluded champions of Tal'Dorei that you may wish to develop into idols of your own include:

- Flavia, Queen of Unending Storms (cloud giant)
- Suthine, Eternal Princess of Vulkanon (fire giant)
- Valdemar, Draugr-Jarl of Farborg (frost giant)
- Ghaladron, Traitor to the Iron Crown (hobgoblin)
- Tevrosk, Whose Axe Was Wreathed in Flowers (orc)
- The First Favored Champion (stone giant)
- Typhoe, the Dreaming Shark (storm giant)

Graz'tchar, the Decadent End

Centuries ago, Zan Tal'Dorei defeated King Trist Drassig in the Battle of Umbra Hills. Drassig died wielding a blade called Graz'tchar, gifted to him by a cunning demon among the ranks of the fiends granted to him by the Strife Emperor. Zan let Drassig's blade lie where it fell, along with his body.

This blade contains a sliver of the ego of the Demon Prince of Indulgence, and enacts his anarchic, hedonistic will upon the world. From up to one thousand miles away from its resting place in the Umbra Hills, the voice of Graz'tchar can be heard faintly in the minds of those it reaches out to—and, so it is said, only one who has heard the voice of the blade can find it amidst the blackened crags of that accursed battlefield.

The Decadent End is willing to grant power to those who accept it, even from afar. It prefers to test those who hear its call before leading them to find it. When the time comes that someone does wield Graz'tchar once more, its game statistics are on page 195.

Khedive Xundi, Lord of Silver Silt

Only about a year ago, a genie of elemental water was freed from captivity beneath Nicodranas—a city in Wildemount, on the other side of the Lucidian Ocean. This marid, named Kedive Xundi, has now returned to his Palace of Silver Silt on the Elemental Plane of Water, and is happy to remain there—but he is itching for payback.

But that's a continent away, and Xundi has time for both payback and entertainment. While he manipulates mortals on Wildemount's Menagerie Coast, he

also has deposited a beautiful clay amphora in the port city of Stilben. Through this item, he watches passersby, occasionally enticing foolish mortals to pick it up and give it a rub. From there, Xundi offers them power, with no strings attached—save for a request for them to go on the most thrilling adventures a little mortal can. And maybe, if they survive long enough and become powerful enough, the marid will invite that mortal and their friends to his Palace of Silver Silt for a grand banquet, all the pleasures they can imagine, and then a request for them to engage in the most thrilling adventure he can think of—and Xundi has had the length of a most interminable imprisonment to think of incredible adventures.

The Lost Beacon of Unknown Light

In a time before time, when Exandria was naught but darkness in the chaos before even the Founding, a luminous being called the Luxon sought answers about their existence. They lit the first fires within Exandria with their unquenchable light, and then began to wait. Gods came. They created beings that spread across the planet. Those creatures died and procreated and died in an endless cycle, of which the Luxon grew curious. Surely, by watching these short-lived beings, they could learn the answers they sought.

So the Luxon divided their own light into beacons, dodecahedral crystals of eternal radiance. They cast them across the world and fell into a deep slumber, during which they hoped people would find the beacons and bond to them, allowing the mortals' souls to be reborn again and again so they could learn everything there is to learn about existence.

Many such beacons have been found across the world, mostly by a people who have learned the ways of the Luxon in a far-off land. However, many of the beacons remain unaccounted for. One such beacon was unearthed about ten years ago by Tal'Dorei settlers in the Cliffkeep Mountains, far from any civilization. The people of this settlement, Reaching Bluff, call it the Beacon of Unknown Light, and treat it as a mystical oracle that will guide their young settlement to prosperity.

Despite the settlers' best efforts, word of their discovery has escaped Reaching Bluff. As adventurers and treasure-seekers begin to trickle in, the settlers protect their newfound oracle with cultish devotion—despite the fact that it has never once spoken to them, as they have beseeched it to countless times.

The Observer

Amidst the Age of Arcanum, the people of the great Tetrarchy of Qoniira were visited by a being of sheltering power and comforting light. The people of Qoniira were on the path to creating the most prosperous civilization that the Rifenmist Jungle—and indeed, all of Gwessar—had ever seen. In its peace and magical might, it exceeded even the grasp of the nearby elven domain of Syngorn. Magic, entirely separate from the arcane rituals practiced by arcanists of the era, fueled their city's rise to splendor, and the being that came to them looked on in fascination.

It appeared before them in a form that at once seemed familiar and majestic. It had a body like one of the catfolk—a wiry humanoid frame with a feline face, covered in tawny fur and possessed of a tail and limbs that ended in large paws. Beyond this familiar appearance, four broad, avian wings burst from this ten-foot-tall avatar's back. It was surrounded by a golden light that seemed not to illuminate and saturate the world around it, but make it dimmer, ashy, and washed-out. Yet in this pallid light came a sharpness of perception, as if it were more real than the material world around it. The being appeared in the center of the Qoniira civilization, at the heart of the city of Niirdal-Poc, and it spoke a single phrase: "I am the Observer, and I give unto you the Gift." Then, it vanished from sight.

All at once, the gray-gold light of the Observer surged throughout Qoniira. Though the citizens didn't notice a difference at first, as time went by, many people began to manifest new forms of magic. This magic was not the controlled, scientific power of far-off arcanists in their flying cities, but chaotic, unpredictable, and miraculous.

The once-sprawling civilization of Qoniira has shrunk over the centuries, but its people still draw upon the miracles of the Gift, and they are still watched from afar by the unseen Observer. This entity does not reign like a god, but watches impassively those whom it gave its unpredictable Gift. As those born in Niirdal-Poc under the auspices of the Observer travel north into the Republic of Tal'Dorei, or south into the oppressive realm of the Iron Authority, the gaze of the Observer is moved even farther afield—adding ever more variables to its mysterious experiment.

The Sightless

In the Age of Arcanum, an archmage named Clemain Astural was the first to make contact with an otherworldly power of the Realms Beyond that called itself the Sightless. His legendary writings, the well-guarded Astural Scrolls (see page 112), say that the entity's words of greeting to him were:
"I am the Sightless. Will you not lend me your eyes?"

The Astural Scrolls are vague about the powers of the Sightless—also sometimes called the Sightless One, the Borrower of Eyes, and the Lurker Behind One Thousand Eyes—but they are specific about several things. First, Astural willingly relinquished his own sight to the Sightless in exchange for his patron's magical powers. He gained all the power he ever

wanted, but Exandria was as alien to the Sightless as the Sightless was to Exandria. Forced to rely upon this entity's horrific interpretations of the world around it, Astural quickly lost his grip on reality.

In time, Astural's unchecked devastation was stopped by great heroes of the time, and his scrolls were confiscated. They exist in the Westhall Academy in Westruun (see page 91), and the second scroll, though secured in a deep vault, still holds the secrets of the ritual Astural used to contact the Sightless all those years ago.

The Traveler

Over the past few years, rumors of a green-cloaked deity with a wiry frame and fiery red hair have spread across Tal'Dorei and the neighboring continent of Wildemount. This fey trickster, though not a god, has certainly enjoyed pretending to be one to spread mirthful chaos across the world.

Hundreds of isolated individuals across Tal'Dorei have heard the voice of the Traveler—or they've at least experienced one of his wily pranks. Within the past year, a convention of the Traveler's devotees congregated on the tiny island of Rumblecusp in the Lucidian Ocean to exult his name and deeds.

And then, suddenly, he vanished. The tales of a trickster deity that washed across Tal'Dorei trickled to a halt, and a few of his once-devoted worshipers hung up their cloaks in disappointment. Something happened on Rumblecusp that shook the faith of dozens of Traveler-worshipers. Some did not return at all.

But amazingly, even though the divine narrative of the Traveler has been abandoned by all, the Traveler's devoted have only grown in number and gleeful impishness. The current story is remarkably close to the truth: that the Traveler is a mighty lord of the fey. This archfey, known as Artagan to a select few, despises the relentless pressure of celebrity godhood, and just wants to bring joy and freedom from responsibility to all. He still has plenty to learn about mortals, and about when a bit of good, harmless fun becomes not-so-harmless after all.



Vesh, the Bloody Siren

Blood and pleasure follow in the wake of the siren Vesh. Long has she stalked the shadows of far-off Issylra, amassing secretive orgies of people of all genders and ancestries. These grand events have a membership that numbers in the hundreds, all of whom are bound to utmost secrecy, and are thrown in obscure retreats that are hidden in cities and towns across the continent. Little do the foolish pleasure-seekers in attendance know that the siren's great fetes of debauchery can end with only two left alive: Vesh and her new mate, who will go on to form a mystical blood-bond.

"Beware the Bloody Siren," sob those few who have escaped her orgy of blood, but their warnings have only fueled her legend. In Tal'Dorei, where Vesh's presence is known only as a legend of a foreign land, her name is most often invoked by youths who want to impress their peers.

But who can say what would happen if an attractive and foolish mortal called too fervently or too frequently to the Bloody Siren? Perhaps she would appear, baring her subtly radiant gray skin, stroking her flowing violet hair, and gazing invitingly at the fool with her blank white eyes.

Factions and Societies

While the dominant cultures of the continent have molded structure and law from the rough clay left beyond the Divergence, these very cultures are comprised of a number of smaller factions that together create the whole. Whether they be a union of opportunists, ever-vigilant to reap the benefits of an exploitable populace, or bands of like-minded politicians, striving to maintain control in a land beset by chaos and danger, each faction seeks to drive and manipulate the social and political direction of Tal'Dorei. The alliances and tensions that can arise between the following societies can guide your adventurers' destiny across the spectrum of heroism and villainy.

Tal'Dorei Council

When the new reign of Tal'Dorei was established three centuries ago, Zan Tal'Dorei deposed a brutal tyrant. Though she was beloved by the people, she did not wish to be given unchecked or uncounseled



rule over the realm. Nevertheless, her inner circle obeyed the will of the people and crowned her Sovereign of Tal'Dorei. She took to her new role well and swiftly expanded her council by appointing some of her trusted allies—and even some dissenting voices—to form an assembly of scholars, generals, and philosophers to govern at her side. This Council of Tal'Dorei worked alongside their sovereign to rebuild the realm following the end of Drassig's line, and were instrumental in the following prosperity of the nascent Tal'Dorei Empire.

Twenty-six years ago, Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II, the latest and last of the Tal'Dorei line, publicly 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 four ancient dragons known as the Chroma Conclave. The dragons destroyed the city of Emon, and the man who had until moments ago been sovereign was one of the first casualties. Uriel Tal'Dorei is survived by his wife Salda, and three children—Odessa, Illiya, and Gren—who have used their family's still considerable wealth and power to become well-known public figures in Emon. Odessa herself won a seat on the council in a landslide victory.

In the generation since the fall of Emon, the council has risen to the challenge of rebuilding and governing their new republic. This state's power is highly decentralized; each individual city-state in Tal'Dorei largely acts according to its own interests, with the council in place to ensure that pursuing those interests benefits the common good. Some critics of the republic say that the Tal'Dorei Council is little more than a glorified city council for Emon, though it is just as often praised for governing lightly as a rule, and for using the spy network helmed by the council's Master of Law to root out corruption as needed.

In addition to the historical Six Masters whose positions have existed on the Tal'Dorei Council since Zan's time, a variable number of delegates also cast votes in matters of state. Each settlement in Tal'Dorei whose population numbers at least five thousand is offered the option to elect delegates to the council if they wish to engage in national politics. The settlement is permitted one delegate per five thousand people, and the means of their election is left to the settlement's local government. Additionally, any settlement with a population of over twenty thousand can appoint an ambassador to Emon; these ambassadors also sit on the council and have voting

power. Once in Emon, each township's delegation is expected to negotiate with one another and find agreement. If an accord can't be reached, they must go through the slow process of drafting proposals to be voted on by seated members of the council.

Though Kraghammer and Syngorn remain sovereign city-states, the invasion of the Chroma Conclave convinced lawmakers that even tighter alliances between the peoples of Tal'Dorei were necessary. One ambassador each from both Kraghammer and Syngorn now also holds a seat with voting power on the council. Each city-state has likewise sent a delegation to Emon to vouch for their interests.

Goals

Following Zan Tal'Dorei's coronation, the Tal'Dorei Council existed to aid and inform the sovereign on how best to execute their duties. The council has evolved to manage the affairs of the city of Emon and provide a private forum for delegates from across the land to shape the future of Tal'Dorei. The council is made up of six masters, whose roles have existed since the time of Zan Tal'Dorei, and a variable number of ambassadors from all city-states across the continent who wish to participate in the coalition of power that is the Republic of Tal'Dorei.

The Six Masters are elected by a popular vote of all city-states who have sent an ambassador to the council. These masters are each beholden to a domain of responsibility, and they either inherit the existing infrastructure of civil servants, or restructure with the approval of the rest of the council. The domains are divided as such: Development, Arcana, Law, Commerce, Information, and Defense. Additionally, the first business of the council upon delivering or receiving a declaration of war is to elect a Seventh Master: the Master of War, who is appointed to the council by a vote of all sitting masters, ambassadors, and delegates. The council members are responsible for these domains throughout the city of Emon and work closely with community leaders in other cities to maintain order.



Heraldry of the Tal'Dorei Council

The Master of Development works with the masonry and carpentry guilds to oversee all major infrastructure projects within Emon, as well as allocating resources to projects needed in settlements that have a delegation in the council. In the past two decades, the current Master of Development has added an unprecedented eight Lieutenant Masters of Development to his staff to serve the reconstruction needs of each city in the republic.

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. This councilmember is currently embroiled in debates over the danger that the League of Miracles poses to organizations like the Arcana Pansophical.

The Master of Law enforces all of Tal'Dorei's written laws from within the Watchful Hall, and serves as high judge on legal matters that affect the fate of the entire republic. All lesser courts answer to their authority.

The Master of Commerce works with all major merchant guilds and trading networks within Emon and beyond. They are to maintain healthy trade at home and abroad, especially between squabbling delegates, and establish the government's annual budget.

The Master of Information manages foreign diplomacy, and also serves as the head of a network of spies that, these days, is supplemented by the skilled eyes of the Clasp. Their work as spymaster and chief diplomat seeks to root out threats to the republic from within and without.

The Master of Defense is head of the Emon Guard, High Commander of Fort Daxio, and manages the allocation of federal resources to city guard groups throughout Tal'Dorei. They work closely with the Master of Law to mobilize armed troops throughout the country if supernatural or nonmilitary threats arise during peacetime.

The Master of War is a temporary position only instated during times of open or impending warfare. As Tal'Dorei has only a small standing army, this newly appointed master then assembles a military from city guards and town militias across the nation, mobilizing the elite warriors of Fort Daxio as needed. When peace is declared, the position is dissolved until it is called for again.

Relationships

The council maintains free travel, free trade, and free communication between its constituent settlements, and between the republic and its allies—both on Tal'Dorei and abroad. The incursion of the Chroma Conclave has united the oft-feuding city-states of Syngorn and Kraghammer like never before, and all of Tal'Dorei now enjoys free trade and open borders between even its most remote enclaves. Thanks to the actions of Vox Machina, the previously solitary city-state of Whitestone has joined the republic, to the benefit of both.

The Clasp was once considered a serious threat to the council's rule, but times have changed. These days, Clasp Spirelings in Emon frequently make public appearances before the council on behalf of their own organization and their often unscrupulous business partners. This is to say nothing of the Clasp's deep involvement in the Master of Information's spy ring.

The Tal'Dorei Council has comfortable trade and diplomatic agreements between the realm of Othanzia in Issylra and the loosely federated cities of the Clovis Concord in Wildemount. The recent conclusion of a bloody war between the Dwendalian Empire and the Kryn Dynasty in Wildemount has given the Tal'Dorei Council cause to send ambassadors to both nations to establish embassies, in hopes of creating an historic arrangement with all of the sovereign nations of that oft-maligned continent. On the continent of Marquet to the southwest, the great city of 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.



Arcanist Allura Vysoren

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Tal'Dorei Council that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Guardian Tofor Brotoras

Dragonblood Master of Defense

Stern, honorable, and quick to anger, Tofor is proud to serve on the council. After losing many friends (and one of her own arms) in the struggles against the Chroma Conclave, she took the vulnerability of the city to heart, swearing never to allow such a thing to happen again. She is a beloved hero of the war against the Chroma Conclave and has served on the council since before the death of the Last Sovereign. Most folk in Emon suspect she'll win reelection until the day she dies.

Seeker Odessa Tal'Dorei

Human Master of Information

When the eldest daughter of the Last Sovereign campaigned for the Master of Information's seat, its current holder was Seeker Assum Emring, a loyal servant of her father's. He bowed out of the race, and his blithe quote made headlines in Emon: "I taught her everything she knows." She won in a landslide. Odessa wields the dual blades of Assum's spy network and the mercenary agents of the Clasp with practiced finesse. Nevertheless, her name and the legacy of her father's martyrdom weigh heavily upon her. As Seeker, Odessa is calm, methodical, and laconic, but she carries a dignified sorrow.

Arcanist Allura Vysoren

Human Master of Arcana

Allura Vysoren has held the position of Master of Arcana since before the Chroma Conclave's attack, and is held in the esteem of Tal'Dorei's people—mages and common folk alike. As a member of the Arcana Pansophical, she is also increasingly worried as more and more of Tal'Dorei's politicians fall in debt to the League of Miracles. After decades of investigating supernatural abnormalities herself, age has finally forced her to limit her adventuresome excursions. She now is one of the council's foremost employers of adventurers.

Arbiter Brom Goldhand

Human Master of Law

A stone-faced, gray-haired, flame-scarred cleric of the Knowing Mentor, Brom is as mysterious as he is proficient with law. One thing is clear: he is dedicated to

keeping the realm just and orderly, and there are few who would dare challenge his judgement.

Hearthmaker Edelbern Cleareyes

Goliath Master of Development

As a goliath of the Rivermaw nomads, no one expected Edelbern to have an interest in civic architecture. Yet, after growing up in Westruun while it was occupied by the Herd of Storms some twenty years ago, he found that he preferred the beauty of stone towers to towering pines. He also possessed a remarkable gift of mathematical acuity, and used his skills to set Westruun—and eventually all of Tal'Dorei—on the path of reconstruction. Edelbern is also idealistic to a fault, and has, in his dedication to restoration, been manipulated into handing numerous lucrative contracts to the League of Miracles, allowing them to amass greater and greater power.

Coinmistress Vex'ahlia de Rolo

Half-elf Master of Commerce

As a member of Vox Machina and hero of the realm, Vex'ahlia could help Tal'Dorei in any number of ways. She already held a ceremonial title in Whitestone as Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt. Yet when she and her husband pushed for Whitestone to be formally recognized as a constituent city of the Republic of Tal'Dorei, all who knew her name (and her legendary financial savvy) clamored for her to be elected to the council as Coinmistress. She took to the duty with aplomb, and fights hard to ensure that Emon never gets the bad end of a deal when gold is involved.

Ambassador Syldor Vessar

Elf ambassador from Syngorn

Vex'ahlia's elven father has served as his city's ambassador to Emon for well over a century, and requested to be appointed a seated ambassador as soon as the office was created. Though he is otherwise a staunch traditionalist, Syldor was inspired by his brave children to move past his old racial prejudices and drive his homeland to be less bigoted and xenophobic—learning from his own mistakes as a father to two half-elven children. His relationship with his elder daughter is still strained, and it is a newsworthy occasion when they vote in accord.

Ambassador Deirdrik Greyspine

Dwarf ambassador from Kraghammer

The youngest son of the ruling House Greyspine of Kraghammer, Deirdrik has little hope of being elected Ironkeeper. Instead, this ambitious young dwarf—a scant seventy years old—left his home to win political renown in the national arena. He is a romantic idealist at heart and always votes for bold new policies, but doesn't always think through the consequences of his actions.

Ambassador Keyleth of the Ashari

Half-elf ambassador from Zephrah

A legendary archdruid and member of Vox Machina, Keyleth is both leader of the Air Ashari and ambassador for all Tal'Dorei's Ashari peoples. She despises politics, and is focused entirely on improving the wellbeing of as many people as possible—as well as involving the Ashari on the national stage. She spends most of her time in Zephrah, with her people—including her father, Korrin, and her newly returned mother, Vilya—but she can and will arrive in Emon at the drop of a hat, if Vex asks it of her.

Delegate Kel'jaia Uloeh

Gnome delegate from Syngorn

Kel'jaia is a confident gnome with incredible strength and resilience—both physical and emotional. She is thought by all to be the council's first choice for Master of War, should the time ever call for it. She was born in the Rifenmist Jungle and grew up amidst mercenaries who fought against the Iron Authority. After her commander was killed in battle, she traveled north to Syngorn to seek aid in her fight. She dreams of forging bonds of unity between her homeland and Tal'Dorei.

Arcana Pansophical

All of 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 had not wholly prevented supernatural evil from infringing upon the world, and that the mages of Exandria must prevent future "surprises" of this nature. The mistakes of the Age of Arcanum



Crest of the Arcana Pansophical

must never be repeated. In light of 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 this fellowship of 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 routinely checked up on, as misuse of magic is grounds for arrest, judgment by the Makers, and punishment outside of the local law. Even so, the reach and sight of the Arcana Pansophical are not without limits, and many dark and terrible dealings manage to escape their notice.

The Truth of Magic

The Pansophical's myriad rules on the use and misuse of magic are innumerable — detailed at length in centuries of amendments made 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—outside of any local law.

Though the school of Necromancy shall be restricted to none, in the interest of magical study and 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 unjust Murder is a Violation of the Truth.

In addition, 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."

Relationships

The Arcana Pansophical is respected, if somewhat feared, throughout the Republic of Tal'Dorei. Syngorn and other elf-founded settlements see the Pansophical as allies, as the roots of the society began within Syngorn itself. The people of Kraghammer are suspicious of the Pansophical's legalistic Truth of Magic, and they fear that its members hold more loyalty to the Pansophical than to their homeland.

Recently, a group of profit-driven arcanists splintered from the Arcana Pansophical to form the self-styled League of Miracles. Their involvement in the for-profit reconstruction of Tal'Dorei has made them popular among mages who see the Pansophical as a stodgy, elitist institution. The Pansophical, however, sees the League of Miracles as a distasteful upstart that will soon buckle under its own ambition.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Arcana Pansophical that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up your own NPCs.

Enchanter Yurek Windkeeper

Elf wizard (enchanter) and Maker

Founder of the Arcana Pansophical, the ancient archmage Yurek generally stays within Syngorn, acting as the nexus of the order and a consultant to the Wardens of Syngorn.

Alchemist Oz Gruude

Halfling alchemist and Maker

Gruude is an ornery old halfling who is more interested in traveling the world to study plants and minerals with latent magical properties than doing alchemical lab work. He is rarely seen in the halls of the Pansophical.

Seer Gloria Ios

Human wizard (diviner) and Maker

Gloria is one of the great diviners of the age, and her duties have sent her to Vasselheim, where she acts as a foreign outreach for the Pansophical.

Magus Seanor Wiles

Human wizard (enchanter), Maker, and tutor

A humble-looking traveler, Wiles delights in finding fresh and emerging talent and helping his new students refine their arcane gifts.

Planerider Ryn

Tiefling wizard (conjurer), Maker, and planar studies specialist

This former pupil of Yurek Windseeker has grown into a master of planar travel. She likewise has

taken an interest in the flow of magic across the world by means of ley lines. She's constantly on the move, traveling from plane to plane to conduct her research.

Tinkerer Quash Dentdruggle

Gnome construct specialist and Guide

Obsessed with the development of autonomous and living arcane constructs, Quash is usually holed up in his laboratory within Kraghammer.

Arcanist Allura Vysoren

Human wizard (abjurer) and Guide

As a member of the Tal'Dorei Council and a retired adventurer, Allura has helped maintain the political significance of the Arcana Pansophical within Emon. Even among her colleagues in the Pansophical, her unpretentious strength commands great respect.

Elementalist Drake Thunderbrand

Dwarf wizard (evoker) and Guide

Driven to bind the physical elements of the chaotic planes to his will, Drake is a prodigy of new incantations in the field. He and Allura Vysoren are lifelong friends, and together they're renowned for achieving the impossible.

Realmseer Eskil Ryndarien

Human archmage and Maker emeritus

Though he was a Maker for most of his life, Realmseer Ryndarien grew frustrated with the politics and limitations of the Pansophical, eventually retiring to Westruun to pursue his own interests. These days, he has found a way to rejuvenate his aged body and is now renowned as a handsome and aloof man about town—much to the annoyance of all who formerly knew him.

The Ashari

The Material Plane is surrounded on all sides by the churning chaos of the elements. This elemental power is invisible to most, but in some places, the veil between this world and the Elemental Planes grows thin—and sometimes is torn entirely asunder. These places where the Elemental Planes bleed into the world are called rifts, and they first appeared on a long-ago Celestial Solstice when the planes aligned. That day, elemental rifts of untold proportions burst open across Exandria. Wildfires, tsunamis, hurricanes, and earthquakes ravaged the lands, and the people of the world struggled to combat the elemental beings that poured forth from the rifts. The tide of rampaging 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 druids called the Ashari made a covenant to divide and form four separate orders to seal and watch over the sources of these unleashed energies. Most of the lesser rifts that opened in that time have been healed, but one rift to each of the four Elemental Planes remains in Exandria. The four orders of the Ashari settled near these rifts, watching over them and soothing them when they grow volatile. Of these orders, two are in Tal'Dorei, where they watch over the rift of earth and the rift of air. A dozen generations later, the Ashari still hold watch over these tumultuous locations.

Ashari Culture

Though the Ashari began as a single group of elementalists, their individual orders have each developed their own ways of living over the centuries.

The people of Pyrah value reactivity and coolness under pressure, for panic is death during an eruption. The Ashari of Vesrah have a close relationship with the marine life that surrounds their rift, and their actions always prioritize the health of Exandria's waters. Zephrah's culture values the freedom of the open sky, and balances their sense of duty with a free-spirited sense of play. Finally, the society of Terrah is rooted in planning for the future, and fixing what is broken with patience and humility.

Goals

Each Ashari order guards their respective rift 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 Ashari of Pyrah oversee the Fire Elemental Rift in the valley caldera of the Sunderpeak Mountain range in Othanzia, upon the continent of Issylra. The Ashari of Vesrah watch over the Water Elemental



Symbol of the Ashari

Rift on the Islands of Anamn, within the Ozmit Sea. On the southwest edge of the Cliffkeep Mountains, the Ashari of Terrah stand vigilant over the Earth Elemental Rift, while high atop the windy mountaintops of the Summit Peaks, the Ashari of Zephrah keep the Air Elemental Rift. The Air Ashari also watch over the Frostweald, where a being of elemental ice once broke through to cause untold destruction.

Due to their isolation, the Ashari go to great lengths to maintain contact with their kin. Each order is led by a single elemental master, a title that is passed on by blood or honor for generations. In every new generation that comes of age, the young leader-to-be must embark upon an Aramente. This "noble odyssey" sends them across the world to meet with the other Ashari leaders and train until they have earned both the respect and an understanding of their hosts.

Upon returning, they ascend to the head of their order, while the elder retires. This journey often takes years, and should one such Ashari not return within a reasonable period of time, a next-of-kin or a suitable elemental adept is chosen to take up the Aramente.

Relationships

The Ashari maintain peaceful, if sometimes strained, relationships between the orders, though inner conflict occasionally arises within them. Beyond this, much of life within the Ashari is hidden from outsiders' prying eyes. In recent years, however, Keyleth of the Zephrah has taken steps to unite the Ashari with the rest of the people of Tal'Dorei. She has gone so far as to become an ambassador for the Ashari people on the Tal'Dorei Council. Part of this work has been expanding the crisis orbs system, which the Ashari used to contact their distant kin in times of peril, to connect cities across Tal'Dorei in the event of another crisis on the level of the Chroma Conclave.

The Ashari of Terrah nurture a seed of disrespect and mistrust for Kraghammer, whose miners constantly disregard their warnings against reckless mining. This arrogance caused countless deaths in the most recent eruption of the Terrah Rift—and led to the collapse of an entire mountain.

Each Ashari culture has its own favored deities. Many Ashari of Pyrah venerate the Dawnfather, for his flames give life to Exandria. Many in Vesrah worship the Moonweaver, for her work controls the tides. In Zephrah, the faith of the Wildmother is predominant, for her freedom is like that of the wind. And the people of Terrah hold the All-Hammer in great respect for his association with creation and the earth. There are many Ashari, as well, who prefer to revere the elements themselves, forgoing the worship of gods.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Ashari that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

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 sees it his proper time. Many believe that his druidic training will keep him alive until he himself chooses to let go of this mortal coil.

Korrin of Zephrah

Half-elf elder of Zephrah

His wife Vilya was lost while she undertook the Aramente, and when the previous Voice of the Tempest died of illness, Korrin was called upon to act as Voice until his daughter Keyleth came of age and completed her Aramente. Korrin was shocked when Vilya suddenly returned, and now spends his days in disbelieving bliss, reunited with his long-lost wife. He is gentle with those who show honor, and merciless to those who threaten his people.

Vilya, Who Escaped Death

Half-elf elder of Zephrah

Vilya disappeared on her Aramente nearly thirty years ago, and was presumed dead. Her daughter, Keyleth, took up her own Aramente ten years after Vilya left, and discovered from the Water Ashari of Vesrah that Vilya was killed by a kraken, and only her leg was able to be recovered. Less than a year ago, Vilya suddenly strode out of a tree in Zephrah, her leg replaced with a druidic prosthetic of her own creation, shocking all—though none were more overwhelmed with emotion than her daughter and husband. Though Vilya never earned the title of Voice of the Tempest, she now aids her daughter in leading her people without the faintest trace of jealousy.

Keyleth, Voice of the Tempest

Half-elf leader of Zephrah

Hero of Tal'Dorei and member of Vox Machina, Keyleth completed her Aramente and took leadership among her people following the destruction of the Chroma Conclave. She seems to have not aged a day since Vox Machina's victory over the Whispered One. Since her beloved's death, she has kept busy to fill the void in her heart. From expanding the crisis orb network across the realm and building beautiful windmills in the Summit Peaks with Percy's aid to

training Air Ashari heroes at home, she has never allowed herself a free moment. She has rarely left Zephrah in the months since her mother's emotional return.

Brawler's League

The brutal blood sports of the Brawler's 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; 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 gladiatorial 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 bearing their symbol in the weeks leading up to an event. These coins are required for entry into the events, and those who wish to join, whether as a patron or participant, require a coin of their own.

Goals

The Brawler's League is always in search of hidden and well-guarded locations around Tal'Dorei (and sometimes other realms) to establish their semiannual 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.



Crest of the Brawler's League

Relationships

The Brawler's League is extremely illegal in all major cities across Tal'Dorei. Should lawkeepers of any nation discover the location of the semiannual 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 that do infiltrate.

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

The Brawler's League frequently hires local Clasp agents (or Myriad operatives, in a pinch) to spread word of their next event through the criminal underground. If all goes well, they get hired at the event itself to provide protection, run interference, and make money on the side by providing loans and taking bets.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Brawler's League that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Oben "Broadstaff" Sunderchin

Dwarf organizer and head of Brawler's 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, as he avoids public connection with the league.

Kradin Grimthorne

Dwarf fight manager

A previously disgraced dwarf, exiled from Kraghammer for murder, Grimthorne is the foremost brawler talent scout in Tal'Dorei.

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 the de Rolo family, and these brave humans 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 Sun Tree, and the respected and beloved de Rolos were asked by their shipwrecked allies to be the

leaders of this new settlement. Pressed against the chalky cliffs of the Alabaster Sierras, their new homeland was dubbed Whitestone.

The sovereign city-state of Whitestone enjoyed peace for many generations, secluded from the rest of Tal'Dorei and Wildemount. This serenity was destroyed when Lord Sylas and Lady Delilah Briarwood arrived in Whitestone and murdered most of the de Rolo family. Lady Delilah, a necromancer of the Whispered One and a disgraced member of the Cerberus Assembly in Wildemount, and her husband, a power-hungry vampire, transformed the quiet city-state into a realm of death. They attempted to take control of all of Tal'Dorei by puppeteering the Last Sovereign, Uriel Tal'Dorei II, but were thwarted by Vox Machina.

Thirty years after Whitestone's fall, the Briarwoods and their sepulchral master are defeated, and Whitestone has returned to the blessed peace of its past. Nevertheless, much has changed. The surviving de Rolo siblings, 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 now sends a delegation to the Tal'Dorei Council to help safeguard the republic against evil.

Goals

Under the watch of Lady Cassandra de Rolo, the chamber handles and surveys all aspects of political life in Whitestone. Its members are appointed by the head of the chamber, who is likely to be a scion of the de Rolo family for generations to come. The head can also add or remove members from the council. This system is new and untested by a ruler less noble than Percival or Cassandra. In many ways, this system of government is another one of Percy's tinkering projects.

Members of the Chamber are granted distinct areas of responsibility to the realm.



Heraldry of the Chamber of Whitestone

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 and economic business, both locally and with allied and foreign entities.

The Keeper of Divine Virtue is responsible for religious organization and spiritual guidance regarding multiple faiths within the region, both as a religious leader and a protector of practices.

The Commissioner of Wardship is responsible for the enforcement of local law, the organization of the Paleguard, acting as judge on smaller matters of civil justice, and defense of the city during times of war.

The Architect of Enlightened Progress 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 for rooting out dangers beyond the city's walls.

Relationships

Despite its benefits, Whitestone's previous solitary existence left it without allies in its time of need. The Chamber of Whitestone has sent a delegation to the Tal'Dorei Council for the betterment of both. These days, trade caravans are a common sight along the Silvercut Roadway, transporting goods from Whitestone to Westruun, Kymal, and ultimately Emon. The most expensive goods travel via skyships, which land at Whitestone's brand-new skyport.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Chamber of Whitestone that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Lady Cassandra Johanna de Rolo, Guardian of Woven Stone

Human head of the Chamber of Whitestone

Cassandra is Percival's younger sister, thought dead until he discovered her in the thrall of the Briarwoods. She now manages Whitestone's most pressing matters, with daily briefings from other members of the chamber. She is beloved throughout the city for her resilience and her decisive leadership.

Lord Percival Fredrickstein von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III, Architect of Enlightened Progress

Human member of the Chamber of Whitestone

Percival is Cassandra's older brother, thought dead until Vox Machina discovered him in a prison cell. His life was filled with countless joys and regrets. He has taken well to retirement from adventuring, and is renowned across Tal'Dorei for his creations.

Lady Vex'ahlia de Rolo, Baroness of the Third House of Whitestone and Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt

Half-Elf Member of the Chamber of Whitestone

Vex'ahlia is the Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt, a title she has held since before she married Percival. Over the past twenty-four years, she has become a talented and respected leader of the Grey Hunters. And though the hunters use guns inspired by her husband's own designs, she still prefers to wield her trusty bow.

Grog Strongjaw, Grand Poobah de Doink, In Charge of All This-and-That

Goliath friend

The noble, if simple, warrior of Vox Machina, no one really knows if Grog's 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.

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 gravesites 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 Trence 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, Trence 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, Blood Mages, and Blood Hunters.

The Claret Orders work in relative secrecy, as the nature of their abilities is largely misunderstood, which often leads to persecution. Their numbers are small, as the price is great and the Orders only accept those who are strong of heart and have little to lose. Small sects of the Orders have begun work far enough 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.

As blood flows through and invigorates the body, so faith flows through and invigorates the soul. Ever remember this: your blood and your faith are one and the same. Spill not your 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

Despite the Claret Orders' best attempts at secrecy, the esoteric art of blood magic has escaped their clutches. Though rare, rogue blood mages and blood hunters have spread across both Wildemount and Tal'Dorei, unbound by the tenets and strictures of the Claret Orders.

Goals

The Creed of the Claret Orders asks that its followers 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 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 among the hunted.

Relationships

The Claret Orders have no alliance with nor allegiance to any standing government or group. Solitary in action and discreet in display, they've not drawn the attention of many factions in Tal'Dorei as of yet. 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.



Symbol of the Claret Orders

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Claret Orders that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Claret Director Alasterre de Vitrevos

Human Blood Domain cleric of Ravens

Calm and sanguine to a fault, Alasterre de Vitrevos is the youngest-ever director of Tal'Dorei's Claret Order. He sees his position as one he deserves without question, and is willing to use his command more boldly than his mentor, director emeritus Teresa Dulamar. He is frequently seen in the field, working with various adventuring parties and his own blood hunters to wipe out monsters wherever they emerge. The combination of his relaxed personality and his aggressive strategy may seem a contradiction at first glance, but those who know him see the truth of the immense self-assurance that lets him make hard decisions without hesitation. This quality is a strength when coolheaded leadership is needed in the thick of battle, but it can make him challenging to work with as an equal.

Director Emeritus Teresa Dulamar

Dwarf Blood Domain cleric of Ravens

The former head of Tal'Dorei's Claret Orders retired ten years ago after suffering a traumatic death in combat. Her soul accepted resurrection, but she took her defeat as a sign to let younger, fresher blood take her place. She remains a part of the Claret Orders to advise the current director on matters he is too young to have experienced himself. Though she displays a chilly demeanor, she simply keeps her compassionate side hidden from the untrusted riffraff.

Hunter Jorick LaMensh

Human blood hunter

Once among the greatest of all blood hunters, Jorick is now Director Emeritus Teresa Dulamar's personal bodyguard. He is still a capable member of the Order of the Profane Soul, and urges immediate, decisive action to destroy demons and devils whenever their occult activity is discovered.

The Clasp

The Clasp is a well-established secret organization consisting of spies, thieves, fences, assassins, saboteurs, and smugglers. It was built upon the ruins of the Winksman Thieves' Guild, an organization that flourished during the reign of Drassig, but crumbled under the rule of Zan Tal'Dorei. Based largely in Emon—and under it, via a network of subterranean tunnels—the Clasp also runs 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 family or mafia, celebrating loyalty and an ability to keep one's word. A member pays their debts, keeps their promises, and always seeks opportunity for the betterment of the Clasp.

Leaders of a Clasp sect bear the title of Spireling, 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 most common folk assume 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 commonly held 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 more wealthy and powerful citizens cannot commit with their own hands. On the other hand, less scrupulous Spirelings also understand that discontent breeds profit, and have occasionally kindled the flames of unrest to keep things tense and profitable.

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



Symbol of the Clasp

Relationships

A generation ago, the Clasp was considered by most to be an uncouth cesspool of cutthroats and criminals. These days, thousands of people know the Clasp as the roguish heroes who saved their lives, or the lives of their parents, from the Chroma Conclave. Nowhere is this truer than in Emon, where its Spirelings make public appearances and even, on occasion, deal openly with the Tal'Dorei Council. Nevertheless, Clasp agents outside of Emon keep their wits about them, for most local governments still view them as underhanded scoundrels—and not without reason. Most guards and town militias will arrest known Clasp members on sight; however, most Clasp members know well enough to have a friend on the force that will help them escape.

The Clasp frowns upon dogmatic religion or cultish behavior, as it has 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. Gang warfare has broken out sporadically between the Clasp and the Myriad in cities from Stilben to Emon over the past twenty years, and though the rival organizations are currently at peace, everyone knows the whole thing is just one poached client away from reigniting.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Clasp that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Spireling Shenn

Human Spireling of Secrets (Emon)

A powerful illusionist, Shenn runs a far-reaching network of spies and informants. In his younger days, he was a canny negotiator who sought to spread the Clasp beyond Tal'Dorei. The arrival of the Myriad forced the Clasp onto the defensive, and he will never forgive them for souring his ambitions.

Spireling Warren

Half-orc Spireling of Blades (Emon)

Deadly duelist turned master assassin of the Clasp, Warren handles all contracts that involve kidnapping, assassination, and intimidation. He hates public appearances.

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 plays a dangerous game by enjoying folk-hero status as the public liaison between the Clasp and the Tal'Dorei Council.

Spireling Gholesh

Human Spireling of Shadows (Westruun)

A crass and ambitious man, Gholesh's appearance is a mystery as his face is always hidden behind a leather mask that resembles an ogre. He has secretly thrown in his lot with the League of Miracles and, with their backing, he aspires to take over the Clasp and enjoy all its wealth and prestige.

Spireling Melchior

Tiefling Spireling of Blades (Westruun)

This clean-faced, curly-haired tiefling with pale blue skin and stubby horns may have a soft, babyish visage, but it belies their powerful physique. They are equally skilled with a sword, axe, or bow, and made their name in underground brawling rings before joining the Clasp.

Spireling Fetch

Halfling Spireling of Secrets (Westruun)

Creepy and unkempt in appearance, Fetch's gaunt face only distracts from his cunning and skills of keen manipulation.

Golden Grin

In dark times, entertainment and good cheer are just as vital as resistance. During the despotic rule of King Warren Drassig and his sons, a group of bards, dancers, and storytellers united to subvert his rule and inspire the people to rise against him. This band took the name "the Golden Grin" 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, using song, comedy, and theatrics to inspire the people of Tal'Dorei to endure hardship



Crest of the Golden Grin

and fight back against evil. These "Grinners" include among their ranks spiritual leaders, artists, musicians, innkeepers, and dozens of retired adventurers who still want to do good outside the public eye. Little is publicly known about the Golden Grin, other than myths and rumors, and the Grinners gladly perpetuate these tall tales.

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. The Grin's core philosophy is that each and every person is capable of great things alone, and even greater things together. Rather than taking direct action themselves, most Grinners use songs and tales of great heroes to galvanize people to action.

Relationships

The Golden Grin claims no formal allies, nor do members reveal their secret affiliation to outsiders unless circumstances are dire indeed. They use their covert, grassroots power to empower local freedom fighters and activists. Some Grinners do occasionally find their way into government, granting them a higher vantage point and platform to disseminate the ideals behind their cause—but even these members of the Grin take a dim view of the slowly turning gears of bureaucracy.

Enemies of the Golden Grin are those that oppress and abuse freedom of expression and living. The Grin likewise mistrusts people and institutions that control or regulate the populace too heavily, even if they seem to have the best of intentions.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Golden Grin that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Theona Balmhand

Gnome cleric of the Lawbearer

A wandering healer hailing from Kymal, Theona lives by donation and perpetually travels from place to place, seeking to aid who she can and to learn whatever the people whisper.

Doctor Dranzel

Half-orc traveling bard

A jovial and lackadaisical violinist and frontman for Doctor Dranzel's Traveling Troupe, the renowned Doctor Dranzel exaggerates his stage persona for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to make him seem like a preening fool—the perfect cover for a master spy of the Grin.

Houses of Kraghammer

The fortified, subterranean city-state of Kraghammer was carved out of the bedrock of the Cliffkeep Mountains in the years following the Divergence. It is the ancestral home of the native dwarves of Tal'Dorei, and the five major bloodlines that founded the city in ages past still rule to this day. The ruling families are Houses Greyspine, Zuurthom, Bronzegrip, Thunderbrand, and Glorendar. These Great Houses elect an official to the office of Ironkeeper every ten years to keep the alliances between houses just and healthy.

Though the culture of Kraghammer is highly traditional and as stoic as the stone it was carved from, it is not without unrest. It seems every dwarven generation has its own great social movement where disenfranchised workers or greedy, lesser noble houses attempt to unseat the ruling five. Yet for good or for ill, the Great Houses have time and time again shown that they can put aside their differences to preserve their mutual rulership.

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.

Relationships

Almost every dwarf living in Kraghammer can remember a time when, "Kraghammer for the dwarves!" was a common cheer at the pubs. And when they said, "for the dwarves," they meant just



Heraldry of the Houses of Kraghammer

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

—A child's learning rhyme from Kraghammer

the dwarves born in Kraghammer. Times have changed. The prevailing opinion is that a unified Tal'Dorei is best for all. Those dwarves whose traditionalism is just a veil for bigotry have found that they aren't welcome in Kraghammer—they've subsequently retreated to make their own isolated enclaves in the Cliffkeeps.

The Houses of Kraghammer facilitate a healthy trade of metals, weapons, and armor with Emon and Westruun. These bonds of commerce and communication have only grown stronger since an ambassador from Kraghammer has taken a seat on the Tal'Dorei Council.

Many members of House Thunderbrand also have ties to the Arcana Pansophical. However, lesser clans with aspirations of supplanting the renowned Thunderbrands have thrown their lot in with the League of Miracles, hoping to become the new masters of the arcane. They have been wooed by to this upstart faction with promises of disrupting the old ways of commerce and prestige, establishing something new.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Houses of Kraghammer that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Ironkeeper Palluda Zuurthom

Dwarf Ironkeeper of House Greyspine

Even after weathering the Chroma Conclave, uniting Kraghammer's squabbling houses in support of the Tal'Dorei Council was no mean feat. Ironkeeper Palluda of House Zuurthom proved up to the task. They made a name for themself by taking control of a trade deal that ultimately sold tens of thousands of gold pieces' worth of quarried stone to the League of Miracles, which began the reconstruction of Tal'Dorei in earnest. Palluda became a hero of the working dwarf within Kraghammer. They are a master at getting all sides to agree to a compromise, and do so with an iron-edged smile.

Lord Nostoc Greyspine

Dwarf overseer of House Greyspine

The dour executive of dozens of quarries across the Cliffkeep Mountains, Nostoc makes up for his unpleasant personality by being a formidable businessman. In recent years, he has become fabulously wealthy as the reconstruction of cities across Tal'Dorei devoured thousands of tons of stone. House Thunderbrand and the League of Miracles made it possible to transport it all with teleportation spells.

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. His friendship with Allura Vysoren made him a popular choice for Kraghammer's ambassador to the council, but he politely refused, claiming it was a younger dwarf's duty.

League of Miracles

"Magic isn't cheap, but miracles are priceless." Such is the credo of the Wonderworker, the mysterious thaumaturge whose words inspire and guide the League of Miracles. This company of mercenary magi is the reason why Tal'Dorei has recovered so rapidly from the near-apocalyptic destruction of the Chroma Conclave. Westruun and Emon rose from rubble to the height of their former glory in a matter of months.

The people of Tal'Dorei adore the league. Their mighty spellwrought adranachs (a new creature described on page 223) can be seen lifting thousand-pound bricks of limestone high into the sky to rebuild walls, towers, and even castles in a matter of days. Many of the league's spellwrights have become folk heroes and celebrities for their miraculous acts, which range from healing those maimed in the Conclave's attack to transmuting raw timber, mud, and straw into full-fledged houses in minutes.

For most of Tal'Dorei's elite, the League of Miracles is likewise a great ally. Trade and travel have resumed stronger than before, for the league has eagerly subcontracted their talented mages out as guards for caravans and persons of interest.

Yet, not everyone sees the league as an ally. In the early aftermath of Thordak's defeat, the new and untested Tal'Dorei Council put out thousands of bounties on reconstruction projects to get their towns and cities back on their feet, and local mayors and margraves across the nation agreed to these subsidies to reduce the cost of reconstruction for their already devastated populace. They expected Tal'Dorei's rebirth to be a multigenerational undertaking—yet the League of Miracles snapped up these

bounties like candy, and the league does not work their miracles cheaply. Bills for hundreds of thousands of gold pieces' worth of bounties found their way to the desks of local leaders and to the Tal'Dorei Council by the end of the year. Such vast wealth for thirty years' worth of rebuilding in three years' time simply did not exist.

But this was all part of the Wonderworker's plan, and their spellwrights executed it flawlessly. The league needs money to purchase their expensive spell components and to pay their talented mercenary membership, of course, but their true goal is the priceless currency of power, in the form of political favors from leaders ranging from small-town mayors, to city-ruling margraves, and even delegates to the Tal'Dorei Council. Rumors even swirl that one or more of the members of the council itself are in the league's pocket.

The league's members are delineated into a simple hierarchy.

Mercenary Mage. Spellcasters drawn from across Tal'Dorei form the backbone of the League of Miracles. The league works as an agency, handing mercenaries lucrative jobs, collecting the payment themselves, and paying out in a timely fashion—minus twenty percent. These mercenaries come from all walks of life. Some are aspiring adventurers seeking a less life-threatening first gig, while others are skilled arcanists with shady pasts, including Remnant cultists and double-dipping Myriad agents with a talent for magic.

Spellwright. The most talented (or best-connected) members of the league are awarded the title of spellwright. Only two dozen such masters of the arcane exist across Tal'Dorei. These spellwrights know the secrets of how to create adranachs, mighty constructs of magical energy that were used publicly to rebuild Tal'Dorei's ravaged infrastructure—and are also used in secret as hunter-destroyers of the league's enemies. These spellwrights sign a blood pact that connects their minds to the mysterious communications of the Wonderworker, which all spellwrights are blood-bound to interpret and enact.

Grand Thaumaturge. The official title of the league's shadowy master is the Grand Thaumaturge, though most colloquially refer to them as the Wonderworker. None know their true identity, or their ultimate goal. The spellwrights understand that the Grand Thaumaturge has a master plan that must be followed. Only these spellwrights have the privilege of hearing their master's psychic messages. Over the years, they have interpreted them to mean that the League of Miracles must become the secret puppet-masters of all Tal'Dorei.



Symbol of the League of Miracles

Goals

The League of Miracles is comprised mostly of mercenary magi pulled from all corners of Tal'Dorei, with some even coming from abroad as news of the league's reputation spreads across Exandria. For most of these arcanists, their goal is simple: to make money. The goals of the league's spellwrights are more elaborate. They listen for the cryptic words of the mysterious Grand Thaumaturge and dedicate themselves to deciphering and enacting their grand design. The spellwrights' current aim is one of total control—once all of Tal'Dorei's social and political elite are in their pockets, they can shape the land as they see fit, all to the cheering adoration of the fawning people of Tal'Dorei.

Relationships

The League of Miracles tries to keep cordial, if distant, relationships with every major power on Tal'Dorei. Their public image is shiny and unimpeachable. Many members of the Tal'Dorei Council are already in their pocket and cast votes that further the league's self-interest. The Arcana Pansophical—especially Allura Vysoren, who also sits on the council—are deeply distrustful of this unregulated, uncommonly powerful organization.

The League of Miracles has a tense relationship with the Chamber of Whitestone, as they have long sought access to the residuum unique to that territory. The spellwrights fear outright hostility with the legendary heroes of Vox Machina, and have supposedly abandoned their quest to mine Whitestone's naturally occurring residuum.

As "no questions asked" employers of mages, the league is in the good graces of many less scrupulous arcane factions, including the Remnants. Necromancers, blood mages, Ruidus cultists, and other unsavory magi now exist under the league's protection.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the League of Miracles that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

The Wonderworker

Mysterious enactor of true miracles

All spellwrights hear the authoritative—yet enigmatically distorted—voice of the Wonderworker. The Wonderworker has supposedly appeared in the flesh only three times throughout the league's twenty-four-year history, as a humanoid draped in robes of starlight and wearing a mithral mask. In those moments, they have produced true miracles—raising a castle from the ground in a matter of seconds, halting the rampaging silver dragon Saldarthoryn in her tracks and healing her twisted mind, and stopping the Center Slab of Kraghammer from collapsing into the Pits in a catastrophic mining accident that would have cost countless lives. These legendary acts inspired utmost awe and faith in all who witnessed them, leading the spellwrights to create adranachs in the Wonderworker's image and enact their cryptic will.

Blaine Kraverrogg

Half-halfling mercenary necromancer

Short and brimming with a malign lust for power, Blaine appears to be a short, skeletally skinny human who hides his lack of stature in billowing black-and-gold robes. He is a member of the Remnants, but pays his bills by doing undercover grave-robbing for the league. He longs to reach the bottom of Shadebarrow, a mysterious crypt somewhere on the Dividing Plains. His obsession with Shadebarrow stems from a hunger for the power of the Demon Prince of Undeath.

Honor Kinnabari

Tiefling blood mage and novice spellwright

As the newest spellwright in the League of Miracles, Honor Kinnabari has a lot to prove. She was granted a chance to prove her quality in the eyes of the Wonderworker when the league was contracted to rebuild the Market Ward of Westruun after it was devastated by a herd of magma landsharks that descended from the Cliffkeep Mountains. Her red eyes and sheet-white skin and horns complement a traditional red-and-white mage's robe from the reclusive dwarven clans of the Alabaster Sierras. She is fully dedicated to the league, but she is as honorable as her name implies; her fellow spellwrights fear that she could turn traitor, should the unsavory truth of the league be laid plain before her.

Library of the Cobalt Soul

The Cobalt Reserve in Westruun is home to a monastic order so old, enduring, and tirelessly dedicated to the preservation of knowledge that most people in Tal'Dorei simply take it for granted. Just as birds have always flown and grass has always grown, the Library of the Cobalt Soul has always sent its agents across the world, taking minutes at public trials, archiving broadsheets, exploring ancient ruins, and copying scrolls. To all but the most dedicated scholars, the work of the Cobalt Soul seems like dreary, banal stuff.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Beneath the veneer of being a dopey order of bookish monks, the Cobalt Soul is one of the most dogged espionage organizations in the world. The secret agents of the Cobalt Soul, its expositors, are spies who wield the truth as a weapon more potent than any blade. The Cobalt Soul was born in Wildemount, just after the end of the Calamity, when the Knowing Mentor was maimed by an evil god. Her most loyal followers went into hiding and vowed to continue her divine work in knowing all there is to be known—and most importantly, to use the truth as a holy weapon against lies and propaganda.

Each archive of the Cobalt Soul has a common hierarchy, and higher-ranking members of the Cobalt Soul can command their lower-ranking comrades from another archive.

Monk. The monks of the Cobalt Soul are their most visible members, for they travel the land in search of knowledge both modern and archaic. Not all monks are engaged in fieldwork, especially new recruits. Those who work entirely within an archive aid in the organization and preservation of information. Few know that these monks are



Sigil of the Cobalt Soul

dedicated to the Knowing Mentor; the common opinion in Tal'Dorei is that they are ascetics, obsessively dedicated to the chronicling of knowledge, not devotees of an obscure god.

Expositor. Trained in the art of espionage, the expositors of the Cobalt Soul use their infiltration expertise to uncover the secrets of governments, world leaders, and obscure cults. In times of great crisis, undercover expositors have even incited revolutions by sharing the knowledge they discovered with people toiling under evil regimes. This true mission of the expositors is a secret even to low-ranking monks, who see them simply as well-trained field agents.

Archivist. Though they are not involved in field work, archivists play the vital role of organizing the overwhelming flow of information that the monks and expositors return to their archive. They also train new monks and perform administrative tasks, like negotiating with sellers of artifacts and with government officials to ensure the stability of their archive.

Curator. A small group of three to five curators manage the top-level operations of each archive. One of their number is given the special designation of High Curator, to whom all other members of their archive must ultimately answer.

Goals

The public mission statement of the Cobalt Soul is to archive knowledge for the betterment of all peoples of Exandria. The secret mission of the Cobalt Soul is to use their accumulated knowledge to root out tyranny and ensure the freedom of all people.

As instructed by their reclusive god, the Knowing Mentor, the Cobalt Soul in Tal'Dorei makes their archives available to everyone, so that knowledge can be used to improve and enrich the lives of all. Despite this, the curators of the Cobalt Reserve privately determine what knowledge is too volatile to be freely disseminated. Typically, this privileged information is magical in nature, but it also includes secrets recovered by expositors that must be strategically employed as a weapon against unjust leaders, cults, and power-hungry factions.

The Cobalt Soul itself is not immune to corruption and complacency. Nowhere is this truer than in the Cobalt Soul's birthplace of Wildemount, where it must work hand-in-hand with the authoritarian Dwendalian Empire. Its highest officials say that the Cobalt Soul has outlasted every tyrant on Exandria, and that they must be content with small acts of insurrection—subtly subverting propaganda and sharing the truth with any who will listen—while waiting for the right moment to strike a fatal blow. Nevertheless, this mantra of patience has caused some of its more radical members to abandon the order entirely. Typically, deserters of the Cobalt Soul are expositors, who see the ugliest side of the world firsthand again and again.

Relationships

The Cobalt Soul is an international organization with archives in the Dwendalian Empire and Clovis Concord of Wildemount, the Republic of Tal'Dorei, the Dawn City of Vasselheim on Issylra, and the great city of Ank'Harel on Marquet. Each of these archives acts independently under the orders of their commanding High Curator, though they must ultimately answer to the joint leadership of the Cobalt Soul: the High Curators of the Rexxentrum and Vasselheim archives.

Though Tal'Dorei is a freer society than the Dwendalian Empire, the Cobalt Soul knows better than to think that means it is free of corruption. From the Cobalt Reserve, their archive in the city of Westruun, the Cobalt Soul keeps close tabs on members of the Tal'Dorei Council, the leaders of Syngorn and Kraghammer, and other powerful individuals across the land.

The Cobalt Soul actively opposes the Remnants—followers of the Whispered One, a tyrannical god of secrets who is diametrically opposed to the goals of the Knowing Mentor. They are also concerned by the meteoric rise of a guild of arcanists called the League of Miracles, whose political maneuverings have made puppets of dozens of delegates to the Tal'Dorei Council and political leaders across the land. This worry has only deepened as rumors reach them of the league filling their ranks with Remnant cultists who seek to dominate Tal'Dorei.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Library of the Cobalt Soul that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

High Curator Greisalda Cassios

Half-dragonblood leader of the Cobalt Reserve

The High Curator of the Westruun archive of the Cobalt Soul is a high-cheekboned, bald woman who would appear fully human if not for her slitted, silver eyes and the silver scales that run across her head, neck, and upper arms. She is regarded as one of the fastest minds in Tal'Dorei, for she has the rare gift of perfect recall. Monks tremble when her clear, unpretentious voice rings through an archive chamber, for Greisalda remembers acts of justice and personal slights with equal intensity, making her a powerful ally and a furious enemy. She is concerned that corruption is spreading throughout the Tal'Dorei Council.

Cressida Holt

Orc expositor of the Cobalt Reserve

The name Cressida Holt is synonymous with style and effortless charisma—and also a blunt, merciless coldness. Cressida is nonbinary, and uses both she and they pronouns interchangeably. Though she's fresh blood to the expositors of the Cobalt Reserve, she has already taken advantage of her license to kill on her espionage missions. They are slim for an orc, but still more muscular than many of their human colleagues. Their assignments take them across Tal'Dorei in search of political corruption. She is currently stationed in Emon to observe a person of interest on the Tal'Dorei Council, where she alternates between lurking on rooftops and striding through ballrooms in fine suits.

Archivist Salomane Rothtree

Half-elf archivist of the Cobalt Reserve

A haggard, overworked administrator, Archivist Rothtree is known throughout the Cobalt Reserve as someone who tries too hard to prove himself and constantly bites off more than he can chew. Half-orc and half-elf, he has said that he hopes to accomplish as much in his lifetime as an elf could in theirs. He often is tasked with helping adventurers find information. Though he resents the task, he may slowly open up to heroes who treat him well.

The Myriad

Wildemount's greatest organized crime ring is now becoming known throughout Tal'Dorei, but it came from humble beginnings. The Myriad began in the Dwendalian city of Yrrosa, as a small shipping company specializing in exotic goods and services, exploiting and selling 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 business. Through years establishing underworld contacts and tactical blackmail, the Myriad evolved into a powerful, well-veiled criminal faction. Over the past two decades, the Myriad's aspirations have spread beyond Wildemount, and they are now deeply entrenched in Tal'Dorei's criminal underworld.

Known for displays of opulence and social grace, this misdirection enables the Myriad to seduce and control the lives and wills of whomever is deemed valuable to their plans. Dozens of truly amoral cutthroats and thieves noticed when the Clasp began to work hand-in-hand with the Tal'Dorei Council. They felt the dagger of accountability pressed against their backs, and broke with their former guild. Now, the Myriad has filled the vacuum of truly lawless criminality that the Clasp left in its wake.

The Myriad operates as a loose network of gangs whose bosses run 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 success slow, threats of enslavement or destruction soon follow.

Goals

The Myriad seeks wealth in hideous excess. The means are unimportant, as long as they're lucrative. No trade is too abhorrent, from bloody theft to kidnapping and slavery. And though they lack the political capital to bribe and puppeteer politicians the way they did in Wildemount, the Myriad are confident that they can get even the supposedly noble Tal'Dorei Council in their pocket.

Most fronts for the Myriad are businesses that publicly deal in antiquities and exotic textiles. Behind these masks is a ruthlessly 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. Should that fail, however, kidnapping or assassination can be a quick and traceless final alternative.

Relationships

Though they are relative newcomers to the criminal underworld of Tal'Dorei, the Myriad is well-versed in the covert art of making money by any means necessary. The Clasp is well aware of their presence in the broadest sense, and the two thieves' guilds have spilled blood in the streets of every city in Tal'Dorei at some point in the past twenty years. These days,



Sigil of the Myriad

the bloodshed has subsided into a cold war of espionage and counterespionage, as each organization tries to sabotage the other.

The Myriad has only been routed from cities a number of times—they no longer have any presence in Whitestone or Syngorn—and each time, it has been by a concentrated citizens' uprising. In both instances, when they sought the source, Myriad leaders were furious to discover an empty safe house containing only a single gold coin, marked by a grinning face: the calling card of the Golden Grin. Even across the Lucidian Ocean, the old enmity between the Myriad and the Golden Grin remains today.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Myriad that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Lustran "the Backstabber" Zeth

Human boss of Stilben

Lustran was one of the first Clasp members to turn double agent. By the time anyone realized his betrayal, he had granted the Myriad their foothold in Tal'Dorei in the swampy port city of Stilben. His lean, hungry face and graying hair give him a handsome, intimidating appearance. All Myriad agents in Tal'Dorei respect him, and all members of the Clasp hate him. He revels in his bad reputation as the renowned Backstabber of Stilben.

Tully "the Conclave of One" Dezzeram

Gold dragonblood boss of Emon

Tully's distasteful nickname delights her inner circle in Emon's underground. The Myriad boss of Emon is a position that usually changes hands by the season, thanks to the diligent efforts of the Clasp, but Tully has evaded capture for three years, and grown rich and powerful in her reign of smuggling, trafficking, and grand burglary.

Sylker "the Millionaire" Uttolot

Half-elf boss of Kymal

This gold-eyed half-elf, a former underling of the crime families of Shady Creek Run in Wildemount, joined the Myriad and became the first individual on that continent to hoard one million gold pieces. He has a masterful mind for money, and spearheaded the Myriad's infiltration of Kymal. "Gold is a disease," he often says, "and I'm bloody sick."

The Remnants

In a time long past, an archmage of unparalleled power known as the Whispered One attempted to ascend to godhood by conducting the Ritual of Seeding from high atop the citadel of Thar Ampala within the Plane of Shadow. The Whispered One surrounded himself with a cult of fanatical mages and empowered murderers to protect him during his apotheosis. Despite these protections, he failed. His cult, however, survived, and helped him return to power centuries later, after the defeat of the Chroma Conclave. He succeeded in his bid for godhood, but was kept from utterly dominating the Material Plane at the last second by Vox Machina, who banished him beyond the Divine Gate, where he was shackled by all the same limitations as the other gods.

His cult, the Remnants, went into hiding once again. Their fanatical ranks, bolstered by his true apotheosis, now seethe in secret, convinced that there is a way to grant their god the ultimate power he sought. Many of them have wormed their way into positions of power within Tal'Dorei's political institutions, churches, arcane organizations, and criminal outfits. Many more have joined up with the dubiously moral, profit-driven arcanists of the League of Miracles. They exist in shadows, lurking, waiting, longing for a new dark prophet to lead them to glory.



Crest of the Remnants

Goals

The Whispered One achieved an incomplete victory over twenty years ago, and now his cult is building a new generation of faithful to make his megalomaniacal dreams a reality. The cult's leadership believes that reuniting these malign artifacts will give them greater power to commune with their god and let them begin their quest in earnest to reach him through the Divine Gate. This leadership is known as the Circle of the Dismembered. Each cult leader in the circle commands a branch of the cult, named for a part of the Whispered One's body. These factions are:

The Unveiled Sight. Members of this cult are tasked with scouring the planes for arcane lore that could restore their master to the Material Plane.

The Mordant Voice. Members of this cult serve their master by infiltrating other factions across Tal'Dorei and subverting their purposes with subtle propaganda.

The Devouring Blood. Members of this cult specialize in the art of silent death. They train in stealth and necromancy to become truly horrific assassins.

The Unseen Touch. Members of this cult are trained in magic that corrupts the mind and perverts the will, making them vile puppet-masters that prepare the world for their god's return.

The Insatiable Heart. Members of this cult do the vital ground-level work of seeking out new blood. They are trained to exploit the emotional weaknesses of their targets to convert them to the cult, without the need of magic.

Relationships

The Remnants remain largely unknown, even after their master's grand ascension, and wish to keep it that way. Those who are aware of their presence are either cult members or people who have uncovered their insidious existence and wish to stamp it out wherever it may appear. Thus, there are rarely any alliances made by or with the Remnants.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Remnants that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

Quinton Puck

Human jeweler, Master of the Unveiled Sight

While he runs a middling jewelry business within Emon, Quinton is secretly the leader of the Unveiled Sight. He is a master of creating and piercing illusions, deciphering ancient script, and all things to do with the magical arts of obscurement and unveiling. He can be recognized by his blood-red spectacles.

Ixrattu Khar

Tiefling vampire, Master of the Devouring Blood

This escapee from the Black Bastille prison in Emon is Tal'Dorei's most infamous mass murderer, who once slaughtered and consumed hundreds of innocents on a deadly killing spree from Kymal to Emon. During her imprisonment, Ixrattu was plagued by shadowy visions of a woman beckoning to her from beyond the bars. The visions pointed her towards weaknesses within the Black Bastille's guard, and helped her achieve the unthinkable: escape. Once free, she vanished for a year as she scoured the countryside, puzzling over the cryptic whispers of her continuing visions.

At the end of her quest was a fateful discovery: within a lightless underground passage, she found the venomous crossbow *Condemner*, a Vestige of Divergence (see page 204). Now she lurks in Kraghammer, where she trains a network of elite assassins who gleefully dispatch anyone the Unveiled Sight identifies as an enemy of the Remnants.

Ixrattu Khar



Wardens of Syngorn

The elven city-state of Syngorn was established in the Verdant Expanse by the sorceress Yenlara, the wood elves' first leader after the Divergence. Today, the physical and cultural wellbeing of Syngorn is safeguarded by the three offices of elders called Wardens, united by the High Warden. Their primary duty is to protect the city and the surrounding lands from intrusion.

Goals

The Wardens believe that preserving the ancient culture of Syngorn is of utmost importance. Even as their fate grows ever more closely tied to the fate of all Tal'Dorei, the traditions that make Syngorn unique must be conserved. The three offices of the Wardens are the Verdant Lord, the Voice of Memory, and the Guildrunner. The office of Verdant Lord commands Syngorn's formidable military, which is maintained and scattered throughout the Verdant Expanse, ready to be called to Syngorn's defense at a moment's notice.

As preservers of culture, the Wardens also encourage public respect for the arts, including the art of magic. It's not uncommon for a Syngornian to rise in social status after being publicly praised by a warden for a masterful artistic creation or performance.

Relationships

Syngorn has long been an isolationist society. As a mostly elven enclave, they have often been criticized as xenophobic, or even racist, toward outsiders. There is truth to these claims. Nevertheless, the rise and fall of the Chroma Conclave has goaded even some of Syngorn's most conservative voices into strengthening the bonds of trade, travel, and kinship with the other free peoples of Tal'Dorei. Even the people of Kraghammer, who many elves still remember siding with the tyrant Drassig in centuries past, have been welcomed as friends and allies for the loyalty and courage they displayed in the battle against Thordak.

Figures of Interest

These figures are major members of the Wardens of Syngorn that you can use as NPCs in your game. You should also take inspiration from these figures to make up new NPCs for your own campaign.

High Warden Tirelda

Elf Warden of Syngorn

Though she is in her twilight years, even by elven standards, High Warden Tirelda is a trusted descendent of Yenlara, founder of Syngorn. She is skilled with magic and blessed with calm wisdom. Thus, she was entrusted with the highest level of responsibility amongst the Wardens—to maintain law, guide society, and preside over all other Wardens.

Verdant Lord Celindar

Elf Warden of Syngorn

Head of the Verdant Guard of Syngorn, and an accomplished warrior in their own right, Celindar handles all military strategy and instruction within the forest's bounds. They only return to Syngorn when called by their fellow wardens, and can otherwise constantly be found prowling the Verdant Expanse. They use any pronouns, and have relinquished any sort of gender presentation after receiving a vision from the Arch Heart.

Ouestra, the Voice of Memory

Elf Warden of Syngorn

A renowned historian and a beloved vocalist, Ouestra is charged with the preservation of Syngorn's history and culture. It's said her most magical songs can control moonlight and bring light even to the Abyss itself. These days, she has grown somewhat unpopular by also singing songs of Syngorn's darker days, for she says true greatness can only be inspired by learning from failure.

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.



Heraldry of the Wardens of Syngorn



CHAPTER 3

Tal'Dorei Gazetteer

I've wandered over many a shore and plain in my journeys, and my mind still finds itself drawn back to Tal'Dorei. Ain't no place in this world more vibrant; the land feels young. Unscarred. Mind you, that sort of calm causes my old bones to itch, too. Folk in that land are kind and honest, and its vistas are second to none, yet...well, I'll just say that cities are cities, and the wilds are the wilds. Tal'Dorei's got plenty of both. Keep a sword or a wand with you wherever you go, adventurer.

—Norad Firth, Captain of the Brazen Beast

This chapter contains a wealth of information about the lands of Tal'Dorei, the adventures to be found therein, and the many centers of civilization to be found across its vast wilds. Consider this chapter a compilation of a wide variety of assorted notes, research, and scattered publications of historians of the Library of the Cobalt Soul and the Alabaster Lyceum.

Boundless possibilities await eager adventurers of all kinds who explore Tal'Dorei, from the vast fields of the Dividing Plains to the treacherous crags of Tal'Dorei's many mountains, from the storm-wracked Lucidian Coast to the immemorial depths of the Rifenmist Jungle. Countless nomadic civilizations exist within these realms of magic and monsters, as do dozens of tiny villages, thriving towns, and bustling cities. The people of Tal'Dorei do what they can to survive, and share the tales of treasures and adventure with any who will listen. Consider this gazetteer a compilation of tales and fragmented histories, passed down from bards and scholars. Your campaign can follow its descriptions to the letter, or diverge as wildly as you see fit.

Settlements

Every permanent settlement in Tal'Dorei has a few basic statistics that impart a top-level impression of that place. This includes what type of settlement it is—typically a village, town, or city—its population, and its rough demographics. Don't feel restricted by these demographics if you want your character to come from a specific location but you don't see their race listed there. People of all races can be found in just about every community in Tal'Dorei, and your character can come from anywhere.

Additionally, cities and large towns often have a number of small rural communities outside their fortified walls and population center. The population numbers of these larger settlements include the people in the outlying areas. On the other hand, the official populations of a village or other small settlement just includes the people living in the village itself.

In fact, though there are a few villages and small settlements listed in this gazetteer, Tal'Dorei is home to hundreds, if not thousands, of tiny settlements too small to detail or place on the map. The Game Master can make up any number of villages or other communities wherever they wish in Tal'Dorei without changing any of the lore presented in this gazetteer. And of course, the GM can also create large settlements unique to their version of Tal'Dorei—the only difference is that they should be prepared to think about how their version of Tal'Dorei is different, now that they've added another hub of population, trade, politics, and culture.

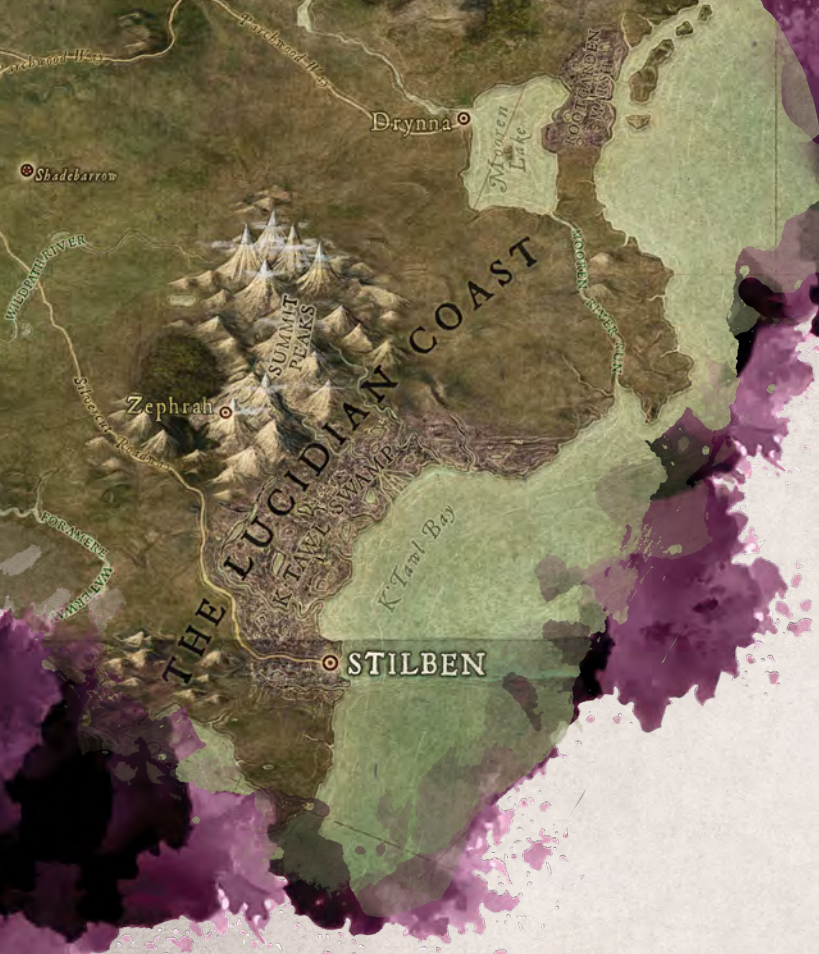
Story Hooks

This chapter contains a variety of story hooks that you can use as a starting point for Tal'Dorei adventures of your own creation. Chapter 5 of this book contains advice for expanding these hooks into full adventures, and even more advice for creating RPG stories can be found in the fifth edition core rules.

These plot hooks are tied to specific locations, and all have a level range. These level recommendations aren't strictly mandated, but have generally been chosen either because of the monsters involved, because of the narrative weight of the location or characters involved, or to indicate how epic and world-affecting the adventure should be.

- For low-level characters: 1st to 4th level
- For mid-level characters: 5th to 10th level
- For high-level characters: 11th to 16th level
- For epic-level characters: 17th to 20th level

Additionally, some plot hooks are marked as "any level." These hooks present stories broad enough to suit characters of any level, anywhere in their party's story. These hooks generally don't suggest specific monsters to use as villains. When creating adventures based off of these hooks, use the encounter-building advice in the fifth edition core rules to choose appropriate foes for your players.



Majority Faiths: Changebringer, Wildmother, Stormlord
Minority Faiths: Lawbearer, Strife Emperor, Scaled Tyrant
Imports: Livestock, lumber
Exports: Fish, ships, grain, iron, silver, gold, trade goods from Wildemount

Lucidian Coast

The stormy Lucidian Ocean crashes furiously against the rocky coasts of eastern Tal'Dorei, chewing inlets into the coastline and spurring vast banks of impenetrable fog across the waters. Most ships rightly avoid the volatile northern waters, instead docking at southern ports like Stilben. Adventurous folk leave their seafaring vessels behind and brave the Mooren River Run to Drynna. Yet even there, the Lucidian Coast is not without its dangers; vicious wildlife stalks 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 2,765 (75% humans, 8% gnomes, 8% halflings, 4% elves, 5% other races)

Along the shore of Mooren Lake rests the sleepy town of Drynna. The community thrives on the bountiful wildlife around the lake, and the Drynna fisherfolk are responsible for most of eastern Tal'Dorei's freshwater fish supply. The social guidance of the city revolves around the Sunrise Lodge (or simply "the Lodge"), a membership of community leaders who meet to discuss and vote on important social and legal matters. The Lodge has also sent a variety of increasingly frustrated petitions to the Tal'Dorei Council, since their community's small size means they have traditionally lacked a delegate of their own on the council. However, the recent surge in prospectors has increased their population enough for a member of the Lodge to attend council sessions, and the Lodge is doing everything it can to make sure the boom lasts as long as possible before it falls into bust.

Boomtown

Drynna has a small militia to protect the town from wild beasts and roving monsters, and to capture horse thieves and other petty criminals. This militia is presently overwhelmed by hundreds of prospectors who have swept into town over the past three years after hearing rumors that chunks of whitestone have been found in Mooren Lake, washed down the river from the Alabaster Sierras.

Given the high price of residuum (see page 75), this new occurrence has made Drynna into something of a boomtown. Thousands of small homesteads now surround the town center, and burglary and banditry are both on the rise.

Drynna Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Drynna can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Unfriendly Waters (mid-level). Recently, Drynna has suffered a number of losses, with prospectors and fisherfolk being attacked. Worse still, the supply of fish itself seems to be declining rapidly; without this local food staple, villages across eastern Tal'Dorei will certainly starve. The party hears 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 has an Intelligence score of 12 (+1), can speak Common, and commands a tribe of lizardfolk.

Bleak Inheritance (any level). Last year, Hareth Val Bardo, a younger member of the Sunrise Lodge, made a pact with the Moon Mistress (see "Mooren Lake," below). Hareth's elder brother, Pauvren, died in his sleep shortly thereafter, leaving the entire Val Bardo family fortune to Hareth, the only surviving heir. However, nightmares now haunt Hareth every night, and violent urges surge through his mind. The Lodge, having noticed Hareth's paranoid eyes and twitchy hands, calls upon outsiders to investigate.

K'Tawl Swamp

The sprawling swamplands of K'Tawl cover much of the southern Lucidian Coast, enveloping Stilben and the K'Tawl Bay. The saltwater swamp is thick with cypress and tupelo trees reaching up from muddy waters that range, in places, from one to ten feet deep—or more. The hot, muggy air and thick, sludge-covered landscape host all manner of terrible beasts, including venomous flying snakes and man-eating giant frogs.

Bands of frog-headed humanoids harry the edges of Stilben from their deep-marsh encampments, while a vicious school of sahuagin called the Ghormauth command the shoreline of K'Tawl. The bloodthirsty Ravagers use the forested edges of the swamp to ambush prey—as do countless bandits and petty thieves. As such, caravans and messengers must remain on constant alert for the possibility of an ambush. With such dangers lurking in the swamp, travel to and from Stilben is rarely made without an armed escort.

K'Tawl Swamp Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in K'Tawl Swamp can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

They Shamble (mid-level). People have been disappearing from the isolated swamp-burghs within the K'Tawl. The characters, perhaps en route to Stilben, spend the night in the village of Dunghill. After hearing tales of the disappearances, the characters awaken the next morning to screams—as a terrified human is carried off within the rotting orifice of a **shambling mound** of swamp vegetation.

Monolith of the Hells (high-level). Why have members of the Torchraiser herd been found dead, their hearts exploded and their teeth plucked from their mouths? Why have the stagnant K'Tawl waters suddenly begun to flow toward the dismal center of the swamp? A divine messenger of the Everlight visits the characters, its celestial form torn and wavering, and dies before it can impart its request. On the angel's lips is a single dying phrase: "Destroy K'Tawl's Heart."

Mooren Lake

North of the Summit Peaks is a shimmering lake fed by the snowmelt from the Alabaster Sierras by the Mooren River Run. Mooren Lake is surrounded both by bountiful wildlife and the frightful creatures attracted to such a thriving ecosystem, including roving lizardfolk, flocks of harpies, and several hydras that lurk in the lake's depths.

Centuries of whitestone runoff from the Alabaster Sierras have allowed deposits of residuum (see page 75) to collect at the bottom of the lake—and the residuum has formed into a thrumming organ of raw magical energy, beginning to gain sentience. The 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, and is either granted a favor, a boon of unveiled knowledge, or a swift and terrible end.

Mooren Lake Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Mooren Lake can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Renew the Mists (mid-level). 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 mortal sacrifice to renew, and the Mistress is willing to reward those who would aid her in retrieving a victim—willing or otherwise. Perron Brill resides in nearby Drynna, and though she is no saint herself, more honorable characters may think it best to help the hunter find her prey in Rootgarden Marsh.

Rootgarden Marsh

The shallows of Mooren Lake leak into the tender soil of the lakebed and spread eastward, creating the cold and desolate Rootgarden Marsh. Tall, thin trees lift five or more feet above the muck upon stilt-like roots, like freshwater mangroves. Their sparse placement gives them the appearance of a village of scattered huts. The fresh water mingles with salt here, leaving only adapted vegetation. The smell of moss and rot fills the air, while strange, feral 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, 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in Rootgarden Marsh can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

The Ley-Knot (mid-level). Without warning, arcane magic stops functioning within a hundred-mile radius of Rootgarden Marsh. As panic spreads across northeastern Tal'Dorei, the

characters or a patron of theirs discover 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 Moonspeaker Luneskon of the Moonsteeth gnolls. Her ambitions are small, but whatever 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 (any level). Rootgarden's strange ecology has produced many distinctive and powerful forms of plant life. During the course of a campaign, a group of adventurers 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 named Thardraxxus, who keeps the mushroom and its sporelings safe. This dragon can be of any age, depending on what level the characters are.

Stilben

Large Town: Population 10,660 (67% humans, 11% elves, 11% halflings, 5% half-elves, 6% other races)

Stilben stinks to high heaven. Most sailors who pass through it—be they honest traders of the Clovis Concord in Wildemount or pirates seeking their next conquest—call this dismal burgh the Rotted Lot. The stink and the crime that run through this town make the name an apt one, but things aren't all bad in Stilben. The largest port on this coast of Tal'Dorei, Stilben is the focal point of international trade with Wildemount. Even though Stilben's permanent population is a scant ten thousand, its more transient population of sailors who stay for a few days or weeks at a time is just as large, and fully triples Stilben's total population in the summer months.

Predictably, the vast majority of Stilben's business caters to folk who won't stay for long. There are brothels aplenty, at least one inn and one tavern each on every street, and countless other comforts for the weary traveler. The town is nestled in the sticky depths of the K'Tawl Swamp, and its putrescent stink 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 Stilben's cozy, cosmopolitan heart, its poor and disenfranchised citizens—derisively called muck-dwellers by the town's bigshots—struggle to eke out a living in the K'Tawl's murky waters.

Central Stilben houses most of its businesses, residences, and attractions. Those living in Stilben's heart like to present a clean, "civilized" view of their town, maintaining it as a thriving commercial hub. 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 the aging Margrave Wendle Truss is Stilben's ruler in name, it is the guilds that hold true power. Their vast wealth and sizeable "protection" force have impelled the bombastic-yet-ineffectual margrave to acquiesce to the guilds' will in order to maintain peace, as well as to preserve his own station within the city.

Order is kept by the Waterwatch, Stilben's official constabulary, but corruption is common within their ranks. The past few decades have been hard for the Clasp in Stilben. Though the local Spireling has kept a tight grip on the margrave and the Waterwatch, the Myriad has used bribes, intimidation, and every dirty trick in the book to winnow away the Clasp's power. Now, Stilben is little more than a crucible for the power struggle between the two criminal organizations.

Origins of 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 two-copper 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 has found a wealth of evidence that the heroes of Vox Machina first gathered in Stilben under inauspicious circumstances and were dragged into an unexpected battle against the Myriad.

Stilben Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Stilben can use these plot hooks for inspiration

Lost Below (low-level). 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 smugglers were last seen by a Clasp agent watching a bridge in the western swamp, but two weeks have passed since their last contact. They should have arrived by now. The characters are approached by one of several groups: an agent of the Relic Seekers in search of the relics, one of the Clasp seeking to find their smugglers, or a Myriad taskmaster who seeks to undermine the Clasp. Their first contact: the bridge guard, a hulking tiefling **Clasp enforcer** (see page 232) named L'Arkhelle.

Ashari Agitator (mid-level). Gang warfare between the Clasp and the Myriad has been a daily affair in Stilben for the past thirty years, but something is changing. A cruel **Ashari waverider** (see page 228) named Galessi has joined the Myriad and is using her elemental magic to turn the tide of this gang war. The Clasp, the Waterwatch, and even the Air Ashari of Zephrah want to see Galessi laid low, but she has a secret base within the swamp, protected by a charmed **giant crocodile** and putrid **water elementals.**

Demonblood Vengeance (high-level). A **marilith** demon using the guise of a blonde human named Iselda has been lurking on the outskirts of Stilben since her defeat at the hands of Vox Machina decades ago. Her demonic ichor has spawned a brood of **demonfeed spiders** (see page 236) that now view her as their mother. Iselda, sensing an opportunity, dedicated herself to the Spider Queen and attracted a small legion of dark elf fanatics to her side. Aided by all these evil creatures, she plans on conquering Stilben, not for the Myriad, but for herself and her evil god.

Summit Peaks

The Summit Peaks loom over the southeastern plains of Tal'Dorei, like great spires of rock reaching for the sky. The tall, thin mountains burst so aggressively from the surrounding fields and swampland that even travelers from distant lands recognize them as a landmark of eastern Tal'Dorei. They are a welcome sight for any ship's crew making their way to shore. The mountain valleys recess into marshy gorges that house all manner of creatures migrating from the K'Tawl. Reclusive hill giants and stone giants also make their homes in the marshy valleys. As the mountains rise higher, strong winds blow across the battered rock, leaving strangely smooth peaks that harbor griffon lairs, harpy dens, and convocations of giant eagles hunting the lower lands.

Zephrah

Small Town: Population 1,310 (62% half-elves, 12% elemental ancestry, 10% humans, 9% halflings, 5% tieflings, 2% other races)

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. Most of the tribe consists of skilled hunters and climbers who hunt mountain goats, large birds, and other cliff-dwelling creatures, along with subsisting on high-elevation vegetation. Utilizing the proximity of powerful elemental magic, the druidic masters of the Air Ashari craft *skysails* (see page 199) to ride the ever-present winds, allowing their people to traverse the sheer cliffs of the mountains. The leader of Zephrah is called the Voice of the Tempest; they oversee all travel through the rift, all major druidic rituals, and any visiting outsiders.

Though it's still a small settlement, Zephrah has grown greatly in the past several years. Many people with an innate connection to the element of air have petitioned the current Voice of the Tempest for her permission to live here among the Ashari. Likewise, a number of druids and other spellcasters who wish to learn the ways of the Air Ashari have come to live in relative isolation here—after they have proven their good intentions and respect for the sanctity of the skies.

Diplomacy and Developments

Zephrah has grown in more than just population. The close friendship shared between Keyleth, Voice of the Tempest, and the genius inventor Percival de Rolo of Whitestone has led to a number of modern technologies being adopted in Zephrah. Windmills now dot the cliffsides, milling grain purchased from farms on the Dividing Plains. Keyleth continues to work with Percival to improve the lives of her people through technology and innovation. The operation of two of these mills is also kept private from the rest of Zephrah, and they're used to refine whitestone into residuum for the construction of magic items to arm the Ashari skydancers (see page 228).

Keyleth's confident leadership has also guided her to make further diplomatic ties between her people and the rest of Tal'Dorei. These attempts at breaking down the traditional isolationism of the Ashari have been met with skepticism from within, slowing the process to a crawl. Allowing any outsiders into Zephrah at all has been seen as a huge step. Beyond this, Keyleth has pushed for greater economic and political involvement, so that the needs of Zephrah can be heard in the Tal'Dorei Council. Resistance toward political integration has mostly been internal within the Ashari, but Keyleth considers any progress at all a good start.

Defense

Zephrah has never maintained a formal army, though past Voices of the Tempest have trained martial forces and druidic warriors to defend their home against the monsters of the Summit Peaks. As Keyleth attempts to build bonds between her people and the rest of Tal'Dorei, she has expanded the training of new skydancers and created a unit of druidic warriors capable of responding to any emergency across Tal'Dorei. If a threat like the Chroma Conclave were to rise again in Tal'Dorei, the skydancers of Zephrah would be there to help save the nation's people.

Thanks to Zephrah's mountainous terrain, the Ashari enclave has never fallen under siege. Because of the dangerous beasts that lurk in the mountains, most Zephran adults have learned how to wield a spear or a staff to defend themselves. Roughly one in ten people have undergone a small amount of elemental training—enough to be able to cast the *gust of wind* spell a number of times per day equal to their Wisdom modifier (minimum of once).

Were Zephrah to fall under attack, the skydancers would defend the town and its elemental rift for as long as possible while the rest of its people evactuated to hidden retreats in the mountain caves.

Zephrah Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Zephrah can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Poached Eggs (low-level). The local Ashari have noticed a terrible trend of poachers climbing the peaks to steal entire griffon 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 (use **scout** statistics) led by a **quasit** demon named Ryzzix, are fencing the stolen eggs on the Stilben black market.

A Welcome Overstayed (mid-level). Shaktia, an overbearing **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 bother the people with pranks, debates, and invitations to become his well-paid servants. The Voice of the Tempest, at the end of her patience, seeks adventurers to capture Shaktia and return him through the rift to the Elemental Plane of Air. However, when the adventurers learn what caused the djinni to leave his home plane in the first place, they may find it hard to force him to leave.



Majority Faiths: Dawnfather
Minority Faiths: Wildmother, Matron of Ravens, Chained Oblivion
Imports: Industrial and precious metals, cloth, livestock, grain
Exports: Granite, limestone, whitestone

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 gelid northern territory has for decades been beyond the reach of the Tal'Dorei Council, and fallen under the rule of the Chamber of Whitestone. However, over twenty years ago, thousands of Emonian refugees fled to Whitestone to ride out the devastation of the Chroma Conclave. These refugees included the bereaved family of the Last Sovereign. Since those dark days, the Chamber of Whitestone has enjoyed a close relationship with the Tal'Dorei Council. Lady Vex'ahlia de Rolo, a member of the Chamber of Whitestone, also sits on the Tal'Dorei Council itself, further strengthening the bonds of unity between this once-isolated land and the rest of the realm.

Beyond Whitestone, the region's vibrant-yet-gothic urban center, the Alabaster Sierras are framed by dangerously windy shoreside cliffs and dry, desolate mountains swarming with harpies, cold-adapted 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. 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.

The small town surrounding the dock is simply called Mooren, and seasonally is home to some five thousand people of various ancestries in the spring and summer. When conditions grow too cold, mages from Whitestone are called to place arcane locks upon all establishments and to place the empty town in lockdown until next season.

Due to the plentiful nature of the river, many denizens of the Parchwood wander its banks to reap its bounty, or to seek bounty from those who frequent it.

Mooren River Run Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Mooren River Run can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Bear of the White River (low-level). While traveling near Whitestone or through the Parchwood Timberland, the characters find the corpse of half-orc forester; a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that he was savaged by a large bear. This half-orc's forester clothing marks her as a cleric of the Stormlord and a member of the Rivermaw herd, a long way from the Dividing Plains. Investigating the scene shows that bear tracks in the mud lead westward, toward the Mooren River Run. These tracks, when followed, soon fade into the bare footprints of a humanoid—the killer was a **werebear**, but who could it be?

Off-Season Suspicion (mid-level). The cold nights of autumn and winter force even the most stalwart fisherfolk away from Mooren. Some Mooren residents who have returned to Whitestone for the off-season have seen lights in the abandoned town, and are spreading rumors that some of the **mages** contracted to "lock up" after everyone has left town are actually agents of the Myriad. The truth is that these mages are mercenaries hired by the League of Miracles to secretly conduct experiments on **cold snap spirits** (see page 234) to transform them into loyal elemental warriors.

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 grim inhabitants, from the 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's common knowledge that if you intend to travel through the 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Parchwood Timberlands can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Headless Horse-Man (mid-level). 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 spiriting away eligible young bachelors, and soon no men will be left in the Timberlands.

These marauders are **centaur skeletons** (see page 255). Their leader Ichabarr uses the same statistics, and can also use the optional Ethereal Stride feature.

They Seek Only Rest (high-level). Those who travel the Parchwood sometimes hear thunder roll through the valley, accompanied by the cracking of timbers, but no storm follows. Over twenty years ago, the Briarwoods slaughtered and reanimated an entire clan of giants native to the Parchwood. Some of these zombie giants survived the fall of the Briarwoods. Most of these giants have been destroyed by the Grey Hunters, but a few still remain. However, their mindless actions are not without purpose: each giant is tormented by being denied the halls of their ancestors, and quietly weeps 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 giving it immunity to poison damage and the poisoned condition. This does not affect its challenge rating.

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 coastal boundary of the Alabaster Sierras and are home to seemingly infinite cliffside caverns that overlook 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 even consider sailing

through these treacherous waters. These factors make the Salted Bluffs an ideal hideaway for pirates, who have taken to these bluffs to hide away their riches or build a base of operations.

However, these outlaws must also deal with the colonies of harpies native to the region. They can never be too sure if a cave they're holing up in for the evening is abandoned—or if it's home to a beast of alluring song and shredding talons. Even empty caves house the remains of these harpies' brutal kills, for they sweep up unsuspecting creatures and dash them against the cliffs and rocks, recovering the broken corpses to feed upon safely.

Salted Bluffs Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure on the Salted Bluffs can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Crow's Nest (low-level). The Ashwing harpy tribe that roost among the Salted Bluffs have recently commandeered the galley owned by the group of penitent corsairs and started 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?

Start Believing in Ghost Stories (low-level). Pirates are one thing. Undead pirates are another. A group of swashbucklers have willingly turned themselves in to the Chamber of Whitestone, begging for absolution from the Dawnfather for their crimes. They refuse to return to the cove where they kept their stolen treasure since it's guarded by the **zombies** and **skeletons** of their risen comrades—as well as the **wight** that killed them. Perhaps a group of adventurers can save the day?

Shearing Channel

Long ago, a land bridge once connected the landmasses of Tal'Dorei and Wildemount. However, the catastrophic forces of the Calamity blasted it apart, leaving in its place a deathly strait of jagged rock and gale-force winds. 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. It's said that no honest sailor knows a safe passage through the channel, but rumors abound of hidden coves and unknown routes that the Revelry pirates of Wildemount's Menagerie Coast use to safely traverse these deadly waters.



Amidst fluted white bones, serenaded by siren's call.
'Twas there did I bury my treasures, one and all.
But deaf and blind must the finder be,
Lest a briny death be that which ye truly seek.

—From a fragment of a treasure map

Shearing Channel Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Shearing Channel can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Scion of Oblivion (epic-level). 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 undisturbed in the tempestuous channel—and now it rises. A **kraken**, mutated by the Oblivion's aberrant power, explodes from the water. Its mere presence causes the flesh and minds of sailors to fuse to their ships, sea creatures to hideously mutate into humanoid abominations, and the clouds above to rain thick, ichorous black droplets. A storm now lingers permanently over the Shearing Channel, and forces from Whitestone and the Menagerie Coast of western Wildemount relay frantic messages, seeking to somehow halt this evil. It seems to be building an army here for some larger attack. What is it planning?

Whitestone

Small City: Population 17,710 (78% humans, 7% halflings, 6% dwarves, 4% tieflings, 5% other races)

Over 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 slavering beasts. After a time, the survivors found a clearing containing a single tree that glowed with the radiance of the sun itself. They called it the Sun Tree—a literal blessing of the Dawnfather himself—and built their home around it.

Since then, the de Rolos' pioneering settlement has grown into a robust, if isolated, city. The sights of the city range from the gothic majesty of Castle Whitestone to the radiant glory of the Sun Tree, and from the quaint townhouses of the city center to the humble homesteads of its outlying townships. Because Whitestone is limited in fertile farmland, 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 most sought-after export. Before long, the de Rolos' sale of whitestone allowed them to quickly amass a significant fortune and construct a princely keep within their city.

The city is constantly improved (and unsettled) by the brilliant tinkering of Percival de Rolo. His greatest creation, the Heart of Whitestone, overlooks the city. Most prominent these days, however, is a rudimentary electric light grid. Using acid pits in the relatively unexplored caverns beneath the city as a sort of battery, six dozen electric lamps throughout the city are given just enough power to gently illuminate the streets, the watch posts on the castle, and the city walls with a soft, greenish glow all through the night.

Scars of the Briarwoods

Lady Delilah and Lord Sylas Briarwood, former cult leaders of the Whispered One, were ousted from Whitestone over twenty years ago. Though they are no more, the evil they committed still lingers. The nearly 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 and vampirism themselves, and have fled into the Alabaster Sierras to learn the secrets of the Briarwoods' foul magic—and to emulate their takeover of Whitestone. The enigmatic Grey Hunters, the secretive elite warriors of the Chamber of Whitestone, have worked tirelessly to pull out the Remnants by their roots, but permanently eliminating them seems an impossible task.

An Enchanting Export

One of the climactic battles of the Calamity was a clash between the stalwart Dawnfather and the engine of callous destruction known as the Chained Oblivion. This battle 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 physical residue of arcane energy.

The sheer amount of leftover arcane power within the whitestone of the mountains is incredibly receptive to enchantment. Magic items that incorporate at least an ounce of whitestone into their construction require only one-quarter the creation time of other magic items. 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 markets, though it becomes extremely expensive and difficult to find outside of Emon or the city of Whitestone itself.

Residuum can also be heated and blown into glass, forming a shimmering, greenish surface. Residuum slates or orbs can be used in stationary enchanting tables. Archmages willing to pay exorbitant rates—easily 20,000 gp or more—may acquire an enchanting slate that can be used to expedite the creation of all magic items. Using such a table allows anyone crafting a magic item to do so in one-quarter of the usual time.

Government

For many years, the de Rolo family ruled Whitestone with dignity and justice. Their noble rule was broken by Delilah Briarwood, an exiled necromancer of the Cerberus Assembly from Wildemount, and her vampire husband, Sylas. Together, they slaughtered the family, took over Whitestone, and plunged the city into despair.

Nearly 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 until the rest of the Chamber unanimously agrees there are no suitable de Rolos to accept the position.

Defense

Whitestone's first line of defense is made up of the obelisk wards. Hastily constructed during the time of the Chroma Conclave to avoid detection by their roving wyvern armies, five whitestone obelisks mark the perimeter of the city and castle grounds. These obelisks form a dome of illusory magic when powered by an arcane spellcaster, hiding the city under the guise of continued, undeveloped Parchwood, and shielding everything within from arcane detection. The obelisks haven't been used since the attack of the Chroma Conclave and are beginning to be covered by graffiti and overgrowth.

For each spell slot that is syphoned into an obelisk, two hours of illusion is powered per spell level sacrificed, and the cover of the illusion barrier is incomplete unless all five obelisks are powered simultaneously. This siphoning is a taxing experience, and for every 30 spell levels sacrificed within a 24-hour period, the caster gains 1 level of exhaustion.

In addition to this rarely used magical ward, three groups of defensive personnel protect Whitestone from both within and without.

Pale Guard. The people of Whitestone rely upon the Pale Guard to resolve any (admittedly rare) crimes and disturbances of the peace. The Pale Guard are a force of sentinels who answer to the Pale Lord of Wardship. Since criminal activity is fairly low these days, most of the Pale Guard are given other civic tasks to help Whitestone's people.

These tasks range from helping newcomers navigate the city streets to escorting visiting dignitaries to diplomatic functions. While performing a duty that requires it, members of the Pale Guard are permitted to carry simple, three-barrel pepperbox revolvers.

Whitestone Rifle Corps. The defense of the city from outside invaders and threats from the darkened boughs of the Parchwood Timberlands is attended to by the Whitestone Rifle Corps, who are trained in the deadly long-range rifles created by Percival de Rolo. They are only permitted to wield the weapons while patrolling the city walls or castle battlements—except in times of emergency, or when granted special permission by the Chamber of Whitestone.

Grey Hunters. An elite force called the Grey Hunters makes up the most secret of Whitestone's defenses. Trained in the arts of hand-to-hand combat, marksmanship, espionage, and etiquette, the Hunters have a reach that extends across all Tal'Dorei, but they exist only as a rumor in the eyes of the public—and they answer only to the Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt.

The firearms wielded by members of the Grey Hunters are custom-made and named by their owner. Their rifles' stocks are made of Parchwood inlaid with whitestone and enchanted against wear with residuum. The lock mechanism bears the Whitestone crest. Hunters are trained to meticulously care for their weapons, and many learn enough to make personal modifications, or even build one from scratch. A Hunter must never lose their weapon. If they cannot prove it was destroyed, they aren't permitted to return to Whitestone until it is recovered—although they may request help from other Hunters in retrieving it. If they come across a weapon of Whitestone in the wrong hands, they are honor-bound to return it to the city.

This covert organization is headquartered in the ruins of a failed city expansion deep beneath the eastern Parchwood. This base is used for training, for weapon storage, and as a repository for their mission logs, so that a complete record of every Hunter and their weapons can forever be kept. As with many of his inventions, Percival de Rolo fears that the Hunters are a powerful—and even necessary—tool in the hands of the righteous, but a terrible weapon, should they be perverted to suit evil.

Crime

The community of Whitestone has endured much hardship, from its shipwrecked beginnings to the bloody reign of the Briarwoods. Its hardy people are generally more concerned with personal duty, small comforts, and the creation of new art and technologies than with the pursuit of easy profit. The Myriad has tried several times to gain a foothold in Whitestone, but they've been foiled time and again by the consistent counterespionage efforts of the Grey Hunters. Nevertheless, they continue to try, and their presence has inspired petty theft throughout the city.

The altruistic Lord Percival and Lady Vex'ahlia of Whitestone prefer to address crime at the source—poverty and suffering—rather than punishing criminals. Likewise, most petty criminals are seen in Whitestone as worthy of rehabilitation, not punishment.

Geography

Whitestone was originally constructed around the newly discovered Sun Tree, and has slowly expanded outward ever since. Castle Whitestone was built atop



a small hill overlooking the city to the north. Over the years, farmers and homesteaders have cleared more and more of the Parchwood to the south of the city. Even today, as Whitestone's population has swelled, the Parchwood remains defiant, dark, and threatening. It is in little danger of being overrun by mortals, and its eerie creatures strike back whenever the people of Whitestone press against it too greedily. The Grey Hunt was formed to keep the deadly denizens of the woods at bay, though now their purview reaches farther than just the Parchwood.

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 the discovery of the Sun Tree was seen as a sign. Today, Dawnfather Square is filled with quaint, bustling shops and small townhomes.

Points of Interest

The City of Whitestone has a number of famous landmarks. They are keyed to the map of Whitestone.

1. Castle Whitestone. This gothic fortress was erected not long after the city's founding, and has long been the seat of power for the sovereign de Rolo family. Percival and Cassandra de Rolo have opted to end their absolute power over the city by sharing it with the Chamber of Whitestone—on which they each hold a seat.

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' ancestral 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 weight of his sorrow—and of the Briarwoods' evil.

The castle itself is generally off-limits to the public, but its grounds are more accessible. The Whitestone Rifle Corps train in a firing yard behind the castle, and many people of the town flock to watch—only to be politely rebuffed by the Pale Guard. Open to all, however, are the gardens—except for Percival de Rolo's latest project, the Widow's Garden. This walled garden was named for Lady Melanie de Rolo, who originally cultivated its deadly blooms to slowly murder her husband. The Widow's Garden used to be a macabre menagerie of poisonous plants from across Wildemount. It fell fallow during the reign of the Briarwoods, but Percival has resurrected it with Keyleth's horticultural aid.

2. 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 Mentor was nearly destroyed. The god wept, and from the seed grew a symbol of protection—a tree with radiant orange foliage and a golden glow that surrounds it when in bloom. The Sun Tree became a beacon of light within the dark forest that enclosed 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.

3. Temples and the Greyfield. A patch of land outside the eastern wall of the city sees generations of Whitestone's dead interred within a graveyard known as the Greyfield. Custody of this cemetery is shared by the Temple of the Dawn and the Altar of the Raven, sanctuaries maintained by the clergy of the Dawnfather and the Matron of Ravens, respectively. Since most people in Whitestone consider the Dawnfather their patron deity, the Temple of the Dawn is the largest of these shrines. The smaller Altar of the Raven is right next door, and most well-to-do devotees of the Dawnfather look upon the dour, dark-robed clerics of the Matron of Ravens with a mixture of awe and unease.

The temples' grounds also house a number of mausoleums containing the remains of long-forgotten noble families, though the last generation of lost de Rolos were not recovered following the rule of the Briarwoods. Traces of the Briarwoods' defiling magic still linger within the Greyfield, and the Pale Guard are posted here at night to quell the restless dead that occasionally claw their way to the surface.

4. The Heart of Whitestone. A majestic clock tower called the Heart of Whitestone stands proud and tall over the city. It is Percival de Rolo's favorite invention, one he dedicated much of the past two decades to constructing to honor his loyal friends, their sacrifices, and the trials they endured together. The area around it is known as Forlington Square, named for one of the first families to settle in Whitestone. This bustling courtyard is lined with shops and street performers that attract locals and tourists alike.

The clock tower's construction was completed five years ago, but Percival continues to tinker with it, adding both functionality and self-indulgent embellishments. The tower has individual movements for most major holidays (see page 9), including depictions of famous moments and persons from Whitestone history. The clock tracks the movements of the moons, stars, and spheres. The mechanics of the clock are only truly understood by Percy himself, though small clubs of scholars and esotericists take great joy in unraveling its mysteries. Further, it has long been rumored that Percival secreted a vault within the tower's innards to safeguard his most dangerous inventions.

5. Snowdrop Memorial Trail. In the east of the city, winding between the Grey Hunt Estate and the temple to the Matron of Ravens, is a private trail through the woods. Only locals know of this trail, and even among them, few know that the path was made by Keyleth of Zephrah on one of her many visits to the city. Countless snowdrop flowers line this secluded track, and they are tended to by Lady Vex'ahlia when she has time away from her duties to both the Chamber of Whitestone and the Tal'Dorei Council. The significance of this memorial garden isn't listed on any plaque, but most in Whitestone have an inkling that it's dedicated to a beloved champion of the god of death.

6. Grey Hunt Manor. The estate of the Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt is rarely used by the current holder of that title these days, as all her nights not spent away on Tal'Dorei Council business are passed with her family in Castle Whitestone. Members of the Grey Hunt still use it as a formal meeting place—though meetings of true import take place in their secret lair in the eastern ruins (area 11).

7. House of the Lawbearer. This temple is both a place of worship and a stately courthouse. All who enter are sworn to tell the truth by the vigilant clerics of the Lawbearer—for the entire building is under the protection of a vast, permanent *zone of truth* spell. This protection is fallible, but it sends a clear message to all who enter.

8. Slayer's Cake Bakery. Founded by members of Vox Machina, the Slayer's Cake has quickly become one of the most beloved bakeries in Tal'Dorei, and it has a satellite shop in Emon. It ships bread and pastries to Nicodranas in Wildemount via teleportation circle weekly, and the bakery's owners are thinking of expanding.

9. Lord Trinket's Public Park. A section of the Parchwood to the west of the city was cleared in the aftermath of the Whispered One's defeat in anticipation of a major expansion. However, more of the Emonian refugees left the city than anticipated, leaving these plans untenable, but the forest already cleared. At the request of Vex'ahlia, Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt, the space was transformed into a public park that she uses to play with her now-venerable brown bear, Trinket—and a lifelike marble statue of that same bear, clad in magnificent armor, stands in its center.

Portions of this city expansion did eventually come to pass, and now several manor houses have been built near the edge of the park to house visiting dignitaries.


To The Alabaster Sierras
The City of
WHITESTONE
PARCHWOOD TIMBERLAND
NORTHERN WARD
DAWNFATHER SQUARE
COMMON WARD
SOUTHERN WARD
PARCHWOOD TIMBERLAND
To the Timberland Trail
To the South-West Farmlands
To the Alabaster Trail
To the South-East Farmlands
LEGEND
1 Castle Whitestone
2 The Sun Tree
3 The Greyfield
4 The Heart of Whitestone
5 Snowdrop Memorial Trail
6 Grey Hunt Manor
7 House of the Lawbearer
8 Slayer's Cake Bakery
9 Lord Trinket's Public Park
10 Galdric's Gate
11 Eastern Ruins
12 Hearth of the Everlight

10. Galdric's Gate. The new, northwestern gate of Whitestone opens onto the Timberland Trail, which grants hunters easy access to the city when they return from expeditions into the Parchwood.

11. Eastern Ruins. Whitestone's first expansion in recent times happened just after the fall of the Whispered One, to accommodate the city's large refugee population. However, a mix of social unrest and monstrous incursions from the Parchwood stymied the project, and the bones of the expansion were left to fall into ruin. No attempt has been made to reclaim the ruins, but the Grey Hunt have made a secret base of operations in the basement of a magnificent temple not yet dedicated to any god.

12. Hearth of the Everlight. Established by Pike Trickfoot in the years following Vox Machina's victory over the Whispered One, this humble temple stands as a bastion of welcoming light and shelter to those seeking solace and direction. Within its stone walls, the faithful of the Everlight study her philosophy of compassion and fierce protection. Still, the temple is far from tranquil—the congregation also hosts monthly fêtes and revels as a part of their worship in the image of their exuberant founder.

Whitestone Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Whitestone can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Dad Scientist (any level). Percival de Rolo doesn't usually involve outsiders in his creative process. However, when his youngest daughter Gwendolyn takes one of his latest creations and disappears into the dungeons of Castle Whitestone, he has no choice but to rally all adventurers in Whitestone to join him, Vex'ahlia, and the city's elite warriors in scouring the dungeons for his missing girl.

Matter of Some Importance (low-level). The Castle Whitestone library recently acquired a new book containing unprecedented knowledge about the Outer Planes, but opening the tome also opens an infernal portal that summons a steady stream of imps. The characters are hired by Head Librarian JB Trickfoot to keep the **imps** out of her hair—and *out* of the library, please—while she scours the tome for information.

Grey Hunt (high-level). The characters have been recommended to the Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt as formidable adventurers by an unknown ally—or adversary. Vex'ahlia de Rolo considers them cautiously, but offers them the chance to prove themselves worthy of the title of Grey Hunter. She sets them a task to be completed within the next three months: track down a legendary **ember roc** (see page 238) in the Cliffkeep Mountains and claim its head as a trophy. Of course, she knows that this quest is more than just a hunt; the question is, will the characters realize it takes more than just skill to join the hunters?

Dividing Plains

Tal'Dorei's vast heartland, framed by the Stormcrest Mountains in the southwest, the Cliffkeeps in the north, and the Summit Peaks in the south, 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 adventurers and village militias battle back the wild beasts and wandering bandits of the region. The safest way to avoid being beset by monsters is to travel the Silvercut Roadway, which slices through the endless plains, connects the coasts, and shepherds caravans between them. Of course, the roads are coursing with highwaymen and bandits, so which route is safer is entirely up to the traveler to decide.

Cults of the Betrayer Gods also prey upon the people of the plains. The most fearsome of these death cults are the Ravagers, a bloody band of warriors exiled from cities and nomadic clans alike. All people of the plains fear the Ravagers, and even the smallest villages train people old enough to hold a spear how to defend their homes. Beyond the grassy plains, owlbears and other monstrosities stalk the forests and foothills that dot the plains and border it on many sides. Packs of centaurs also gallop across the open plains, delivering the Arch Heart's justice as they see fit.

The Bramblewood

Surrounding the base of the southernmost stretch of the Cliffkeep Mountains is the Bramblewood, a dark and tangled forest named for its jagged, thorny-barked trees. The Bramblewood's impenetrable canopy and thick, gnarled roots give it an ominous appearance, but its eerie boughs are populated with countless deadly beasts. It's a grim warning to all who would dare approach Gatshadow, the mountain of despair: come no closer if you value your life.

Yet despite this, without the abundant game and plentiful timber of the Bramblewood, the nearby city of Westruun would likely not exist. A trade city with nothing to trade rarely lasts long, and the Bramblewood ensures that local carpenters, artisans, and tradesfolk always have plentiful resources. 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Bramblewood can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Haunted Road (mid-level). 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. A **banshee**, aided by the **specters** of those she has slain, hungers for the sweet taste of another adventurer's dying breaths.

Blood of the Ruiner (high-level). The Shields, Westruun's beleaguered soldiery, have tracked a cell of Ravagers to a base in the Bramblewood. They have conducted a foul ritual to the Ruiner to turn their cult master, an elf named Kalydria Darkeye, into a **Ravager slaughter lord** (see page 249). They have also transformed a number of the giant spiders endemic to the Bramblewood into hideous **demon-feed spiders** (see page 236) through the same bloody ritual. The Ravagers have created a makeshift fortification, and the Shields need to know what their next move is—an infiltration mission only powerful adventurers are capable of completing.

Majority Faiths: Wildmother, Lawbearer, Platinum Dragon
Minority Faiths: Stormlord, Everlight, Ruiner, Strife Emperor, Chained Oblivion
Imports: Fish, gold, diamonds, spell components
Exports: Lumber, grain, produce, cobalt, iron, silver, livestock

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 just two years after its founding. It was here that the combined forces of Kraghammer, Syngorn, Tal'Dorei, and the Ashari hurled the Rimelord back into the Elemental Plane of Ice 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 that trade with Kymal and Westruun. The great lake is fed by three rivers that give life to the Dividing Plains: the Byhills, the Tundrun, and the Wildpath. After especially hard winters, these rivers run hard and fast, and the



overflows spill into the Foramere Waterway, which flows into Owlset Bay, near Stilben.

Some of these fishing villages are home to the descendants of the fighters that warred against the Rimelord's tyranny. Even in times when Syngorn and Kraghammer were bitter rivals, the elves and dwarves here took no part in their homelands' hatred.

Foramere Basin Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Foramere Basin can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Nightmare Before Winter's Crest (mid-level). The festival of Winter's Crest celebrates the anniversary of the Rimelord's defeat and the fall of Foramere Citadel. The characters, far from home on the holiday, are not only witness to the fishing communities on the banks of the basin gathering to celebrate Winter's Crest, but to 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 and hillsfolk of the Dividing Plains say 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 this legend is true hardly matters; the tales of Ironseat Ridge permeate the folklore of the plains.

The mountains surrounding Ironseat itself have been hollowed out over the centuries, and other legends say that the ruins of an abandoned dwarven redoubt called Inverspire can be found by explorers savvy enough to navigate the labyrinthine tunnels—and that it's surely filled with monsters and vast riches. Legends aside, countless abandoned mineshafts do snake through the stone like the veins of a dead titan. When the winds grow strong, you can sometimes 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 Kymal's brightly lit streets.

Ironseat Ridge Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Ironseat Ridge can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

The Beast Below (any level). It's one of those still nights where the howls of the Ironseat echo across the plains. The next time the characters spend a night in town, whether in Kymal or any small village of the plains, they learn of disappearances—explorers that went into the caves, never to return—and of

the hefty reward their grieving families are offering for their return. What could be making that awful wailing in the caves? Werewolves? Kidnappers using the echoing caverns?

Dead Fires of Inverspire (epic-level). The mythic redoubt of Inverspire contains a legendary creation of the All-Hammer: a **forge guardian** (see page 239). It was placed here by the All-Hammer during the Calamity to watch over a forge with the power to create arms and armor fit only for a war between gods and mortals. Over twenty years ago, the elemental power of the Cinder King somehow ignited this divine creation's ashen heart and filled it with elemental life. It has turned to the forge it was made to guard, and has begun creating beings of steel and flame that will tear Tal'Dorei apart stone by stone in order to find its missing father, the All-Hammer. Only definitive proof of the All-Hammer's imprisonment beyond the Divine Gate can quench the guardian's anguished flames.

Ivyheart Thicket

Clustered at the western side of the Ironseat Ridge, this thicket contains the ruins of an ancient civilization that remains under study by the Alabaster Lyceum. Among scattered relics and the rubble of forgotten villages lie 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, but very little understanding of what may be found beneath.

The western edges of these ruins are the most dangerous—and the most alluring—part of the Ivyheart Thicket. A vast, well decorated with ivy-crept marble pillars, burns with eternal fire. Explorers in the employ of the Alabaster Lyceum say that this place has become a hotbed of activity. Azer have flocked to it from the Elemental Plane of Fire, and have made it their home, forging beautiful bronze weapons, armor, and objets d'art. The Lyceum reports that elemental activity within the nearby redoubt of Inverspire is somehow related to this elemental incursion—and that it may be connected to the mythic fire giant stronghold of Vulkanon (see page 220).

Kymal

Small City: Population 29,440 (63% humans, 24% dwarves, 13% other races)

Glitzy. Gilded. Grimy. The city of Kymal stands as the grumbling ghost of a gold-rush boomtown. These days, it's 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 it grew into a lively, booming city. Gold and minerals came out of Kymal, and all the pleasures of home followed. Music, theater, sex, food, liquor, drugs, trinkets—if you could want it, you could find it in Kymal. Anything you could spend money on was there, and people spent money like the world was ending. The rich binged anything they could get their hands on to pretend they were important, and poor folk indulged in whatever comfort they could find from their wretched existence in a town where money meant everything.

In time, of course, the veins ran dry. Ten years after Kymal boomed into being, it went bust. The miners packed up and left. Not many of them had struck it rich; in fact, most folk were worse off than they had been before. In the intervening centuries, Kymal has gone through too many cycles of boom and bust to count. New veins of gold or mithral or adamantine have been found in the mountains, and people rush in to claim it. Or a cunning entrepreneur comes up with a scheme to put Kymal on the map—and it works, for a few years, before the con runs its course and people are right back to where they were before.

Most folk here make a modest living in rural villages surrounding Kymal's city center, or trawling the nearby Foramere Basin for fish, and are trying to build interest as a trade center like Westruun, though without much luck. Kymal's most recent change of fortune, however, has yet to run dry. Some seventy years ago, an entrepreneur from Ank'Harel named Calis Krishtan opened a small casino called "The Maiden's Wish." It started something of a gold rush of its own, one that continues to this day.

The city has grown over the past seventy years, becoming a hub of entertainment and games of chance in Tal'Dorei. So great was Calis's revival of Kymal that the Tal'Dorei Council appointed his son (and heir to the Maiden's Wish), Jaktur Krishtan, the Margrave of Kymal.

Government

Now entering old age, Margrave Jaktur Krishtan is desperately trying to maintain the boom that his father created, while grooming his son to take over his gambling empire. Krishtan has recently made headlines across Tal'Dorei by relinquishing his position as margrave. It's an open secret that Jaktur Krishtan has never had a head for governance, simply enjoying the lavish, gold-plated life his casinos' profits bring him. He could easily have allowed his advisors to continue running Kymal for him while he continued to throw magnificent galas, make nightly appearances at the Maiden's Wish, and put his stamp of approval on glitzy parades down the city's main street.

Investigators have flocked to Kymal to uncover the truth of Margrave Krishtan's sudden change of

heart. All suspect that the truth is a salacious secret, one which would shake Kymal to its foundations. Krishtan himself seems unperturbed. He continues to live large as he always has, his detractors don't disparage him any more than usual, and the public that loves him hasn't changed their tune.

Jaktur's former majordomo, an austere tiefling woman named Khavasta "Prudence" Almiji, has taken up the mantle of Acting Margrave with quiet satisfaction. It is, after all, the title that she should have had for the past thirty years, and she hopes that the Tal'Dorei Council will see fit to appoint her margrave permanently in very short order.

Defense

The acting margrave commands a force of about one thousand armed guards called the Public Defense. Despite the name, they are most often seen stationed around the casinos owned by ex-Margrave Krishtan, or working as bodyguards for Kymal's politicians and wealthy cardsharps. Gold can buy anything in Kymal, even the personal protection of the Public Defense.

Crime

Kymal is no longer the den of crime it once was, but there is still scum beneath its glitzy and imperfect façade. Small-time cutpurses lurk in the shadows, waiting to make off with the small fortunes won by the casinos' luckiest patrons. The war between the Clasp and the Myriad smolders within Kymal as well, but Acting Margrave Almiji has played her cards carefully and intelligently. Through an intricate web of bribes, promises, and threats, she has managed to suppress even the faintest trace of gang violence within her city.

Of course, crime still occurs in Kymal. It's just not public and bloody. The Clasp and Myriad both own casinos in town—named the Wishing Well and the Dragon's Hoard, respectively. Not many know of these casinos' less-than-savory proprietorship. Even those who do fail to realize just how deeply rigged its tables are—or how many pickpockets and swindlers hide in plain sight in their gilded halls.

Moreover, the Clasp and Myriad alike have immense illicit drug operations within Kymal. The Public Defense is technically bound to arrest anyone caught selling or possessing these substances, but the bulk of these arrests fall on small-time crooks working for these criminal organizations, almost never the high-ranking members.

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.

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 was the site of a pivotal battle of the Scattered War—one in which King Warren Drassig was ambushed and slain by a rebel army.

The city was destroyed in an act of vengeance by Warren's eldest son Neminar over two centuries ago. Now, its ruins harbor only memories—and occasionally outlaws and cultists who use the ghost stories that surround it to avoid suspicion. The now long-weathered wreckage and broken foundations of the town harbor only ghosts and unsavory creatures drawn to places of such dark history.

Ruins of Torthil Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Ruins of Torthil can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Forgotten War Machine (high-level). The Ruins of Torthil hold one lost secret. Buried beneath a landslide in one of the nearby hills is a **platinum golem** (see page 239). Any crests that may have indicated who it fought for— Tal'Dorei's rebels, the elves of Syngorn, or Drassig's legions—have been scoured away by time. The characters are drawn to Torthil when exiles and criminals living in the ruins flood into Kymal, saying that a greedy treasure hunter awakened a metallic monster that laid waste to the already ruined town—and is now making its way steadily toward Kymal!

Shadebarrow

No one who has visited the Shadebarrow has ever returned alive—but neither do they come back entirely dead. The Shadebarrow was once a monolithic henge used as a ritual site for sun-worshiping druids known as the Dawn Circle, but their shrine became their tomb after Trist Drassig slew them for aiding Zan Tal'Dorei in the Scattered War, centuries ago.

After Trist Drassig's death, the trade guilds 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, 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

Illegal Drugs

If you want to include drugs in your RPG campaign, consider discussing with your group in a session zero (see page 149) to make sure everyone is okay to encounter them in-game. If any player says no or doesn't enthusiastically buy-in, err on the side of caution and leave the drugs out. It's also important to check in with your group whenever drug use comes into play, just to make sure everyone is still having fun. Additionally, while use of drugs might be fine with everyone, also make sure you know how comfortable your players are with explicit descriptions of needles, issues of addiction, and any other topics related to drug use.

The Clasp and the Myriad deal in a variety of illegal, mind-altering drugs, and Kymal is the epicenter of both organizations' clientele. Though the creation and possession of these drugs is strictly prohibited in most of Tal'Dorei, they have found popularity within all levels of society, particularly in Kymal, where the Public Defense frequently looks the other way for a small bribe.

Oloore Root. This root is typically sold in teabags for 100 gp per dose. It was originally a ritualistic tool used by the followers of many gods, but now sees more recreational use. Oracles used it to enhance their divinations, for it helped them leave their physical bodies behind and become closer to gods and spirits. Drinking tea brewed from the root causes intense hallucinations, which feel like they have granted perfect clarity of mind to the imbiber.

After drinking oloore tea as an action, you must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or experience vivid hallucinations for 1d4 hours. During this time, you have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. If you fail the saving throw by 10 or more, your hallucinations become horrific visions and you gain a level of exhaustion. On a success, you gain preternatural clarity, allowing you to cast the *scrying* spell once within the next 1d4 hours.

Zeal. Distilled from the ichor of demons, zeal was originally used by Tal'Dorei's ancient berserkers to grant them incredible strength and courage before battles. These days, it's most commonly used by criminal bruisers before a brawl. Most modern warriors stay well away from zeal, due both to its addictive nature and to the mental and physical degeneration it can cause over long periods of time. When prepared properly, zeal is a purple, ashy-tasting gel that typically costs 150 gp per dose.

After slathering zeal across your exposed skin as an action, you must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, you become paralyzed for 1d4 rounds as your muscles lock up. On a success, your weapon attacks deal an additional 1d6 damage for the next minute. After this effect ends, you gain one level of exhaustion.

Suude. Exandria's most infamous drug, suude is a glittering powder made from residuum (see page 75). It was first developed by power-hungry archmages in the Age of Arcanum as an incense burned to enhance focus during ritual spellcasting. The secret to its refinement has been lost and rediscovered a variety of times since the Calamity, and many different types of suude have been developed by arcanists in search of ever-greater power. It has terrible addictive and mentally degenerative properties, even when used sparingly.

After burning suude within a vessel and inhaling its fumes as an action, you take 22 (4d10) psychic damage and must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, you become poisoned for 1 hour and fall unconscious for 1 minute, or until you are shaken awake as an action. During this time, the world seems to move in slow motion, and your vision is twisted in kaleidoscopic colors—yet your focus is never distorted. If one dose of suude, or more, is used within 1 hour of another, the DC of the Constitution saving throw is increased by 5 per additional dose. If you fail this save by 10 or more, you instantly drop to 0 hit points.

On a success, you gain the ability to use one of the following Metamagic options as a sorcerer for the next minute, requiring no sorcery points. The type of Metamagic you gain access to depends on the type of suude, and once you use it, you can't use it again until you inhale suude again.

Brown suude allows you to use the Extended Spell Metamagic option, blue suude allows you to use Twinned Spell, and red suude grants Distant Spell.

few surviving grandchildren, and they deny any involvement with the forgotten crypt. The surviving descendants of Sevil Howthess, Camilla Tenver and Buddleia Austan, live in Westruun, but have changed their names through marriage. Only searching through the public records in Westruun's Hall of Reason or seeking lore about the Shadebarrow in the Cobalt Reserve will turn up their names.

Despite the barrow's location being lost to time, treasure hunters and historians still seek out—and occasionally find—the infamous crypt. 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

The Shadebarrow is a crypt that you can turn into a dungeon of any size in your campaign. It may have only a single layer filled with ghosts, and perhaps

a plot-important item. Or it could be a multi-level dungeon with interconnected passages and a mighty reward at the bottom, like a Vestige of Divergence (see page 200) guarded by a terrible monster.

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Shadebarrow can also use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Forsaken Monolith (low-level). While traveling across the Dividing Plains, the characters stumble upon 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 an incessant curse as they try to kill or scare intruders away: "Defiler! Howthess!"

Undeath Unbound (epic-level). 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. Ever since Baron Howthess disturbed the Shadebarrow's seal, this prince of evil has rallied an army of undeath in the accursed depths of this crypt. Now, the time has come for him to spill his plague of undeath across the Dividing Plains. The undead are spreading to all corners of Tal'Dorei, and the characters must find the Shadebarrow and reach its deepest sanctum to halt their spread for good.



Silvercut Roadway

Named for the shimmer of endless fields of windswept, sunlit 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 this ancient road predate the Tal'Dorei Council, and it now runs from the Bladeshimmer Shoreline to the Lucidian Coast, connecting most major hubs of civilization across the country.

Silvercut Crossroads

The Silvercut Roadway and the Wildwood Byway meet in the shadow of the Ironseat Ridge. 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 by Zan Tal'Dorei's rebel army, and the rebels created a stone monument with an inscription to commemorate all who lost their lives to tyranny:

The standard-bearers of revolution honor the innocent dead. Vengeance will not restore the lives of the lost, nor will it appease their spirits. We vow you will receive justice, for justice will ensure that no more guiltless blood shall be shed.

Most travelers choose not to camp too closely to the site, for there are countless urban legends about hauntings that surround this grim monument.

Silvercut Roadway Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure on the Silvercut Roadway can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

The Road Warriors (low-level). While traveling across the Silvercut, the characters 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 characters, blaming them for the attack. Investigating the wreckage turns



up unholy symbols of the Ruiner, suggesting that the Ravagers were responsible for the massacre, allowing the characters to easily clear their names.

But is it really that simple? Further investigation reveals that this convoy had a number of mercenary mages in their midst, and many of them had contracts from the League of Miracles.

Shard of the Shadebarrow (mid-level). 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 they 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 Arch Heart

In the foothills of the Ironseat Ridge is a small rise known as the Throne of the Arch Heart: a gathering place for the many nomadic centaurs who ride across the Dividing Plains. The centaurs were first born when the Arch Heart showed mercy to a tribe of elven horse riders who gave their lives serving their god during the Calamity. For centuries, the centaurs have all returned to the Throne of the Arch Heart once per decade to gather in a Herdsmeet to discuss the state of the herds, and to 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 the Ravagers to acts of terrible vengeance against the creations of the Arch Heart—the Ruiner's divine nemesis.

Throne of the Arch Heart Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Throne of the Arch Heart can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Fist of the Ruiner (mid-level). Many 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 Arch Heart and the Ruiner. Orcs with a deep appreciation for ancient myths from across Tal'Dorei make a pilgrimage at the time of the Herdsmeet. Some are long-time friends of the centaurs, and they pay homage to the Arch Heart together in thanks for spilling the blood that created them. Other orcs join with the Ravagers to lay siege to the Herdsmeet—and the Ravagers'

bloodthirsty power is so great that orcs and centaurs alike have begun hiring humanoid mercenaries to defend the herds and pilgrims as they attempt to worship the Arch Heart in peace.

Torian Forest

Cradling the southwestern edge of the Cliffkeep Mountain range, the Torian Forest supplies much of Emon's timber, as well as Kraghammer's firewood. Though its locals proudly proclaim the Torian to be the "most welcoming" and "least haunted" of Tal'Dorei's forests, this is more of a myth than people realize. The forest is welcoming and bright at its edges, with a beautiful wetland at its northern end, but within its deep and unexplored heart are spirits not understood since the Age of Arcanum— and a cruel and hungry wraithroot tree guarding a magical artifact likewise not seen since time immemorial.

Rivermaw Herd

Born from the wild peoples of the Dividing Plains, free folk who shunned the constraints of society, the Rivermaw is the greatest of the Dividing Plains' herds. It now boasts a membership of nearly ten thousand, along with a number of satellite herds that owe their allegiance to the Rivermaw.

Though the Rivermaw is now a mighty force for good on the Dividing Plains, they had humble beginnings. Just two generations ago, they numbered little more than three hundred half-giants, orcs, gnolls, humans, and nomads of other races that made their home in the Torian Forest.

It wasn't until they were conquered by the Herd of Storms, helmed by the tyrannical goliath Kevdak, that a more violent 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 recanted his brutal ways and become the Rivermaw Herd known across Tal'Dorei today. It is led by two goliaths: Zanroar, son of Kevdak, and Skyhaal, daughter of Zanroar.

Turst Fields

Village: Population 2,420 (40% humans, 38% halflings, 15% gnolls, 8% other races)

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 a lucrative stop for trade caravans traveling along the Parchwood Way to Drynna—and an easy target for swindlers. As such, nearly two hundred Shields from Westruun are permanently stationed here to keep the peace and prevent unlawful activity. Nearly as common as the arrival of a trader's wagon is an armored carriage transporting brigands, grifters, and horse thieves back to Westruun for trial.

Gnoll Mercy

Turst Fields has a significant gnoll population. As mutant beings created by demonic rituals, gnolls are shunned as monsters in most humanoid settlements on the Dividing Plains. Nevertheless, without the Dustpaw gnolls, Turst would not have survived its first summer. When the village was founded, it was easy prey for the Ravagers. Their leader sought blood tribute from the people of Turst, but the villagers refused to offer a sacrifice. This cell of Ravagers had recently sought the favor of the Demon Lord of Slaughter, transforming a number of the plains-dwelling hyenas into gnolls in that pursuit.

When the villagers of Turst refused to give up their own, the Ravagers unleashed the gnolls upon them. But something unusual happened. After the gnolls first drew blood, one of them began to weep. Then another, until all of the gnolls were howling in sorrow and fury. These beings, though infused with demon ichor, turned against their creators to defend their helpless prey.

To this day, the Dustpaw gnolls have lingered in Turst, slowly becoming trusted members of their community. Their unsettling fangs and canine faces upset many who travel to this village, but any who deride the gnolls do so at their own risk. Not at the risk of mauling from a gnoll—though any humanoid being will fight back if pushed too far—but because hateful agitators will soon find themselves surrounded by the spears of the Turst militia.

Turst Fields Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Turst Fields can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Herd Mentality (mid-level). A half-elf, half-dragonblood **Ravager slaughter lord** (see page 249) calling herself Grud the Great has taken control of an arm of the Ravagers. Her highly organized regiment worships the Strife Emperor. Now, they march on Turst to take an easy foothold in the northern plains. The army is too large to be stopped by just the characters, but a Dustpaw gnoll warrior named Akaksa knows of a number of nomadic groups wandering nearby that could help defend the town, if properly persuaded. The characters can seek out the Dawnmist Herd, led by a goliath **Rivermaw stormborn** (see page 253) named Gardessk, and convince him to aid the people of Turst.

Westruun

City: Population 51,980 (61% humans, 10% gnomes, 7% tieflings, 5% orcs, 4% half-giants, 1% gnolls, 12% other races)

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. Westruun suffered under the rule of the goliath tyrant Kevdak's Herd of Storms. Worse, its outlying towns and great stone buildings were ravaged by the acidic breath of Umbrasyl the Hope Devourer, an ancient black dragon of the Chroma Conclave who exacted tribute from her lair in the eerie mountain of Gatshadow. Despite the damage inflicted by its evil rulers, Westruun was one of the first cities in Tal'Dorei to recover from the Conclave. Though its government is deeply in debt to both the League of Miracles and a number of adventuring parties, the city has long since reclaimed its place of importance as an economic, academic, and political power within Tal'Dorei.

Government

Westruun underwent a political revolution in the wake of the Chroma Conclave's defeat. The former margrave, Brandon Zimmerset, was a tyrant who claimed absolute power for himself following Kevdak's defeat at the hands of Vox Machina. The title of margrave is a holdover from the authoritarian rule of Warren Drassig centuries ago, and those who hold that office are appointed for life by the council. A group of local idealists called the Retrievers banded with adventurers and mercenaries to overthrow Zimmerset a decade after he took power, and instated their leader as the lord mayor instead. Elections for the position of Lord Mayor of Westruun are held every five years, with no term limits. All adult citizens of the city who have lived there for at least five years have a vote, though only a fraction of the people actually use it.

The Retrievers continue to be a political force in Westruun, and several of Westruun's delegates to the Tal'Dorei Council are members of this faction. They are campaigning to abolish the office of margrave from all settlements in Tal'Dorei. Though they have broad support in the council, the council doesn't have the authority to unilaterally demand its constituent city-states to change their system of government. The revolution-minded Retrievers are somewhat stifled by the need to compromise with other cities.

Lord Mayor Lysandra Kallos is a middle-aged goliath and former leader of the Retrievers. She has never lost a vote for reelection, and holds executive power over the city's defenses, along with the ability to dissolve any business or guild, and to exile any person or group of up to ten people from the city at her discretion. She rules Westruun with the aid of a council of ten advisors.

Defense

The lord mayor commands a city guard of about 1,200 trained soldiers known as the Shields of the Plain, though most folk just call them the Shields. Westruun's soldiery is spread thin across the walls of the city itself, stationed at the gates of the dozens of outlying settlements and conducting raids against small cells of Ravagers across the plains.

Many people in town would like to gather their forces and put an end to the Ravagers' death cult once and for all, but the Shields are spread too thin to mount an effective offensive. Even in their current state, dozens— if not hundreds—of mercenaries, bounty hunters, and adventurers pass through Westruun every year in search of bloody work that the Shields are too beleaguered to handle themselves.

Debt

Before he was ousted, Margrave Brandon Zimmerset authorized hundreds of reconstruction bounties—offers of gold to anyone who could rebuild the immense damage the city suffered during Umbrasyl's attack and the Herd of Storms' occupation of the city. Bounties were placed on the city's siege-breaking stone walls, majestic towers and parapets, and even its iconic post-and-beam houses, many of which were razed completely during the attack.

The margrave expected these bounties to be slowly completed over decades, but they were all snapped up and completed in a few short years by mercenary mages serving a group called the League of Miracles (see page 56). The margrave was saddled with a crushing debt, one that he was both unwilling and unable to pay before being ousted by the Retrievers. As his successor, Lord Mayor Lysandra Kallos inherited Zimmerset's immense debt to the league, and is constantly seeking to find ways to alleviate their pressure—especially as the league continues to use the debt as leverage to buy the allegiance of her advisory council.

Crime

The Clasp has become a major and public force in Westruun since the criminal organization's dubiously virtuous makeover following the Cinder King's defeat in Emon. Many Clasp agents enjoy the reputation of folk heroes across the Dividing Plains, and make public appearances in taverns and town squares throughout Westruun.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Clasp is still a criminal organization. They have 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. Their hideout changes every few years, when the Shields manage to track them down. Their current hideout is secreted away behind the storefront of the Saddled Plainscow, a popular tavern owned and operated by Clasp agents.

Folk in search of real folk heroes often seek the covert agents of the Golden Grin (see page 54), who tend to wait and watch in local taverns. The Grin sometimes gets a bad reputation in Westruun, since people need help every day, but the Grinners prefer to wait for just the right moment to reveal themselves and strike against evil.

Geography

Miles of farmland and fields surround Westruun's towering stone walls—except to the west, where the city is bordered by the Bramblewood and dwarfed by the mist-shrouded peak of Gatshadow. Nearly two dozen villages and towns surround the city's walls.

The city's interior is divided into six wards:

Scholar Ward. Westruun's northwestern ward is home to the Cobalt Reserve, Tal'Dorei's largest public library and private archive. It's also home to a number of other erudite institutions that instruct knowledge-seekers from across the Dividing Plains. Westhall Academy is the most renowned of them all, but in the shadow of these revered institutions is the College of the Savvy, a school for the arts founded by the storied bard and champion of intuition referred to only as the White Duke.

Temple Ward. The city's small southern ward is replete with major temples to the Prime Deities and homes for their clergy. The most important gods of the Dividing Plains are the Lawbearer, the Wildmother, and the Platinum Dragon, and it's made obvious by their huge, resplendent sanctuaries in the Temple Ward. The greatest temples here are the First Bastion, the Wild Arbor, and the Platinum Dragon's Rest.

Opal Ward. Westruun's central district is also its municipal heart. The ward has no residential housing, but is home to the Lord Mayor's Residence, the Hall of Reason, and the public square.

Residential Ward. The northeastern section of Westruun is the city's most densely populated ward, housing over two-thirds of its population. There are no major landmarks in this ward, though every neighborhood in the ward has its own unique culture. Even though tourists might not visit the landmarks here, there are countless local bakeries, shops, and pubs beloved by its residents.

This ward is rife with crime. Westruun's poorest citizens are pressed together in tight quarters, sometimes as little as a single city block away from the city's wealthiest manor houses. The Clasp and the Myriad prey upon the poor and affluent alike, often stoking the tensions affecting the city's downtrodden to create chaos that masks their crimes. The Shields are stretched too thin to properly deal with these agitators. Unlike in the Temple Ward, free expression of religion is not a guaranteed right 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.

Market Ward. Westruun's southwestern ward contains the majority of its businesses, trade stands, and production warehouses. Some of these businesses are historic fixtures of the city, rebuilt by the League of Miracles in years past, but many sell overpriced wares to cater to tourists, adventurers, and the city's wealthy elite.

It's currently in fashion for store owners to live in a second story above their shops, though less scrupulous businesspeople have turned their residences into gambling dens, black markets, and illegal brothels. The most significant building in this ward is the Exandrian Exchange, a marble-walled auction house where hundreds of vendors hawk rare and unusual items from across Tal'Dorei. A satellite location of Gilmore's Glorious Goods, a famed magic item shop in Emon, is a beloved attraction of this district.

Underwalk Ward. The city's newest ward is underground. It's an extension of the residential sprawl built from repurposed sections of the sewers, underground military bunkers, and the wine cellars of mansions annihilated by Umbrasyl and the Herd of Storms.

The Underwalk was frantically excavated during the invasion of the Chroma Conclave in hopes of keeping the populace hidden. It has been largely abandoned for the past twenty-four years, save for those too poor to return even to the Residential Ward, but an effort has been made in the past two years to create a unique and vibrant ecosystem in the Underwalk. The optimistic entrepreneurs trying to popularize Underwalk housing hire adventurers in great quantities, for every day, new and unsettling rumors of many-headed monstrosities prowling the Underwalk's shadowed roads spread to the surface.

The best-known entrance to this tangle of tunnels is the Underwalk Gates, a forty-foot-wide staircase in the Residential Ward that descends into a gaping opening lit only by torchlight. Another entrance known mostly to the Clasp is a single unassuming manhole in the Opal Ward, topped with a metal cover emblazoned with the crest of Westruun.

Points of Interest

The City of Westruun has a number of noteworthy landmarks. They are keyed to the map of Westruun.

1. Cobalt Reserve. This vast repository looks more like a house of worship than a library. Nevertheless, this landmark of the Scholar Ward is Tal'Dorei's largest house of knowledge, and it is maintained and fiercely defended by the monks of the Library of the Cobalt Soul (see page 58).

A character who spends 1 hour in the public section of the Cobalt Reserve can make a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, discovering any piece of common knowledge in Tal'Dorei. On a failure, this check can be repeated after another hour of study. The GM can decide that the knowledge the character seeks can only be found in the restricted archives, which only members of the Cobalt Soul, or characters in the Cobalt Soul's good graces, can access.

2. Westhall Academy. No university in Tal'Dorei can hope to compete with the prestige of Emon's Alabaster Lyceum, but the Westhall Academy does its best. Its sand-colored stone walls and copper-patina dome are an unmistakable landmark of the Scholar Ward. They imply a stately and refined institution with an unpretentious, workaday attitude. Most of the Westhall Academy's students come from humble backgrounds, and the lord mayor does her level best to ensure that the academy is funded enough to let anyone from the plains who shows great promise attend, free of cost. Mages, architects, poets, artists, agriculturalists, and people of all disciplines can find an education at Westhall.

3. 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 the heavens. A quasi-religious order of diviners and astromancers named the Scions of Yuminor study here, supported by the academy's headmistress, Estella Ladimar, who is 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. Despite the Scions of Yuminor's affability, something seems odd about them, like they have stared into the stars just a bit too long and seen something they wish they could forget.

4. First Bastion. The most magnificent of the temples within Westruun's Temple Ward is the First Bastion. Dedicated to the Lawbearer, this opulent sanctuary is a common attraction for visiting folk of all faiths. Its magnificent, even decadent, gold-and-marble exterior is a sight most people can't imagine exists upon the Material Plane—it seems





like nothing less than a building from the realm of the gods themselves. 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.

5. Lord Mayor's Residence. The Lord Mayor's Residence is a squat manor in the Opal Ward. It was originally named the Margrave's Keep, and as such, it is a defensible and highly fortified compound buttressed against military barracks. The interior has been livened up significantly by the lord mayor, but the exterior is still a spare, military edifice.

6. Hall of Reason. This beautiful courthouse in the Opal Ward is constructed in sweeping Lyrengornian style and bears a marble statue of the Platinum Dragon above its steps. The square before the courtroom steps is a forum for public gatherings and bears a fountain depicting Palest Westruun, the founder of the city, atop an onyx horse.

7. 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 First Bastion blessed both the Black King and Westruun itself when the statue was unveiled on the 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 unsheathe 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 speed of 60 feet, Charisma and Intelligence scores of 18 (+4), and the ability to speak Common. Its personality is dour but determined—regal and single-minded in its desire to protect its city and its people.

8. 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. Legend has it that the 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 Survivors' Legacy can pray there and gain advantage on death saving throws for the next 24 hours.

Westruun Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Westruun can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

They Can't Have Flown Away (low-level). Over the past week, over four dozen **plainscows** (see page 248), exceptional livestock and beasts of burden, have disappeared from Westruun's outlying villages. Left in their place were 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 disrupt commerce. Jeremiah Sook, head of the regional Rancher's Guild, is willing to pay a hefty bounty for the culprits.

An Assistant's Plight (mid-level). Just outside Westruun is Slaterock Tower, the abode of renowned archmage Realmseer Eskil Ryndarien (see page 48). Normally, none are invited to the tower, but the characters, 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 Jekt's entry—and apparently, the Realmseer's exit. Upon arrival, and confirmation of Jekt's request, the tower seems to constantly shift its interior structure, almost acting like a sentient entity. Challenge after deadly challenge is thrown at the party as they traverse the labyrinthine paths of the tower, only to find that the Realmseer himself is actually trying to keep something far more dangerous imprisoned within.

The Stuff of Nightmares (mid-level). 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 regarding either issue, but the sadistic **oni**, secretly responsible for both, is deft at erasing its tracks. Nyx and Vryll, twin tiefling **mages** 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 (high-level). A massive sinkhole has emerged beneath the First Bastion, taking a portion of the temple into the darkness of the Underwalk Ward. With the depth seemingly bottomless, and initial investigators going missing, high priest Umentu Helmdoff seeks the assistance of brave and able-bodied adventurers to find answers and save the people still in the temple when it vanished. Only one thing is certain when descending into the unknown below—the terror only grows as the light from above fades.

Wildwood Byway

Known as the oldest road in Tal'Dorei, this path linked the adolescent cities of Kraghammer and Syngorn before the landfall of humankind. During the reign of Drassig, the Silvercut Roadway intersected with this ancient road. Warren Drassig built countless fortifications along this road to defend his holdings against Syngorn, a move that made him many allies within Kraghammer.

While traveling the Wildwood in broad daylight isn't any more dangerous than riding along the Silvercut, it's common knowledge that the forest at the northern end of this road is fraught with danger. Wild beasts, cultists, and bandits make the Wildwood their home.

Cliffkeep Mountains

Spanning the northern reaches of Tal'Dorei, the Cliffkeep Mountains are an impenetrable barrier between the Republic of Tal'Dorei and the frozen Neverfields. The 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 Cliffkeeps are the largest mountain range in all of Tal'Dorei, and innumerable types of beings make their homes upon the crags, in mountainside caves, and in the miles upon miles of tunnels that descend into the earth below them. Dwarves, half-giants, goblins, and kobolds are the best-known peoples of the Cliffkeeps, but the mountains are also home to the fire giants of Vulkanon, wandering ettins and hill giants, hungry cyclopes, frost giant marauders from the Neverfields, and cave-dwelling trolls.

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, peaks reach higher and winds grow colder as snow and ice take the lands to become the frozen waste of the Neverfields. These challenges keep the common folk at bay, the secrets and spoils held within these crags calling to the brave, the clever, and the foolhardy.

Fort Daxio

Nestled within the Othendin Pass, north of Emon, Fort Daxio is a massive stronghold and series of military structures that, under the rule of the Tal'Dorei Council, trains Tal'Dorei's most elite warriors. The fortress was constructed following the Scattered War as a strategic bulwark against opportunistic



Majority Faiths: All-Hammer, Stormlord, Dawnfather
Minority Faiths: Platinum Dragon, Moonweaver, Lord of the Hells, Scaled Tyrant
Imports: Lumber, spices, fish, grain, livestock
Exports: Precious gems, industrial metals, quartz, granite, gold, silver, platinum, mithral, cobalt, jewelry, fungal produce, weapons, armor

humanoid and giant bandit forces in the Cliffkeep Mountains, and as a hidden reserve of military might in the event that Emon was ever threatened.

Though Tal'Dorei doesn't maintain a standing army—rather, it assembles one in times of strife from mercenaries, adventurers, and local militias—the forces of Fort Daxio are an exception. The legendary Daxio Outriders are a corps of cavaliers some four thousand strong. Half their forces remain stationed in Fort Daxio and its surroundings at any given time, serving as a historic barrier between Emon and the bandits and creatures of the Cliffkeep Mountains. The other two thousand Outriders are spread across the continent, typically in battalions of up to one hundred riders, safeguarding villages, patrolling the Silvercut Roadway, putting pressure on the Ravagers of the Dividing Plains, or protecting traveling diplomats.

Fort Daxio itself is led by General Elle Gorgofon, a dour but diplomatic tactician. She served faithfully under the fort's previous leader, Warmaster Mikael Daxio, for nearly thirty-five years before he was killed at the hands of a vampire hoping to throw the fort into chaos. Daxio was resurrected, but is enjoying an extended holiday in Syngorn rather than returning to arms.

The Daxio Outriders are divided into four different regiments: The Dusk Regiment, the Gale Regiment, the Aegis Regiment, and the Tide Regiment. Each regiment is led by their own assigned general, all answering directly to General Gorgofon (who in turn answers to the Master of War on the Tal'Dorei Council in times of conflict).

The Dusk Regiment is responsible for covert operations across the country and is led by General Fei Yujian, a cheerful, affable man. The Gale Regiment is trained in skyborne combat in addition to horseriding; after the Chroma Conclave was defeated, Fort Daxio trained a variety of griffons, hippogrifs, and wyverns to ward against airborne threats. It is led by General Jillian Sylph, a calm, tactical human with air elemental ancestry. The Aegis Regiment is charged with remaining in Fort Daxio to protect Emon, and is led by General Elle Gorgofon herself. The Tide Regiment is trained in spellcasting and ship-to-ship combat, in case Emon is ever threatened from the western seas. This final regiment is led by General Kay Clearsight, a half-elf trained in the arcane arts at the renowned Soltryce Academy in the Dwendalian Empire of Wildemount.

Fort Daxio Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Fort Daxio can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Vampire Hunters (high-level). Years ago, Warmaster Mikael Daxio was killed by a **vampire** named Vrylaska Fellbranch. She disappeared without a trace, and the Daxio Outriders have been searching fruitlessly for her for years. While the characters are in Fort Daxio, a scout returns with breathless news of vampire attacks in remote settlements in the Cliffkeep Mountains. General Elle Gorgofon suspects a trap, but has no choice but to mobilize the Aegis Regiment—and the characters, if they accept her offer of 5,000 gp—to hunt the monster down.

Little do they know that, while the Aegis Regiment is away, the vampire's minions hidden in Fort Daxio will come out to play.

Gatshadow

The mighty mountain known as Gatshadow is a spire of death that looms over the Dividing Plains. Westruun sees it always upon the horizon, and the most vicious monsters of the Bramblewood grow cruel in its fell shadow. Folkloric tales about the evil powers within Gatshadow are told in all cultures of the Dividing Plains: stories of giant spiders in the forest, of beings of pure shadow that dwell within the mountain's tunnels, and of the tunnels themselves, which are so labyrinthine and shifting that no one who enters will ever escape. These days, most of these stories are told to keep children from wandering into the forest alone—but they are far from simply children's tales.

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

Acek spread the Oblivion's nihilistic despair across the Cliffkeep Mountains and the Dividing Plains below. All bowed before their influence their minds lost to unfathomable contemplation of the end of all things. Untold thousands died at the hands of Acek and his god, willingly entering Gatshadow—which then became their tomb.

The bitter cold of oblivion threatened to consume the land, but it was repulsed by the Dawnfather and his warriors of light. The Dawnfather struck a telling blow against the Oblivion, and doggedly pursued as it retreated to Gathsadow. He shackled and banished the god of the end within Gatshadow's depths. It was said that Acek's mind and spirit were so saturated with his master's essence that 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 Umbrasyl the Hope Devourer, the black dragon 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 the Oblivion pace endlessly into Gatshadow's tunnels, carrying lightless torches, whispering that the secret to freeing their god from the Divine Gate 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 can't breach them—and it is well that they cannot, for who knows what terror would be unleashed if they were opened.

Gatshadow Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Gatshadow can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Blood of the Dragon (high-level). 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.

However, there's a reason no one has dared to recover the Hope Devourer's corpse. When Umbrasyl died, the caustic acid and magical blood within his body seeped through the caverns of Upper Gatshadow, devouring stone and transforming the mountain's upper levels into a vitriolic maze teeming with oozes, half-black dragon warriors, and the restless spirits of goliaths from the Herd of Storms that failed to kill the dragon.

No Lights in the Darkness (epic-level). 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 characters hurry to the bottom of the mind-sundering labyrinth within, they discover that they race against not only the new Herald of Oblivion, but also the Remnants she betrayed.

Jorenn Village

Large Village: Population 2,480 (64% humans, 9% dwarves, 7% halflings, 7% gnomes, 13% other races)

For many years, Jorenn Village was just a tiny pioneer town trying to profit from the shadegrass of the Umbra Hills. Over the past century, 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 Tal'Dorei Council rarely touches it, giving opportunists and outlaws freedom to subvert and control both the village government and the local economy. Thirty 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 three decades, others seeking fame and glory joined the ranks of the Shadewatch, and the group ballooned into the unofficial town law enforcement.

The Shadewatch is deeply corrupt, and it has been almost since its first year. The vigilantes personally stoke the fires of fear, all while demanding increasingly galling 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 the watch keeps at bay.

The Shadewatch is a minor organization in the grand scheme of things, but Shademaster Arhanna Lewyn has grand ambitions. She has sent messages to every faction in Tal'Dorei, from the Myriad to the League of Miracles, with an interest in cruel subterfuge. It's clear that 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in Jorenn Village can use this plot hook for inspiration.

An Offer You Can't Refuse (low-level). The characters are attacked by a group of **worgs**, and more just keep coming. Just as they're about to be completely overwhelmed, they're saved by a sudden volley of black-feathered bolts! Six **thugs** join the battle and "rescue" the characters by driving off the remaining worgs. These Shadewatch "officers" ask for the characters' names first, then brusquely declare that they like their moxie. They offer the characters a position in their force back in Jorenn, with unbelievable pay: 50 gp a day each.

If this deal sounds too good to be true, that's because it is: the Shademaster needs strong-willed sacrifices if she's to open the gates of Gatshadow, a feat she can accomplish by teleporting up to twelve creatures into the depths of the mountain with her whispering quartz orb.

Kraghammer

City: Population 73,550 (73% dwarves, 8% gnomes, 5% humans, 14% other races)

Dozens of dwarven redoubts rose and fell in the tunnels beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains during the Calamity, and in the uncertain years that followed it. Legend holds that a great civilization called Uthtor once reigned supreme in the Cliffkeeps, and that all of the deep settlements are fragments of Uthtor's glory, fractured by the Calamity. Over the centuries, these fragments divided and coalesced dozens of times until, finally, those who remained came together to create Kraghammer.

Clan Jaggenstrike united thousands of dwarves, gnomes, and other dwellers of the deep halls in the creation of Kraghammer. Having quietly died out centuries ago, the clan now holds a position of mythic reverence within the city. Kraghammer's founding was dedicated to the All-Hammer, divine creator of the dwarves and patron of creation and ingenuity. This god's industrious spirit filled the people of Kraghammer and blessed them with rich veins of platinum, mithral, adamantine, and other precious metals that have sustained them since the city's founding.

An ominous walk of a thousand stairs climbs 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. With the path too steep and treacherous for carts or common beasts of burden to traverse, 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, guarded by three watchtowers carved directly into the mountain.

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 Kraghammer 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 and carries a term of ten years, with no term limit, though most Ironkeepers contain their rule to three to five terms.

The current sitting Ironkeeper is Palluda of House Zuurthom. She rose to prominence advocating for the rights of workers in the wake of the Chroma Conclave, and is a strong advocate for uniting with the Republic of Tal'Dorei to strengthen their might against future supernatural threats. She is sitting comfortably in the midst of her second term and enjoys strong support from members of Kraghammer's working class—and staunch opposition from traditionalists, who cling to the city's fading culture of isolationism.

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.

Most who join the Carvers are dwarves from families with centuries of history within the Carvers. This isn't just because of the pressure to uphold their family's honor. Most hopefuls are also those who value Kraghammer's ancient traditions and rigid social order—a set of beliefs largely held by dwarven clans with long family histories. Once officially named, a Carver is given a homestead built into the center slab of the city, a set of immaculate armor and weapons, and a steady income.

In the years following the defeat of the Chroma Conclave, the famously isolationist and xenophobic houses conceded to formally make an alliance with the Republic of Tal'Dorei. An ambassador from Kraghammer now sits on the Tal'Dorei Council, and rumors are beginning to circulate within the city that the heads of the Great Houses of Kraghammer are in talks with the Tal'Dorei Council to make Kraghammer an official constituent city-state of the republic.

Isolation of Kraghammer

It's not easy being an outsider. Kraghammer has long been a city of dwarves, for dwarves, and anyone else within the city is an interloper. Some traditionalists within the city still think that surface-born folk should spend as little time in Kraghammer as possible, so as not to dilute the ancient splendor of their culture.

Yet times are changing. A coalition of people, ranging from dwarves to gnomes to traditionally surface-dwelling people who have made Kraghammer their home, have demanded that the Great Houses amend the city's most xenophobic laws. Despite the angry protestations of the city's most bigoted dwarves, the Great Houses have acquiesced to the



requests of their people. This is due in no small part to these protestors having the support of the current Ironkeeper—Palluda Zuurthrom has long been a proponent of Kraghammer entering the Republic of Tal'Dorei and ending their centuries of relative isolation.

No non-dwarf has ever served as a delegate of the houses, let alone the Ironkeeper. Progress is slow, especially in Kraghammer, but it is happening. The most despicable of the city's xenophobes have left of their own volition, creating other dwarven settlements throughout the Cliffkeeps where they can keep to themselves and "their own kind" in peace.

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. Crime is low because the courts of Kraghammer almost always reach a guilty verdict. As a long-lived and durable people, most dwarves, particularly those with a family reputation to uphold, would rather plead guilty and endure years, even decades, of hard labor than disturb the fabric of their society by fighting conviction.

Beyond this, corruption is rife within the Carvers, and they are able to brutalize even innocent people with relative impunity. This corruption is shielded from public scrutiny by the vast wealth and political influence of House Glorendar, their patron house. Because of Glorendar's close ties with the Carvers (and the mutual benefits thereof), corruption has been hard to uncover within either organization.

Over twenty years ago, however, a gnomish journalist named Ida Mudrake uncovered something damning within the vaults of House Glorendar, bringing some hope that change may yet move steadily forward. She has been forced to flee the city and now lives with a security detail in Emon, but she works tirelessly to bring the crimes of House Glorendar to light. Many in Kraghammer hope that this evidence, whatever it is, will shake both Glorendar and the Carvers to their foundations. Many more fear that even true justice is not worth the chaos that bringing Glorendar's misdeeds to light will cause.

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, the inner walls still sparkle like starlight in the amber glow of the furnaces.

Top Slab. Also called the Arch, this uppermost tier is the entry level of the city, built on a massive ring. Like a hub with many spokes, countless neighborhoods and tunnels spread out from the Top Slab. A fine layer of soot tends to coat much of this slab, due to imperfect ventilation from the industrious center slab; despite this, this level is where most people make their homes, with thousands of stone-built abodes dotting the walls, while popular taverns like the trendy Firebrook Inn and the historic but austere Ironhearth Tavern fill alcoves pushed into the rock. For hundreds of years, most non-dwarves within Kraghammer were relegated to living in a Top Slab neighborhood called the "Otherwalk." These days, non-dwarves live all over the city, and the Otherwalk has been renamed the Cavernwalk. It's still mostly inhabited by non-dwarves, and it has a vibrant culture all its own.

As members of the Kraghammer working class, "Topslabbers" 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.

Center Slab. Also referred to as the Heart, this middle tier is the widest and most varied rung on the journey through Kraghammer. It is stratified between the residences of Kraghammer's old money (its long-established noble houses), and the new (the wealthy merchant class). At the exact center of the slab is the Pyrethrone, seat of the Ironkeeper. The geometric symbolism of the Pyrethrone being at the dead center of the city is a fact most visitors to Kraghammer hear *ad nauseum*. Radiating out from the Pyrethrone are the various fortress-manors of the dwarven noble houses, with several Carver barracks in easy reach.

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 tinkerers like the Cracksackle Union. The Hunter's Club is also well known as the chief provider for non-imported meats to the city, sending parties into the mountains or the nearby Torian Forest for wild game. The extravagant marble temple known as All-Hammer's Will stands on the center slab of the city, the grandest of all shrines to the most worshipped deity under the mountain. Enormous in size and impeccable in both detail and architectural design, this hall calls to 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 Glorendar used to oversee the combat training of all Carvers

within Kraghammer, but hasn't been seen in public for twenty years. Her daughter, Kazya, runs all her affairs within the public eye.

Bottom Slab. Best known as the Pit, this tier is the industrious powerhouse of Kraghammer, boasting the most forges per square mile of any location in Tal'Dorei, courtesy of the Bronzegrip Metalworks and their competitors. Most of these forges are potent, highly industrialized, and mechanized blast furnaces. The expansive Keenstone Quarry is chief among the numerous mining operations that have tunneled through the depths of the mountains—depths whose true dangers are obscured by centuries of legend, and therefore not fully understood.

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 have 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. Haddi Bronzegrip is the foredwarf of the Bronzegrip Metalworks; she claims to be the wealthiest dwarf in the North, a claim no one has ever been able to successfully dispute. Blenton Zuurthom is an architectural savant, and one of the older and kinder nobledwarves; he tries his best to oversee every major construction project in the Bottom Slab.

Points of Interest

Kraghammer has a number of famous landmarks, as well as a few mythic locations said to exist in the caverns beneath the city, as depicted on its map.

The Starshrine (Top Slab). Most dwarves worship the All-Hammer, 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. Shrines to all the Prime Deities have spread throughout Kraghammer since the fall of the Chroma Conclave, but the Starshrine was the first.

When the world trembled at the might of Thordak the Cinder King, tremors rocked the upper layers of Kraghammer, causing certain caverns to collapse—and in some cases, to reveal places of great beauty. The Starshrine is a vast grotto whose granite walls mysteriously sparkle with a perfect replica of the stars in the night sky. It can be found within the Top Slab's culturally diverse Cavernwalk district. Once per year, when a character prays to one of the Prime Deities here, there is a 1% chance per character level that their prayer is answered, as the cleric's Divine Intervention class feature.



Cracksackle Guildhall (Middle Slab). The headquarters of the Cracksackle Union looks unlike anything in Kraghammer. It's 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. Most within Kraghammer consider the building an eyesore, but all interested in technological tinkering and ingenuity love it for its uniqueness. If nothing else, it plainly displays the oft-baffling ingenuity of its tinkerers.

The Cracksackle Union was founded by gnomish refugees from Wittebak nearly four hundred years ago. While intrinsically tied to the Bronzegrip Metalworks for resources, contacts, and distribution, the Cracksacklers have made themselves indispensable to the dwarven elite with their inventive contributions to mining and masonry technology.

On any working day, a dozen tinkerers, many of them gnomes, 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:

Cracksackle Wares

Item	Cost	Description
Dynamite	100 gp	This bundle of explosives can be lit and thrown up to 30 feet as an action. It explodes at the start of your next turn. Creatures and objects within 20 feet of it must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 6d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
Gluebomb	50 gp	This unique explosive can be primed and thrown up to 30 feet as an action. It explodes on impact. Creatures within 20 feet of it must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained for 1 minute. A restrained creature can make a DC 12 Strength check as an action, escaping on a success.
Stink bomb	25 gp	This smelly explosive can be primed and thrown up to 30 feet as an action. It explodes at the start of your next turn. Creatures within 20 feet of it must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat this save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Keenstone Quarry (Bottom Slab). Despite all of Kraghammer's wondrous crafts and goods, its most significant export is raw stone—most of which is excavated from Keenstone Quarry, making the quarry's overseer, Nostoc Greyspine, a very rich dwarf indeed. As the legend of Vox Machina spread across Tal'Dorei, Overseer Greyspine got an idea: open the quarry to adventurers. Vox Machina famously entered the vast network of dangerous tunnels beneath Kraghammer from a fissure at the depths of the quarry, and countless imitators have tried to follow in their footsteps—some emerging with fabulous treasure, but most never returning at all.

To take advantage of this opportunity, Greyspine has advertised the quarry far and wide as the "Gateway to the Depths," and posted an entrance fee of 25 gp per adventurer. Of course, neither Greyspine nor the staff of the quarry bears any liability for death, dismemberment, or emotional trauma sustained with the depths.

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. Characters known within Kraghammer may be requested by House Bronzegrip or Thunderbrand to cut through the inferno and destroy the myconoid monarch.

Emberhold

City: Population 21,180 (73% dwarves, 15% elves, 12% other races)

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 an underground kingdom of the duergar, dwarves who long ago broke away from the rule of the Great Houses of Kraghammer.

Millennia of fear and superstition have turned the dwarves of Kraghammer into bitter, fearful enemies of their estranged kin. Untold dozens of duergar villages span the glassy lava-plains that the Emberhold is built upon, with mighty armies constantly coming and going, sometimes returning with just a few bloody survivors, other times returning with captives in chains—and other times returning not at all.

The dwarves of the Emberhold rarely rise to the surface; they have lived so long in the darkest depths of the earth that the light of the sun sears their eyes

and prickles their skin. Few ever arise even to Kraghammer, for they are taught that only death awaits them there. Nevertheless, many duergar doubt the narrative that has been fed to them since birth, and make attempts to escape to the surface. Those duergar that have left the ways of the Emberhold behind and learned of the outside world have remarked how unbelievable it is that their people were so misled by lies about the barbaric cruelty of surface-dwellers.

Government

The Emberhold and the towns that serve as its vassals are ruled by an absolute monarch. The current King of Embers is the wrathful King Thangrul II. He rules through fear and conquest, spreading his armies to the farthest corners of Tal'Dorei's underground caverns in the name of the Crawling King.

Thangrul's rule is supported by a contingent of dark elves from their decadent, alien domain of Ruhn-Shak. Most in Thangrul's court know well enough to mistrust these ambassadors of the far-flung caverns, for their minds have been twisted by the influence of not just the Spider Queen, but also the aberrations with whom they have made strange alliances in order to sustain their power. Thangrul himself cares little for his advisors' mistrust of his elven allies and openly declares that he will make use of them as long as they are useful.

Vox Machina's assault of the Emberhold over twenty years ago cost the duergar their king and queen, but rumors of a lost princess of Ember have begun to circulate through the realm, and the survivors of Vox Machina's raid have rebuilt their hierarchy and continued their endless war of conquest throughout the depths.

Geography

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 the boundaries of its peoples' domain.

Emberhold Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Emberhold can use this plot hook for inspiration.

The Lost Heir (mid-level). 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 Emberhold's missing heir. The new king, Thangrul II, grows particularly fiery whenever anyone mentions her name in his presence.

Yug'Voril

Where the dwarves of Kraghammer whisper fearful words of the duergar, so too do the duergar whisper of Yug'Voril. Beneath the deep 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 loom the grand, austere towers of Yug'Voril.

The clean lines and beautiful facade of the city belie its current, abominable denizens.

Thousands of years old, the builders and previous occupants have long vanished, leaving the unspoiled ruins to become home to a host of psychic, mind-eating creatures from a plane beyond the boundaries of reality. The tyrannical society of these alien creatures flourishes here, far from their cosmic pursuers, giving them the freedom to build a legion of thralls: mind-slaves whose delicious brains are allowed 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 alien mind-eaters 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in Yug'Voril can use this plot hook for inspiration.

A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste (high-level). 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. The alien inhabitants of Yug'Voril hunger for a specific morsel of powerful knowledge within their brilliant minds.

Lyrengorn, the Elvenpeaks

Town: Population 5,430 (93% elves, 3% dwarves, 2% humans, 2% other races)

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-sheeted forests topping both peaks. While the exterior of these forest canopies appears 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 crossing into the endless ice of the Neverfields to the north.

These lyren'alfen—"high elves"—call themselves friends of none and 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 rare art of wyvern riding. When Warren Drassig's legions marched to conquer Tal'Dorei, the elves of Lyrengorn refused to die for anyone else's war, retreating instead to their mountaintops and lush forests.

Today, few of the lyren'alfen 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 mutlicolored 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's also a ritual to the goddess known as the Moonweaver, chief deity of these elves. The high priestess of the moon claims that the annual rite purifies Lyrengorn and gives the wild elves long life.

Lyrengorn Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Lyrengorn can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

The Impossible Art (low-level). While traveling through the Cliffkeep Mountains, the cold becomes too much for the characters to bear, and they pass out in the snow. When they awaken, they find

themselves being tended to by a trio of Lyrengorn wyvern riders, but their roles are suddenly reversed when a massive band of raiders, most of them **goblins** and human **thugs**, pincushions the riders in mid-flight. When the characters crash in the snowfields, they find their saviors dead, and must try to learn the impossible art of wyvern riding before they are claimed by the blizzard.

The Incorruptible Light (high-level). While the characters 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 fits of sadistic cruelty that still plague them from their days under the abberrations' terrible thrall.

Strange accidents conspire to kill the skyswimmers and the priestesses, and on the day of the solstice, a pair of many-eyed aberrations rise from the depths of the earth 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.

Legends tell of a time when this region was green and temperate, when trees and joyous elven enclaves covered the land. Moreover, these tales say that relics of this elysian era are still 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Neverfields can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Seed of Life (mid-level). Heroes of Tal'Dorei who have made themselves known to 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. The **treants** that once defended the elves have grown pale and sickly, and are now attacking the elvenguard. Celindar beseeches the characters to meet with his counterpart in Lyrengorn, Skyblade Hali Instralidar, who has been surveying the ice fields of the north for centuries. Why? Because elven legend speaks of the Seed of Life, the last bloom of an ancient treant named Cedargaunt, which may restore the withered treants' senses. The Seed of Life is worn on the neck of a **frost giant** jarl's pet **remorhaz** within the Neverfields.

Othendin Pass

This massive valley carved into the southwest section of the Cliffkeep Mountains was, in ancient times, the territory of stone giant clans that warred with the dwarves of Kraghammer. After the arrival of humanity on Tal'Dorei's shores, the people of Kraghammer and the new settlers of O'Noa banded together and pushed deep into the mineral-rich valley.

The stone giants fought back, but they were overwhelmed by the might of their combined foe. They retreated to their caves higher into the mountains to the northeast, and have rarely been seen by humanoids in the centuries since. This allowed the forces of Emon to claim the resources and land of the Othendin Pass for its people, establishing Fort Daxio to defend it.

However, the population of deadly landsharks—creatures called bulettes—native to the region has been on the rise. Some say it's because the giants who hunted them were driven away, but since the giants have been gone for a century, few can understand why the landsharks are only taking over now. The miners, gatherers, and passing travelers do their best to cull the bulette population both on their own and with the help of hired adventurers, but they can only ever hope to keep the deadly monsters at bay.

Othendin Pass Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Othendin Pass can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Bite the Bulette (mid-level). A druidic order called the Stoneherders, made up mostly 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 in the pass has kept them away for several generations, but an unusual rise in the **bulette** population has forced them to return.

The Stoneherders' plan to thin the bulette herd requires the characters' aid in rounding up the deadly creatures; once they have been assembled, the Stoneherders will tame as many as they can and move them elsewhere in the Cliffkeep Mountains. Those that can't be tamed will be relocated to other parts of the mountains, where they can be hunted again.

Palace of Wonder

In the desolate and uninhabited northwestern reaches of the Cliffkeep Mountains stands a ruined citadel. All that remains of it are crumbling walls, half-beaten to dust by the unrelenting winds of the mountains, and one forlorn tower, its turret torn asunder to reveal the mildewed, rain-fattened wooden beams within. This ruin, a relic of the early days of Issylran settlement and a panoply of forgotten wars, is all but forgotten by the people of Tal'Dorei. Few explorers travel these wind-scarred peaks, or the storm-beaten northwestern coast of Tal'Dorei. The citadel itself is wracked by the elements, while the shoreline and the mountains beyond it are prowled by territorial elementals that brook no intrusions.

Secrets of the Citadel

The ruined citadel that overlooks this treacherous landscape is far more than meets the eye. In truth, it is the headquarters of the League of Miracles (see page 56). The power-hungry spellwrights who make up the league's upper echelons call this castle the Palace of Wonder. A crumbling but entirely illusory edifice has replaced the derelict fortress, maintained by the league to deter curiosity and avoid notice.

Beneath this arcane façade, the Palace of Wonder truly lives up to its name. The palace is made up of five wings, each of which has a dedicated teleportation circle:

Halls of Splendor. The League of Miracles is in the business of good first impressions. Though the Palace of Wonder is a secret to the people of Tal'Dorei, the spellwrights occasionally teleport particularly powerful mercenary mages to their home base in order to dazzle them with the castle's splendors. The palace's ground floor is made of a number of interconnected grand halls, awash in a tide of splendid, vibrant colors—bordering on garish—that crashes over all who enter.

These many grand dining, entertaining, and performance halls are gleaming spectacles of white marble, decorated by sparkling globes of magical light, and festooned with self-indulgent tapestries of the spellwrights' many dubious achievements. Any intruders here without the express permission of at least one spellwright will find themselves beset by a small army of animated armors and other constructs—including a platinum golem (see page 239) that watches over the front entrance.

Bowers of Recovery. The second floor of the palace is a verdant paradise, with vibrant plants curling around the castle's stately stone architecture. Most spellwrights have their quarters in this wing, which is protected by powerful enchantments that give life to the plants. All who enter here without a spellwright escort are viewed by the living plants as a tasty snack.

This wing of the palace also includes a three-tiered conference chamber where all twenty-four spellwrights can gather to discuss matters of import. In the center of the chamber is a pedestal, upon which sits a humanoid mask of gleaming mithral. When the Wonderworker, the league's mysterious leader, wishes to deliver a proclamation to the spellwrights, their voice emanates from this mask.

Towers of Farsight. The pinnacle of the palace is made up of four sky-scraping towers that gaze out over the Cliffkeep Mountains—and all of Exandria. These private studies are the personal quarters of four of the league's chief spellwrights, and they are equipped with all manner of scrying crystals and tools of clairvoyance, clairaudience, and far-speech.

Dungeons of Despair. Woe betide the prisoners of the League of Miracles, who are left to rot in the cells beneath their palace. The warden of this dungeon is an infallible mage hunter golem (see page 239), and each cell is equipped with shackles that inhibit the spellcasting capabilities of anyone in their grasp. Instruments of unspeakable arcane torture litter these dungeons, capable of instilling endless pain, and even extracting the very soul from one's body. The shackled spirits of those who have died by this last vile torment serve eternally as the guardians of the palace dungeons.

Cradle of the Adranach. Winding about the palace dungeons are a network of twisting passages illuminated by glaring, magical lights. These forking tunnels shift daily, and the secret to navigating them is a mark visible only under the power of a *true seeing* spell. Within these passages are a dozen laboratories stocked with the tools needed for the spellwrights to dream up new potions and spells. Some they sell at extravagant cost to the governments and militias of towns and cities across Tal'Dorei—but the best they keep for themselves, to wield against the factions they manipulate from the shadows, should they ever grow unruly.

At the deepest point of the tunnels is the Cradle of the Adranach, a unique arcane laboratory where all spellwrights are initiated. Here, they craft an adranach (see page 223), a construct of mithral and astral energy that serves as a loyal servant—and that unmistakably marks its creator as a spellwright of the League of Miracles.

Gathering the Spellwrights

The Palace of Wonder is almost never empty, for at least one of its twenty-four spellwrights must always remain within its walls to protect it. Many more spellwrights frequently return by means of the palace's teleportation circles, or upon the back of their

personal adranachs, to take advantage of its magical equipment and nigh-impenetrable defenses.

At times, all spellwrights are requested to return to the palace at the behest of one of the four chief spellwrights, but unless one's presence is demanded by name, these summons are not mandatory. The one summon which cannot be refused, however, is the annual calling of the Wonderworker. The nameless, faceless leader of the League of Miracles holds a near-prophetic sway over the spellwrights that cannot be understated. When all twenty-four spellwrights are gathered within the conference chamber, the Wonderworker intones a slew of cryptic yet unquestionable commandments that all of their followers must interpret and obey to the best of their ability.

Pools of Wittebak

Wittebak was once a peaceful city of three thousand or more rock gnomes, a safe haven for the small ones that was 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 and luxuriated within Wittebak's hot springs and made a homestead on their banks. It is said that Wittebak was founded underneath the full light of Ruidus, for by pure misfortune, a flaw in the stonework of the gnomish city cracked under the force of the giants frolicking within the pools. Worse still, the cave-in did more than simply crush a few buildings beneath. The seismic force of thousands of tons of rock collapsed into the caverns, cracking open buried pockets of volcanic gas.

Over a thousand gnomes suffocated that night, or were incinerated in isolated gas explosions. 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 ten-times great-grandchildren of the giants that caused the gnomes to flee now call the hot springs their ancestral home. To them, it is named Gundergrunch, and they flourish within their unchallenged territory.

Beneath them, the ruins of Wittebak are stratified into three distinct tiers of death and despair.

Tinkerer's Tier. This level is relatively unharmed, and the full glory of Wittebak's tinkering shops can be seen here; some even include marvels of technology unseen for centuries. Creatures that need to breathe can survive the gases in the widest, uppermost level for a number of hours equal to their Constitution modifier, and take 3 (1d6) poison damage each minute after that time. The hill giants that live within have adapted to the gas and do not fear it.

Homesteads. The air in the middle level is heavy with gas, and the quaint gnomish homes on this level are filled with the decomposed remains of those too slow to escape. The entire area is lightly obscured with clouds of gas, and tiny streams of hot water leak from the walls, tumbling into the level below.

Engine Core. The bottommost tier 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. It is also the lair of a sea hag named Mauvlettir.

Pools of Wittebak Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Wittebak can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Getting into Gundergrunch (mid-level). Just getting into Wittebak is an adventure unto itself. It's nearly impossible to fight through the hundreds of **hill giants** in the hot springs and the Tinkerer's Tier—and even if it weren't, such a fight would be a callous slaughter of countless innocents. Stealth is an option, for the giants take little heed of folk smaller than them. Diplomacy is another option; Gondalorr, prince of the giants, has a tender heart and loves the idea of repatriating Wittebak's gnomes. His sister Gondabrau, on the other hand, is cruel, and would like nothing more than to pop wriggling gnomes into her mouth as a snack. Cunning adventurers could sneak in with Gondalorr's aid, or even cause chaos in the giant town by playing the siblings against each other.

The Truth of the Disaster (mid-level). Was it truly just by chance that Wittebak was destroyed? Perhaps there is truth to the rumors that Ruidus, the Moon of Ill Omen, shone brightly above Wittebak on the night of its founding. The **merrow** that lurk in the Engine Core know nothing, but the **sea hag** who lairs there has an inkling. Delve deeper, and the **aboleth** and its aberrant servitors know more still—a secret that dates back to the Founding itself.

Reaching Bluff

Village: Population 324 (53% humans, 27% dwarves, 3% dark elves, 3% earth elemental ancestry, 14% other races)

In a small, fertile valley in the northwest of the Cliffkeep Mountains is a small village founded by Tal'Dorei homesteaders just ten years ago. This simple settlement is inhabited by hardy folk seeking new places to mine gold and iron from the earth. Many unpleasant exiles from Kraghammer have joined

them, so while this village has a charming, rustic atmosphere, few travelers stay for long. The hostility toward outsiders is palpable to all.

This insular attitude has only grown more hostile following the discovery of a gleaming dodecahedron about the size of a human head. One of the miners who unearthed it found that her pickaxe barely scratched its surface—and when struck, it began emanating a radiant, internal golden glow. This mystical object was returned to the village foredwarf, and before the day was out, all the villagers had learned of it. The people of Reaching Bluff call it the Lost Beacon of Unknown Light (see page 41), and worship it as a god.

The settlers protect their mysterious beacon with cultish fervor, and Foredwarf Daz, a deceitful dwarf **veteran** with earth elemental ancestry, is willing to murder anyone who tries to probe into their business.

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 that 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 Serpent's Head Mountain is an ashen ruin. The immolated corpses of its people still lay buried beneath a thick layer of ash, and the mountain itself was transformed into a small volcano by Thordak's magic.

Serpent's Head Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Serpent's Head can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Factions of Flame (any level). Characters who wish to plumb the depths of Serpent's Head for treasure—or perhaps to find an item or character connected to the greater story of your campaign—must contend with the creatures that have made it their home. Mindless **cinderslag elementals** (see page 231) prowl the shattered battlements of the fortress that once stood atop the mountain. Earth tremors have cracked the keep's foundation, revealing deep magma caverns filled with diamonds—precious and infused with chaotic magic. Occasionally, tiny rifts to the Elemental Plane of Fire flash open within the depths, allowing groups of **azer** and **salamanders** to wriggle through. The two factions have made camp in the lower caverns, and both struggle for a foothold in the Material Plane.

Hot-Headed Wanderers (high-level). The Cinder King's incursion into Tal'Dorei attracted elementally infused monsters from deep beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains to the surface. **Magma landsharks** (see page 247) and their young are the worst of these monsters, and even decades after the Cinder King's defeat, they continue to prowl the mountains from their nests beneath Serpent's Head, devouring entire villages unless brave adventurers stand in their way.

Terrah

Village: Population 838 (61% humans, 19% dwarves, 5% gnomes, 15% other races)

Sheltered within a cauldron-like valley, miles deep into the northern mountain range, lies the home of the Earth Ashari. The people of Terrah have long 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 dig 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 hunted game and scavenged fungi, the Terrah people are stocky warriors of stubborn mind and immense pride and loyalty. Jewelry made of precious gemstones is regarded as a sign of station and respect. The Earth Ashari supply Emon with precious and semi-precious stones from the rift in exchange for essential goods and, occasionally, protection from the creatures of the mountains.

The peaks that surround the rift frequently seem to shake with rage, and from their angry slopes rise creatures of living stone, imbued with life by elemental spirits from the rift. The people of Terrah sleep in shifts to keep watch for any sudden changes in seismic activity, lest the fury of the mountains undo all that the Ashari have created.

Government

Terrah is governed by an Ashari archdruid given the honored title of Heart of the Mountain. This archdruid has completed their Aramente (see page 49) and earned the respect of the four elemental enclaves of the Ashari. Pa'tice, the current Heart of the Mountain, is a human man well over one hundred years old. Though tenacious and ornery, he is a venerable warrior with boundless appreciation and support for those who prove themselves honorable and self-reliant. Rumor has it that Pa'tice is seeking a worthy druid who can undertake the Aramente and succeed him as Heart of the Mountain.

Terrah Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Terrah can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Pestering Pa'tice (any level). Rumor has spread throughout the Cliffkeeps that the Earth Ashari are seeking a new Heart of the Mountain. In response, dozens of upstart **druids** with delusions of grandeur have flocked to Terrah, seeking to impress the current leader of the Earth Ashari. Pa'tice can't be bothered with this pageantry, and quietly hires a group of adventurers—the characters—to disperse these druids. If there is a druid in the party, perhaps their actions will impress the Heart of the Mountain and set them on the path of the Aramente.

Dependable as Stone (high-level). 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 characters 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 **earth elementals** descending from the peaks around Terrah. Pa'tice is a practical leader—he cannot lead his people to fight a threat to the outside world while danger lurks on their doorstep. "Eliminate this threat to Terrah," Pa'tice says, "and perhaps we can join your cause."

Umbra Hills

The Battle of the Umbra Hills, the climactic battle of the Scattered War and the death knell of the Kingdom of Drassig, transformed the floral, sun-dappled Emerald Highlands into a blasted wasteland. A tide of demonic blood spilled across the highlands like fire, cursing 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, propelling 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 silvery moon Catha is high, and the ruins of ancient Drassig war camps seem to draw demons of all types, still bound by the contract between Trist Drassig and the Demon Prince of Indulgence. Pathetic dretches gambol about in the ruins' long shadows, and rumors say that, on nights when the moon Ruidus is full, even mighty balor demons prowl the hills in search of mighty souls to corrupt.

Umbra Hills Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Umbra Hills can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Sword of the Demon Prince (high-level). In a dream, a skilled warrior within the party 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 Umbra Hills."* The sword is not as it appears; though the Demon Prince of Indulgence was defeated at the Battle of the Umbra Hills 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 (see page 195 for its game statistics). The alluring, androgynous **marilith** demons that guard it pretend to be the ghosts of great knights, protecting the blade of a lost Sovereign of Tal'Dorei.

Grey Valley

North of the Umbra Hills lies a wide valley of ill omen and dark history, named for the forest of petrified trees that fill the majority of the valley's forest floor. During the Scattered War, Trist Drassig



obsessed over the possibility of losing and pledged his service to the Demon Prince of Indulgence 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 strength of the rebelling forces. The release of terrible energies exploded across the battlefield. Now left cursed and lifeless, the valley remains a warning against dealing with demons—and a dangerous locus of darker entities that are drawn to the ruined place.

Grey Valley Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Grey Valley can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Heart of the Wraithroot (high-level). At the dead center of the Grey Valley is a petrified tree unlike any other. Knots in its stony bark gaze like eyes at its withered domain. This **wraithroot tree** (see page 259) is the eternal guardian of a dark treasure. Rumors abound about what could be secreted away behind this vile guardian—a relic of a demon prince, the crown of Drassig, or an artifact of the Betrayer Gods unknown to mortal minds? The true nature of this artifact is up to the Game Master, but whatever it is, rumors of its existence have lured countless adventurers to their deaths.

Stormcrest Mountains

Spanning Tal'Dorei's southern reaches, buttressed against the Verdant Expanse, stand the massive Stormcrest Mountains. The winds of the Lucidian Ocean wail through the storm-battered peaks, and few dare make these treacherous mountains their home. The few who do live amidst the Stormcrests are ferocious monstrosities and the giantkin strong enough to defeat them—and those few peoples cunning enough to evade storm, monster, and giant alike. The only friendly towns anywhere near these forsaken peaks lie in the Mornset Countryside pushing along the Stormpoint range, far beyond the influence of the Tal'Dorei Council. These rugged folk are used to fending for themselves and scoff at the thought of returning to so-called "civilization," preferring life among the swamps and shadowed forests of their homeland.

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 storm clouds that surround the mountains. Lightning tears through the ashen clouds with giddy excitement, making it clear to all who behold it that 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 tenuous alliances of lizardfolk, dragonblood, kobolds, and even a few young dragons trying to expand their treasure hoards battle 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 and kobolds flocked to his side, worshiping his might and cruelty. Though Thordak is slain, his influence yet lingers,



and his legend draws treasure hunters and would-be tyrants to this place. Gold, jewels, and magic items from all ages of the world lie in wait within the dozen or more secret vaults of the Cinder King's lair. When the king of dragons still held dominion here, he had thousands of loyal scaled minions at his beck and call, moving invaluable treasures into deeper and deeper holds. Beyond the main cavern of the lair, even the Cinder King himself had to magically take humanoid form to traverse the winding tunnels his servants carved through the rock.

The descendants of Thordak's 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 vaults, still locked after all this time. To steal Thordak's greatest treasures, an adventuring party would have to either broker a peace between the warring clans or somehow sneak into the mountain undetected.

The following major factions fight for control over the Ashen Gorge. They make and break their alliances with one faction or another, and then break their new alliances just as readily. You can use these factions to inspire adventures set in the Ashen Gorge.

Scions of Flame. This cult of black-scaled lizardfolk claim to have been Thordak's elite guard in ancient times, and are the current rulers of the gorge. They're led 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. Every ten years brings a new generation of kobolds, and while the Tinysoot tribe's warriors are not the mightiest, their overwhelming numbers have allowed them to overwhelm even the greatest of the Flame Scions' champions. The Tinysoots' leader, a stubborn young Queen of Soot named Yabber Tinysoot XIX, wears around her neck the key to Everflame Crevasse, Thordak's deepest treasure vault.

Black Snow. When Thordak's ally, Umbrasyl, was slain atop Gatshadow, his caustic blood seeped into the corpses of a dozen goliath scouts from the Herd of Storms. The black dragons' magic, combined with the foul power of Gatshadow itself, transformed the goliaths into a squadron of undead black dragonblood warriors. Skeletal wings sprouted from their backs, and the Black Snow tribe flew instinctively to the Ashen Gorge. They were 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 squadron of hateful revenants is small, but each one of them wields the strength of twenty lesser warriors.

Tatterwing Kin. Toxoshuul, Chloroxodon, and Snagglefang, a trio of young green dragons, long to plunder Thordak's lost vaults for their own hoards, and demand tribute from the other factions of the Ashen Gorge in exchange for their aid in battle. All three are the children of



Tatterwing, a feared dragon of the Kirmont Valley, and even if they find themselves on opposite sides of a skirmish, they never fight one another, only annihilating the pathetic humanoids beneath them with their toxic breath and razor-sharp talons.

Dreamseep Marshlands

East of the Stormcrest Range, within the Kirmont Valley, is the sprawling, fetid Dreamseep Marsh. The perpetual rain rolling off the Stormcrests' enchanted slopes has transformed this once-lush forest into a 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 there like water, and the dead drink deep of it. The marsh is populated by 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 putrid 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 fabled necropolis of countless chambers, littered with traps and treasures that have claimed the lives and imaginations of untold hundreds. 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 hearty and stubborn folk..

Dreamseep Marshlands Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Dreamseep Marshlands can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Skull of Udah (epic-level). Two rumors persist of the Tomb of Udah. First, it is said that within the tomb's deepest sanctum is a three-eyed golden skull, and that in each socket is inlaid a ruby that can grant any wish. Second, the locals say that, unlike the mindless undead of the Dreamseep above, the abominations in the necropolis below are commanded by a hideous master. Little do these rumor-spreaders know that the skull and the master are one and the same. Udah the Undying is a **lich** of tremendous power, devouring the souls of all who die within the Dreamseep. His disembodied spirit controls the dungeon itself, and only retreats into the skull—the last remnant of his physical form—when it is in danger.

Bronbog

Village: Population 683 (53% humans, 18% half-elves, 11% goblinkin, 9% halflings, 9% other races)

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 waterlogged bogwood, and the only sign of its previous greatness is 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 maintain a determinedly optimistic disposition. There's a saying in the village: "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 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 will pay good money for a shipment.

The biggest building in Bronbog is its tavern, the Queen's Knight, which has about six beds in drafty rooms to accommodate the town's very few visitors.

Bronbog Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Bronbog can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Morning Glory (mid-level). On a queenscap-gathering expedition to Bronbog, an unusual storm forces the characters to stay the night. As they spend time in the swamp town, vine-choked stone obelisks slowly emerge from the murky waters, emanating an unearthly light. Some villagers immediately fall under the obelisks' sway, claiming they are "heralds of the Dawnfather, the rising sun," but all others are disturbed by their neighbors' feverish worship of the stones.

The true power behind these obelisks is a misguided **deva** that calls himself Eclipse. He seeks to create a brainwashed, perfectly loyal Army of the Dawn to fight against the Dawnfather's enemies. He is posing as Father Larkylai, the town's affable priest of the Dawnfather, and conducts services from within the town's tavern.

The Frostweald

Along the northern base of the Stormcrests is a forest locked in perpetual winter, cursed to eternal cold by the invasion of Errevon the Rimelord during the Icelost Years. Within the forest, ponds magically freeze into perfect mirrors, reflecting the snowy sky

above, and the snow-draped trees shelter families of fey hiding from enemies in the Fey Realm. At first, 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, and travelers who encounter mysterious snow-covered statuaries or copses of petrified trees must think fast or join this grisly statuary—permanently.

Frostweald Inhabitants

The only humanoid peoples who live within the Frostweald are hunter-gatherers called the Shivergut. Many of their people are orcs who have lived within the Frostweald for generations, but their ranks also include humans, elves, and dwarves who adopted their ways centuries ago during the Icelost Years. Most are helpful to travelers, if reserved. Others, however, are dour, selfish isolationists who have been apart from other folk for so long that they care more for the thrill of bloodshed than a warm conversation over a crackling fire.

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 Fey Realm. If pressed for answers on why they left the Fey Realm, their answers are cryptic and dissatisfactory, but always ominously suggest a "Great Shadow" has descended upon their lands—perhaps even a host of warriors from the Plane of Shadow? A nymph named Arethusa watches over a cluster of three mirror-like pools that form a pathway into the Fey Realm, each to a different Archfey's forest. She is suspicious of all mortals, and both her trust and a favor are required to gain passage.

Ruins of the Frostweald

Many forgotten obelisks of the Knowing Mentor rest secretly beneath the ice and snow. These lost beacons were created to guide the faithful of the Knowing Mentor to the Cavern of Axiom, a sacred place guarded since time immemorial by a sphinx dedicated to the Mentor. If any living creature knows why these ancient monoliths reside here when no other ruins of the Knowing Mentor have been discovered, they have kept the knowledge secret from the other scholars of the world. Over thirty years ago, the half-orc Emonian archaeologist Jorlund Vohr discovered a cache of *Ioun stones* buried here and brought 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.

The Silver Tablet

Ye who seek my boundless wisdom,
Pass into the white trees' kingdom.
Return to the shrine Mentor's 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.

Cavern of Axiom

The Cavern of Axiom is a lost shrine to the Knowing Mentor, 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 trials designed to test the will and mettle of those who seek the infinite knowledge of the Knowing Mentor. The chambers plunge deeper into the rock beneath the mountain, while 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 alter from subject to subject, and failure banishes the petitioners from the cavern, barred from ever returning.

Ruhn-Shak

Small City: Population 6,670 (80% elves, 12% dwarves, 5% gnomes, 3% other races)

If you find carved arches and steel gates in the mountain slopes, do not rest there, no matter the cold. There are no grand 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 the Spider Queen's devotees maintains its tyranny. Hidden entrances and tunnels riddle not just the mountain range, but the edges of the Dreamseep,

as well as darker regions of the Verdant Expanse, granting raiding parties quick and easy access to the surface under cover of night—slaughtering many, capturing the rest, and taking the spoils as gifts to the Spider Queen.

These tunnels, in their twisted network, are easily collapsed and reopened through the use of "Pit Witches," druids who master the art of rock and dirt manipulation, making it near impossible to give chase. The Wardens of Syngorn are ever seeking a way to find and destroy this heart of the Spider Queen's power in Tal'Dorei, but the sly and cunning elves of Ruhn-Shak have yet to meet their match.

Ruhn-Shak Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Ruhn-Shak can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Dynastic Intervention (any level). While in Syngorn, the characters are called by Ouestra, Voice of Memory (see page 63), to meet with guests from Wildemount. They are emissaries of the Kryn Dynasty, a society founded by dark elves who fled the Spider Queen's grip and now live on the surface. These Kryn envoys seek to undertake an expedition into Ruhn-Shak, to try to use the radiant power of their mysterious god, the Luxon, to free their kin from the Spider Queen's evil influence. The characters are offered a fine reward by the Wardens of Syngorn to protect these Kryn priests on their mission.

A Plea from the Dark (mid-level). The characters are drawn into the underground tunnels around Ruhn-Shak by a psychic message: "*I have displeased the Spider Queen; there is nothing I can do but beg for salvation—can anyone hear me?*" The message comes from Ry'denyan, a **drow** of Ruhn-Shak granted telepathic powers by an unknown aberration. This unexpected gift allowed him to break free of his society's brainwashing. He tried to escape, and was exiled into the tunnels, where he will surely be devoured by **driders** unless the characters save him.

Wrettis

A relic of the Age of Arcanum, Wrettis is the ruined tower of a powerful mage, one who was driven mad by the seductive whispers of beings from the beyond. What few legends survive of the mage of Wrettis say he was known as Clemain Astural, the Sight Shephard, 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 by an entity he called the Sightless One (see page 41). 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 of the mad mage, as well as some of his creations.

Rifenmist Peninsula

South of the Stormcrest Mountains and the Verdant Expanse are a number of autonomous communities that live outside the influence of the Republic of Tal'Dorei and its constituent city-states. A number of plans to expand into Rifenmist have been brought to the Tal'Dorei Council, but strong opposition from the Syngornian delegation and the Master of Defense have consistently buried these plans before they can come to fruition.

A number of communities exist on the Rifenmist Peninsula. Some are lost remnants of the Scattered War that chose to flee Drassig's rule to the isolated and unpopulated Mornset Countryside rather than fight against his tyranny. These are the communities



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.



that some Emonian merchants wish to bring into the fold of Tal'Dorei proper. Farther to the south (and occasionally roaming north into Mornset) are the Orroyen elves, a collection of nomadic tribes. The Orroyen and the elves of Syngorn see one another as family, and the Syngornian delegation refuses to allow the council to interfere with their cousins' way of life.

Beyond the Mornset people and the Orroyen are a number of other small, individualistic settlements that live in fear of the imperial power that commands Rifenmist: the Iron Authority. Tal'Dorei's Master of Defense warns the council of provoking this slumbering empire, for they are preoccupied with their unholy conquest of the Rifenmist Jungle in the name of their patron deity, the Strife Emperor. A number of Orroyen elves and other people of Rifenmist long for Emon's aid in breaking the grip of the Iron Authority, but fear that allowing the Republic of Tal'Dorei to gain a military foothold in Rifenmist would simply be trading one imperial master for another.

Beyond the political struggles of this realm are terrors only true heroes can survive. Enormous, ancient beasts stalk the vine-twisted paths of the jungle that consumes the majority of the peninsula's coastline. 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.

Beynsfal Plateau

Where below there is life and freedom, above there is naught but death and tyranny. In the high, southern plateaus of Rifenmist, verdant jungle gives way to a cracked, volcanic landscape, its basalt fields interrupted only by towering structures of black 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, aided by his legions of brainwashed goblinkin, 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.

Most of the goblinkin who survived the battle vanished into the jungle and traveled north into the rest of Tal'Dorei, leaving the shame of their connection to the Strife Emperor behind. Centuries later, however, a number of goblinkin still remained among the towering iron of the Strife Emperor's fallen armor. One platoon of hobgoblins, the Iron Regiment, devoted themselves wholly to the Strife Emperor, and pledged to revive his glorious legacy of conquest. They press-ganged as many of their kin as they could into armies and created the seed of an empire—one which they watered with blood.

When the Iron Regiment brought all of the Beyensfal Plateau under their rule and transformed themselves into the Iron Authority, their empire only continued to grow. The Iron Tide never broke, and within a decade, it had engulfed all the other kingdoms along Rifenmist's southern coast. They were united under the cruel banner of Tz'Jarr, the Iron Emperor.

While the entirety of Beynsfal is firmly controlled by the Iron Authority, the empire is still reaching, now locked in a decades-long war to subjugate the native inhabitants of the jungles below: the Orroyen.

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 Plateau Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure on the Beynsfal Plateau and the surrounding mountains can use this plot hook for inspiration.

The Wayward Bloodline (mid-level). Tz'Jarr has a single heir to his throne: his hobgoblin child Zuun'dak, nearly of age and currently 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.

Mornset Countryside

After a long journey south from Syngorn, or north from the Rifenmist Jungle, thick foliage gives way to rolling hills and winding rivers. No great cities are to be seen here, only an untouched wilderness pockmarked by fortified towns. The Mornset Countryside is home to many people whose ancestors fled the rule of Drassig. Most of these people value their privacy—especially from Emonian landscape painters who enrich themselves by romanticizing and exoticizing their idyllic way of life.

The Free Folk of Mornset, as they call themselves, include a wide variety of people who have spurned the ways of their forebears. The bulk of these people are the descendants of refugees from a long-ago war, but a number of Tal'Dorei people who long for freedom from the pressure of modern life have uprooted their lives and journeyed to Mornset to start anew. Likewise, some Orroyen elves who dislike the nomadic lifestyle find homes in the small communities of Mornset.

Beyond those who follow their hearts to this realm, Mornset is also home to a number of criminals fleeing persecution. Most Free Folk don't ask questions about newcomers' pasts, and welcome them regardless. However, if these particular outlanders don't leave their past behind and continue to harm others, or bring bounty hunters (or worse) in their wake, every village in Mornset has a well-trained militia that will eagerly remove dangerous folk from their midst.

Bound by the necessity of survival, the people of this land share a common code of honor called the Fundaments. This code holds all to a baseline of respect for all travelers and outcasts, and codifies ancient principles of hospitality. Each denizen of the countryside looks out for their neighbor, and if a person in need arrives upon one's doorstep, the hospitality of food and shelter must be provided.

It is understood that the Fundaments may be taken advantage of by ruffians and power-hungry upstarts. Nevertheless, this code of honor has served the Free Folk well for centuries, and anyone who scorns it is looked upon with disdain and mistrust. Most of the Mornset Free Folk are humanoids, but many free settlements have alliances with the local hill giants, cyclopes, and ogres that help protect them against the Iron Authority to the south.

Mornset Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Mornset can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Anger Everburning (low-level). A number of residents of the uncharted village of Heldenfaire have been unexpectedly—and suddenly—flying into a rage both mindless and destructive. Many within the village are confused, fearing a plague of violent madness, and they seek adventurers (especially parties with clerics or skilled healers) to save them. Investigation by the party reveals that each individual driven to these fits is connected to the town alchemist's dark past and a failed herbalism experiment from ten years ago, when she lived in Kymal. If the characters wish to find an antidote, they must explore the alchemist's sinister laboratory in the hills.

Byroden

Town: Population 8,050 (45% humans, 21% half-elves, 12% goblinkin, 8% halflings, 8% gnomes, 6% other races)

The northernmost and largest town in the Mornset Countryside, Byroden borders the Gladepools and marks the first stop for any traveler on their way to the Rifenmist Peninsula. It's also a hub of trade for the entire Mornset Countryside, and even some trappers and artisans of the Verdant Expanse. The town has a dense town center surrounded by palisades and tall wooden walls, but most of the community lives in homesteads and farmhouses spread across the surrounding fields. Byroden is mostly self-sufficient, and has a wealth of farmers, fishers, artisans, and miners, giving them everything they need to survive. Trade provides the opportunity for some luxuries, with raw materials serving as their primary currency.

While pleasant and welcoming on the outside, this lifestyle is protected by a fierce and intense drive

to defend the community's way of life at the first sign of threat or danger. Most citizens are armed at all times, trained to rise as a communal militia at a moment's notice from the war ringer, a sentinel charged with the town's protection.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the ever-present dangers that threaten Byroden, the town holds frequent festivals, feasts, and fairs, including the highly anticipated Gem of Byroden pageant and the midsummer Peachiest Pie bake-off. On festival days, small children roam freely within the protective town walls as their parents enjoy the chance to let loose and celebrate life in all its ephemeral glory.

Hillmaw Chasm

A few miles north of the center of Byroden is a gaping chasm. An earthquake thirty years ago split open Deercrest Hill. The chasm is referred to officially as Deercrest Ravine, but is known to most superstitious folk in town as Hillmaw Chasm. After the earthquake, locals stayed as far away from the chasm as they could—until four years later, when a group of adventurers found vast veins of precious gold and sturdy iron within. Soon, all people of Byroden strong enough to swing a pick or lift a shovel made their way into the chasm.

Most miners hire an armed escort because the chasm is known to be home to grumpy earth elementals, as well as unpleasant, slimy creatures of the dark. Most serious beliefs about the chasm being haunted have dissipated over the past thirty years. Still, rumors persist, and as folklore becomes myth, some say that myth can become reality.

Advent of the Cinder King

About forty years ago, Byroden was brought to its knees by Thordak the Cinder King. This incursion was about two decades before the Cinder King's destruction of Emon, and it was stopped by an adventuring party led by Allura Vysoren, now a senior member of the Tal'Dorei Council. Many in Byroden still see Allura, Lady Kima of Vord, and Drake Thunderbrand as heroes. The graves of the companions they lost in that fight, Sirus Kaldrem, Dohla Lorian, and Ghenn Talevesh, hold places of honor in the town cemetery.

While Byroden has long-since been built anew, the terror of that day still lives on in its elders and adults. All but the youngest generation of Byroden takes great caution against another such monstrous attack—as well as against any attack by the Iron Authority to the south.

Byroden Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Byroden can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Ironbound Scouts (low-level). All are awoken in Byroden by the ringing of the town's alarm bell, including the characters. As the town militia is armed for battle, the characters overhear that **goblin** and **hobgoblin** scouts of the Iron Authority have been spotted twenty miles south of town—closer than they've been seen in nearly two decades.

Worried that this scouting party is an omen of invasion, the town's war ringer deputizes the characters and offers them a handsome sum of money to investigate the scouting camp. Their goal is simple: learn the interlopers' mission, either by interrogating their commander or by finding a written command note. And, if the characters can capture or eliminate the scouts before the town's upcoming festival, the locals will celebrate their success with all the free food and drink they can stomach.

The Dreamgate (mid-level). After a mining expedition goes missing deep within the Hillmaw Chasm, locals begin to report vivid, communal dreams involving members of the missing party pleading for help. A half dozen mercenaries have been hired to investigate—only for them to disappear as well. Just a day before the characters are asked for help, the townsfolk of Byroden discovered with horror that the vanished mercenaries have also appeared in their dreams. The adventurers are asked to delve into this unearthed pathway and to find both answers and the missing people.

Niirdal-Poc

City: Population 15,442 (18% humans, 17% goblinkin, 12% elves, 12% elephantines, 10% half-elves, 7% elemental ancestry, 24% other races)

Long before the Calamity, a great civilization called the Qoniira made Rifenmist their home. During the Age of Arcanum, the Qoniira Tetrarchy grew from a loose coalition of towns led by arcanists, clerics of the Wildmother, and druids who spoke with the jungle around them. These towns were inhabited by humans and the animal-bodied humanoids of the jungle. The first stones of the Qoniiran heart-city Niirdal-Poc were laid by the broad, towering elephantine people, and places for new settlements were scouted out by catfolk seers whose eyes glistened with starlight.

Surviving the Calamity

In time, the Qoniira civilization grew into a Tetrarchy, with four great satellite cities and the central heart-city of Niirdal-Poc. The tetrarchs established their cities with mathematical precision. A constellation of the night sky guided them—Surrac's Shield, a four-starred diamond with a fifth star in its center. The constellation still shines over Rifenmist and southern Exandria today. The four outer cities of Qoniira match the points of Surrac's shield precisely, and Niirdal-Poc is aligned with its center star.

The Calamity struck at the peak of Qoniiran civilization, yet rather than take up arms against gods and mortals, the tetrarchs opted to remove themselves from the world—not unlike the elves of Syngorn to the north. Something happened in Niirdal-Poc, some sort of magic that even the Qoniirans of today do not understand.

Geography

Today, only the heart-city of Niirdal-Poc survives. Its satellites are little more than crumbling ruins. Something shifted in the magic of the jungle when the Qoniirans chose not to fight in the Calamity. The Rifenmist Jungle closed its boughs against the world, shielding the city. When the Strife Emperor died on the Beynsfal Plateau to the south, the Qoniirans knew nothing of it. All the tumult of the world passed them by.

The Rifenmist Jungle sunk Niirdal-Poc into a deep basin, and its thick canopies shield it from above, while its intertwining boughs hold the heart-city tightly in its embrace. Few are permitted by the protective, ancient magic of the Qoniirans to enter the city. Its people live contentedly within Niirdal-Poc, only occasionally traveling outside their basin to trade with Orroyen nomads or, in mythically rare instances, with the town of Byroden.

The four ruins which surround Niirdal-Poc are:

Niirdal-Gan. This outer city to the north of Niirdal-Poc was the agricultural hub of Qoniira. Some farmers have opted to live outside the basin and tend to these still-fertile lands. They are few, for magic is able to supply food for most people of Niirdal-Poc.

Niirdal-Teek. This outer city, east of Niirdal-Poc, was an academic center of the Qoniiran



civilization. Most of the city is one vast university that once was populated by over 30,000 people. Some explorers venture into these ruins to find lost knowledge.

Niirdal-Sarqet. Located south of Niirdal-Poc, this outer city was a center of faith for the Qoniirans. All that remains of the sacred city is a vast, floating cube called the Hexahedron of Sarqet. It is adorned with statues of the Prime Deities and the Betrayer Gods alike, and none living know what is inside its unbreachable walls. Even today, modern Qoniiran priests teach that balance is the true way of the world, telling their people to invoke the names of the Prime Deities for blessings, and of the Betrayer Gods for curses.

Niirdal-Hup. Precious little remains of this fortress-city, the heart of the Qoniiran military. A common parable reminds those who hear it to not fight fate—for of all the ruined cities, only the city of warriors was reduced to dust.

All of these ruins are filled with statues from the height of the Qoniiran Tetrarchy. Some statues have been known to move under the light of the stars, illuminating hidden runes upon their bodies as they patrol like sentinels of antiquity.

Government

The Tetrarchy of Qoniira, in ages past, was ruled by four tetrarchs, each of whom ruled one of the civilization's four outer cities. In times where the fate of Qoniira was at a crossroads, they gathered within the heart-city to guide the course of their civilization together.

The relative autonomy of the four outer cities and the looseness of the coalition that bound them seems at odds with the perfect precision with which the cities were built, so precisely matching the stars in the sky. The Qoniirans have always been an easygoing people who typically follow the flow of fate, rather than fight against it.

Today, the tetrarchy survives, even though the four outer cities are in ruins. They gather daily in the Hakredic Dome, an architecturally magnificent granite rotunda adorned with an outer layer of grayish-purple porphyry stone and lifelike, reddish porphyry statues. There, the tetrarchs and their advisors work to keep life simple and content for their people.

The tetrarchy is a hereditary office, but city-wide elections are held between eligible heirs to determine which heir should take up their parent's mantle. Elections are also held when a tetrarch's line ends without heirs—often giving advisors a chance to gain power by virtue of their service to the city.

Storms bring death, but rain brings life. Storms are power, the power of the distant gods, on display for all to see. Climb into the Stormpoints, young one, and shout your fury into the relentless wind and booming thunder. Your prayers may not be answered by the gods, but you will feel them echo in your heart.

—Cloudwriter Ix Eghruy of the Orroyen

Magic Beyond Reckoning

Magic suffuses the city of Niirdal-Poc. Its magic is something older than the gods, or the Calamity, or anything wielded by mortals today. However, the mortal mages of Niirdal-Poc wield the same arcane force gifted by the gods, and its druids and clerics touch upon the power of the gods behind the Divine Gate, just as Exandria's other mortal peoples do.

Both ancient and modern magic mingle in Niirdal-Poc, for the patterns of the ancient powers are mysterious, and its methods are unknowable. Some call it the Light of Fate, others the Blessing of the Stars. The most common name is simply "the Gift." It was the Gift that protected Niirdal-Poc in the Calamity. It is the Gift that causes miracles to occur, like a person surviving a fall from the heights of Vedrim's Pinnacle to the streets of the city. It is the Gift that causes the Hexahedron of Sarqet to hover mysteriously; it is the Gift that surrounds the Statue of the Observer, a four-winged feline humanoid figure in the city's center, with a broken halo of ashen-gold light—and that causes that same light to flicker within the lamps of the city.

Orroyen Tribes

Nomadic Tribes: Population 11,850 (64% elves, 12% half-elves, 10% humans, 14% other races)

Born from a wandering colony fleeing the Calamity, these wood elves have not just survived within the jungles of Rifenmist—they have flourished. Learning the dangers of the surrounding lands, refining their hunting techniques, and maintaining a healthy arms-length relationship with outsiders, the Orroyen call 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*, and the duty of leading their tribe. Each nomadic group maintains a population of anywhere between a hundred and a thousand people. Temporary lodging is constructed at each resting point, called a *tomenda*.

Most Orroyen groups remain at a tomenda they've constructed for about two years, before depletion of resources or the arrival of dangerous creatures or soldiers forces them to move on. Countless abandoned tomenda can be found throughout the jungle, and Orroyen clans will frequently make camp in old tomenda made by a different tribe—it is considered a gift from the jungle.

To come into prominence within the tribe, or request admittance into the tribes as an ally or member, a hopeful entrant must complete a series of ceremonial trials. 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 to not return at all, and many elders bear the marks and scars of their trials long past. Few outlanders from the north, known as *orfindes* to the Orroyen, 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 ancient tyranny of Drassig and the supernatural horrors the people of northern Gwessar invite upon themselves.

Nevertheless, the Orroyen are practical, not prideful. They trade often with the Free Folk of Mornset, and sometimes even travel as far north as Byroden to trade rare goods. There, some Orroyen meet people from Syngorn or beyond and share stories of their lands. Love can bloom in these meetings of separate worlds, and sometime results in an orfinde being brought into an Orroyen clan. And sometimes curious Orroyen leave simply to see the world beyond the jungle.



Rifenmist Jungle

The jungles that cover Tal'Dorei's southern expanses are a vast wilderness. Many elves call this lush landscape their home, particularly those of the nomadic Orroyen Tribes. There is no doubt that this jungle is as magical and mysterious as Tal'Dorei's temperate forests, for the jungle's greenery is home to countless mystical spirits, ferocious monsters, and arcane mysteries. 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 heat of the sun-baked peninsula grows even more oppressive beneath the jungle's humid canopy. Clusters of venomous insects buzz through the mist-shrouded trees, alongside large lizards, and wild beasts in search of carrion. Sunken valleys lead to pockets of marshland or quicksand pit traps, while others are wrought with a dire, spreading fungus. Those who have lived all their lives in this environment know its dangers well and have hundreds of years of precautions to take against them. On the other hand, those who venture into the jungle from northern Tal'Dorei rarely return, and those that do warn others to never make the same mistake.

The farther south one travels into Rifenmist, the denser the jungle grows. Though some elves and humans of northern Tal'Dorei have attempted to colonize the jungles for their vast resources in decades past, they were 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 Tal'Dorei Council reacted quickly as well—the elves of the jungle are to be heeded. The few settlers who have joined the Free Folk of the Mornset Countryside are deeply superstitious about the southern jungles, and rarely travel deeper than they need to in order to parley with their Orroyen allies.

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 nomads fear the conquerors of Beynsfal Plateau and the massive armies supplied to them by their authoritarian leaders. Their raids ebb and flow as imperial leaders rise and fall. Each new era begins with a bold and cruel warlord rallying their people against their age-old enemy. War is waged, and countless innocents and

Authority soldiers perish in a senseless fight. And then resources run low, morale dips, and the legions return to the Beynsfal Plateau to lick their wounds.

Legend holds that the jungle will never die, so long as even one of the Orroyen lives within it. So far, history has only proved the jungle's enduring strength.

Rifenmist Jungle Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Rifenmist Jungle can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

The Insatiable Sanctuary (mid-level). 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 Rifenmist, 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 to be a living entity, and the treasure a lure to draw in prey.

Seed of Immolation (high-level). 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. The Iron Authority and their power-hungry clerics of the Strife Emperor have tampered with the seed and unleashed powers beyond their control. The titan has begun to develop and wake from its eons-long slumber. If the process isn't halted, it will fully awaken and terrorize the continent. However, if the seed is destroyed, vast swathes of jungle may wither and die without its magical essence.

Stormpoint Mountains

The southern offshoot of the Stormcrest Mountains, the Stormpoint Mountains push deep into Rifenmist Jungle itself. These steep peaks are shrouded in low-sitting clouds and fog for most of the year, their rocky surface hidden from view by lush overgrowth that's fed by the near-perpetual rain.

This region is beautiful, and in spring, thousands of waterfalls spray mist and cast gorgeous rainbows across the crags. However, due to its distance from most of Tal'Dorei's population centers, few but adventurers and treasure hunters come here—seeking wealth, not beauty. Some Free Folk from the Mornset Countryside and pilgrims of the Wildmother do take great pains to travel here and revel in the Stormpoint Mountains' natural splendor.

Stormpoint Mountains Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Stormpoint Mountains can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Allies of the Storm (high-level). The people of the Mornset Countryside and the free people of the Rifenmist Jungle long for an end to the tyranny of the Iron Authority. A group of freedom fighters who have heard of the characters' legendary feats of heroism contact them with a request: help. They lack the funds to request the characters fight the Authority themselves, but they wish for the characters to recruit a clan of **cyclopes** that live in the Stormpoint Mountains, including the mighty **cyclops stormcallers** (see page 235) that lead their people.

Once there, the characters learn that their clan is beset by demons who have possessed their stormcallers and are using their mighty powers to conjure a deadly storm to keep the rest of the cyclopes in submission. Only exorcising the demons and saving the stormcallers will earn the characters their aid.

Content Warning: Slavery

The Iron Authority is a despicable society that embodies all the evils of ruthless authoritarianism. This includes the subjugation of innocents, racial supremacy, poverty, and slavery. People at your gaming table may be more sensitive to this type of realistic evil than villains who simply wish to destroy the world. It's worth discussing with your players in a session zero (see page 149) if everyone will still have fun (and be comfortable) if the game contains this type of evil before introducing the Iron Authority as a villain in your campaign.

If you and your players want to use the Iron Authority in your game, but don't feel comfortable with the depth of its evil, you can strip out these elements. What remains is a classic "evil empire" that wants to conquer Tal'Dorei. Its conquest can serve as a backdrop to the other adventures that your players want to go on.

Tz'Arrm, Helm of the Emperor

City: Population 47,400 (70% hobgoblins, 10% goblins, 20% other 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 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 armies of the Iron Authority are strictly regimented, and its society is no less ruthlessly structured. Every goblin, hobgoblin, and bugbear knows their place within the imperial hierarchy. And every being of other races, including a number of elves who have betrayed the Orroyen in hopes of gaining power within the Authority, know their place beneath the goblinkin. Iron Emperor Tz'Jarr is the supreme military commander of the empire, loyally served by the four royal generals that rule the empire's individual city-states. Tz'Jarr is unimaginably old, and it is said that his clerics have used blood magic granted to them by their god to sustain him beyond his years.

The military government of the Iron Authority is headquartered in Tz'Arrm. Its cultish generals are doggedly focused on maintaining the Authority's war machine—and their own personal power. Beneath these generals are innumerable propagandists, military officials, slave-owning nobles, and their cronies, all of whom ravenously seek a way to climb the ladder of power. 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 an empire with an insatiable appetite for expansion and conquest, Tz'Arrm is awash with propaganda and crawling with secret police. In addition to being the headquarters of the military, Tz'Arrm is also the center of operations for the Gauntlet, the empire's intelligence and espionage division. As the children of the Strife Emperor, loyal goblinkin are seen as the supreme citizens of the empire. The upper echelons of the Iron Authority are filled almost exclusively by hobgoblins, for the Iron Emperor has declared them the strongest and most worthy children of their god. By the same token, goblinkin who betray the empire are seen as the ultimate traitors, and suffer a fate worse than death.

Those with wealth and status within the empire are constantly paranoid about falling out of favor. Even great generals see all those around them as hungry wolves waiting to gobble them up. At the bottom rungs of society are the serving class, who eke out a meager existence as indentured servants for the elite, or as merchants who are bound to whatever master owns their shop. Beneath even them are slaves, most of whom are prisoners of war.

Slavery

The armies of the Iron Authority have captured tens of thousands of slaves during their wars of conquest across Rifenmist. The slaves of Tz'Arrm are mostly used as laborers, 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 elite of the Iron Authority sometimes play at benevolence by granting comfortable jobs indoors to slaves skilled in the arts—such as personal portrait-painters, musicians, or sculptors. Such kindnesses are rarely a sign of true mercy; they are more likely a simple (and meager) expression of guilt.

Groups of slaves that pass in and out of the city to labor in the armor yards or furnaces are escorted by a military detachment whose primary purpose is to discourage escape. The powerful people of the city prize their elven slaves above all others, 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 and long life, 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 Rifenmist sun. The imperial elite enjoy spells that cool their homes and shelter them from the sun, but those who toil under the sun pay a heavy price. The Authority's hobgoblin elite are well suited to such a climate, but their goblin and bugbear slaves suffer as they toil—as do the Orroyen elves, whose life in the shady, humid boughs of the Rifenmist Jungle has left them unprepared for the blistering heat of the plateau.

Verdant Expanse

East of the Stormcrest Mountains, hundreds of miles of massive, unbridled forest shroud the landscape in mystery and shadow. This dense greenwood was for centuries traversed by few but the elves of Tal'Dorei, for it was known to be their domain, and theirs alone. Even in the time of Zan Tal'Dorei, when her rebels and their elven allies saved the realm from tyranny, it was understood that the coasts were humanity's domain, and the woods were that of elvenkind. Times have changed, however. The alliances formed to oppose Thordak the Cinder King united virtually all of Tal'Dorei's disparate peoples, and many more than simply elves now walk the shaded paths of the Verdant Expanse. Even so, much of the Expanse is protected by the watchful eyes of the Wardens of Syngorn, as it has been for hundreds of years.



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 bands of dark elf raiders from Ruhn-Shak prowl the forest under cover of night. This enchanted wood holds the decay of the seasons at bay, and its trees are green year-round.

The Verdant Expanse is sustained by a massive confluence of ley lines—rivers of magical power that flow through the earth—after the devastation of the Calamity shifted the flow of magic across the world. The region is saturated with magic. Magical creatures flock to the forest's supernaturally vibrant boughs, including wayward fey, unicorns, unusual arcane monstrosities like owlbears, and displaced aberrations that call the darker groves their home.

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, along with saltwater from the Ozmit Sea to the west. The strange mix 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 Rifenmist region, and of Syngornian hunters from within the Verdant Expanse.

The clay and silt gathered along the shores of the saltwater lakes can be refined into fine ceramics and simple constructs that fetch fair prices in northern Tal'Dorei. Syngornian tradition tells of an oracle's spirit that is bound to the lakes, and when given sufficient offering and respect, the oracle will emerge to grant sufficiently reverent supplicants a cryptic prophecy.

Gladepools Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Gladepools can use this plot hook for inspiration.

No Basis for a System of Government (any level). While traveling along the edge of the Gladepools, an elf character, or a character with elven ancestry, 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. Flowing elven script upon the blade reads, "Whosoever draws this blade bears the mantle of the true scion of Yenlara."

Attempts to appraise the sword and discover if it's a true ancient Syngornian artifact plunge the characters into a dark conspiracy that lurks at the heart of Syngorn: The High Warden may be wise and just, but she is not the rightful ruler—at least, she is not Yenlara's heir. Centuries ago, someone strove to subvert Yenlara's bloodline. Why? And, if the High Warden is truly a good ruler, does the bloodline deserve to be restored?

The Mirescar

Deep within the western reaches of the Verdant Expanse is a region where the trees grow so close together that sunlight is barely permitted to pass through their boughs. These ancient trees cluster and twist into a labyrinth of knotted roots and branches, while a tangled canopy of drooping foliage and gray moss blocks the sky from view. Strange powers dwell within the Mirescar, and beasts and travelers that wander into its depths often emerge with their hearts and flesh touched by a deep and



corrupting evil—if they emerge at all. The woodlands surrounding the Mirescar are rife with dire beasts, cruel fey, and many-eyed aberrations.

The Mirescar is the subject of countless Syngornian folk tales, many of which purport to tell the true story of how it was formed. Some say it contains the bones of a titan. Others say that a meteor from Ruidus itself landed in the forest. Another, that the Spider Queen cursed it during the Calamity. Any one of the tales may be true—or none of them. Only adventurers of great courage and skill have the power to penetrate deep enough into the Mirescar to learn the truth and retain their humanity.

More often than not, these tales serve to frighten the people of Syngorn and Byroden away from the region altogether.

Mirescar Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Mirescar can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

A Sickness Spreads (mid-level). A plague has begun to spread from the Mirescar. People living in the woods around this evil realm are suffering as they fall blind, with milky-white eyes; or their bodies are wracked by fevers; or they are struck by a number of other mysterious symptoms. All are aware that the vile Mirescar is the source of the contagion. The characters are hired to delve into its boughs and find a cure, or to at least stem the flow of disease.

In ancient times, the Mirescar was called the Heartwood. It was the domain of a wise and kindly **guardian naga** named Sagacitous Erusaire, who welcomed all with good hearts to share their bounty or receive alms. However, this naga has been corrupted into a cruel shadow of his former self. He and his **grick** minions have been twisted into hideous, pus-oozing spreaders of disease—and spreading it is now the only thought in their minds. The naga can cast *contagion* at will, and his grick minions can do so once per day. Is it possible to save the mind of this corrupted guardian?

Tree of Scarred Knowledge (high-level). A **wraithroot tree** (see page 259) dwells at the heart of the Mirescar. It is covered with deep gouges, all of which open and close like eyes and mouths as it watches and, on occasion, speaks in a hissing voice to its surroundings. It stands atop a fell artifact—the very thing that turned the Mirescar to evil in ancient times—and has drunk deep of this artifact's forbidden knowledge and its cruelty.

The tree is excited to bargain with any creature that meets it, trading secrets of unknowable origin for the memories held most dear. It fears no attack, for it is protected by a small legion of **invisible stalkers** that enact its will throughout the Mirescar.

The Shifting Keep

The Verdant Guard has a secondary base of operations, beyond Syngorn's walls, called the Shifting Keep. It is built within and around a cluster of massive, living trees that form the heart of the Verdant Expanse, and enchanted with the most powerful illusion magic that could be mustered by Syngorn's military arcanists and their guild of Spellbenders. Enchantments woven into the keep's foundations allow it to cloak its presence, seemingly vanishing and reappearing elsewhere within the forest at will.

The Shifting Keep can't teleport, but it can turn invisible and project an illusion of itself to any point within a mile of its true location. This remarkable enchantment has made it almost impossible for invaders to besiege the keep, and it played a major role in Syngorn's victory against Neminar Drassig in the Scattered War—tales of the unassailable Shifting Keep are told in Syngorn to this day. Nearly a thousand trained elven warriors, hunters, and spies call the Shifting Keep their home, though many spend their time patrolling and exploring the Verdant Expanse. These rangers are vigilant, seeking signs of whatever foolish invaders would dare trifle with the might of Syngorn.

Syngorn

City: Population 38,540 (85% elves, 9% humans, 3% halflings, 3% other races)

Founded by the sorceress Yenlara in the wake of the Divergence, Syngorn became the heart of elven civilization on Tal'Dorei following its calamitous destruction. The remnants of the fallen Court of Ullusa fled to the Fey Realm 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. Though elves have spread all across Tal'Dorei, even as far as the frigid Neverfields, there was once a time where nearly all of them resided in Syngorn.

This beautiful city of curving stone is built in harmony with the trees of the Expanse and sits against the western base of the Stormcrest Mountains. It is all but impervious to external assault—not simply because of its 40-foot-high walls of ivy-covered jade, and not only because it's also surrounded by living trees of the Verdant Expanse and beacons of detection that keep constant vigil for intruders. No, Syngorn is virtually unassailable because 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 Fey Realm, where Syngorn's founders once recovered, allowing the city itself to vanish tracelessly into the Fey Realm as a final act of preservation.

All here will say to you that Syngorn is a city without equal on Exandria. Its towers and bowers are impeccable, yes. Its cloisters and arches so graceful and fine they make your heart ache, yes, it has been said. But our dreams and memories are the most precious treasure here. They flicker like fireflies through the night, and they are heard in the laughter of the youngest elven child, and in the reminiscing groans of the eldest of our kind.

—Ouestra, the Voice of Memory

Government

The city has been governed since its inception by the High Warden (see page 63), a hereditary monarch who appoints proven individuals to three other offices alongside them as the Wardens of Syngorn. Each Warden carries a title and bears a responsibility to guide the city toward safety and prosperity. The Verdant Lord is 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, as well as within the Wardens themselves.

Society

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 is 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.

There was a time that few foreigners ever saw Syngorn's innermost reaches, but that time has passed. Syngorn's gates are open to travelers from across Tal'Dorei—though all who visit the city are bound by Syngorn's strict cultural laws to respect their millennia-old traditions. Any who disrespect the ways of Syngorn are warned but once, and are thrown out of the city thereafter. Delicate crafts by Syngornian hands are sought after by collectors around the world, so many Syngornians take up the trade for both profit and honor.

In a populace made up of people who are extraordinarily long-lived, having children is a rare and highly-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. All elves call such an occasion "regrettable," and truly do treat it with sorrow—but the laws of Syngorn are clear on this point, and few elves are willing to speak out against rulings which have stood for a thousand years.

Crime

If Syngorn appears free of crime, it's because elven criminals have hundreds of years of experience at lurking in the shadows. A thriving market for illegal goods runs invisibly through the city's guilds. Though time often seems to stand still in Syngorn, crime moves with the same celerity as it does in other cities—it must, if the criminal underbelly wants to stay one step ahead of the Wardens of Syngorn.

The most common contraband to pass through Syngorn are shipments of suude, stolen goods, and dwarven trinkets. Many come to Syngorn to purchase these goods for a low price on the black market, but those unwilling to make a journey and risk being stopped by the Verdant Guard can wait for these goods to make their way up to Kymal, where they can be purchased at an outrageous markup of five times their cost in Syngorn.

Most people in Syngorn have their basic needs taken care of by the city's government, to ensure the wellbeing of their people. Nevertheless, some people still fall into poverty, and these destitute individuals are often preyed upon by pickpockets, swindlers, and smugglers who seek to use them as patsies for a paltry sum of gold.

Geography and Climate

The perpetual shade of the thick, green canopy of the forest maintains cooler weather throughout the summer months, while this far south, the ice and snow of winter is present, but minimal.

Syngorn is broken up into six main districts and has a variety of neighborhoods:

Memory Ward. The mind of Syngorn 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. At least, those whose bodies are brought before the sequoia and are granted the Rite of Remembrance, as performed by the Voice of Memory and her disciples, have their memories preserved and added to the collective. Nearly all elves in Syngorn receive this rite, and a vast number of elves who live elsewhere write into their wills that they must be subject to the rite after their death.

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.

Beryl Keep. This fortress-district houses the martial 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 the city. Within these walls are rows of barracks, archery ranges, trance chambers, forges, mess halls, and all the other necessities to train an army of long-lived 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 eucalyptus trees of unknown age mark the boundaries of the keep, and between them grows a thick curtain of ironbark. 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 city.

The Beryl Keep is commanded by Verdant Lord Celindar, Syngorn's master strategist. He possesses a *crystal ball of true seeing* within his war room, which he can use to scry upon any part of the Verdant Expanse and to pierce any illusion. From this vantage point, he commands his forces like a chess master, always one step ahead of the 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 this district at any time. The rest are stationed at outposts within the Verdant Expanse and the Fey Realm.

Tarn Ward. Syngorn's central ward is a peaceful commerce district surrounding Lake Ywynnlas and split by the channels that feed it. From sunrise to sunset, no business is conducted here, save for food service at public houses and beds at inns. During the

daylight hours, elves socialize, play, sing songs, write poetry, paint great works of art, and meditate here. Elves are long-lived, and if half the day is not spent in peace and self-improvement, it is thought that the day was truly wasted, no matter how productive one might have been in matters of business.

At nightfall, however, the Tarn Ward changes. The Tarn Thoroughfare opens at moonrise, lit only by the heavens and by magical, 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.

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 Rawndel sits at the head of all three. The Warden of this district, Rawndel lives in a permanent *magnificent mansion* with a façade adorned with splendid fey grotesques, and is respected by elven merchants and nobles alike. The elves don't seem to mind his monopoly on Thoroughfare trade, as their lives haven't been affected much, but High Warden Tirelda worries of the long-term consequences of Rawndel's power-hungry behavior.

Syngornian Goods

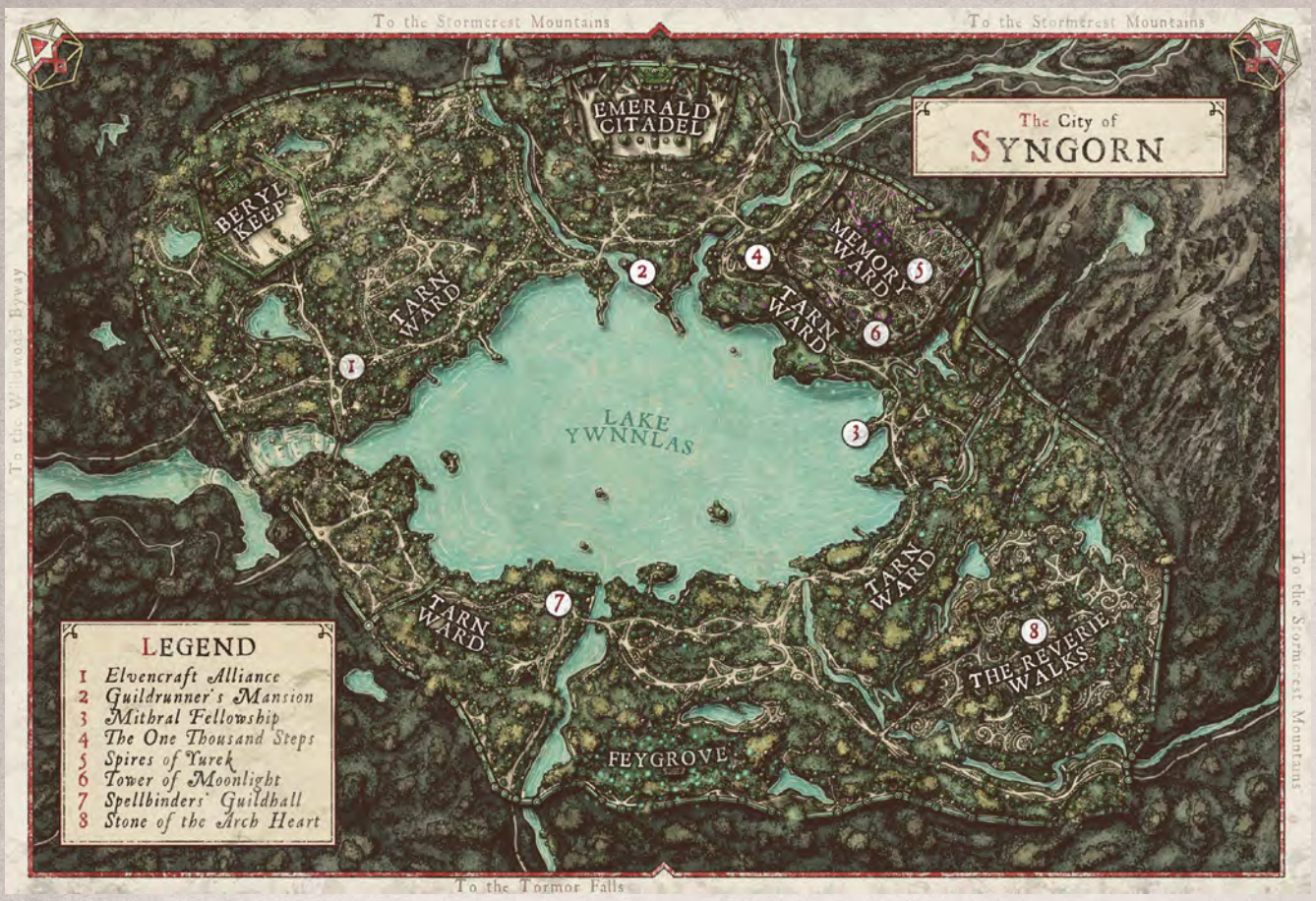
Any basic goods can be purchased in Syngorn at twice their usual cost. These goods, however, are of fine elven make. Weapons have a +1 bonus to damage rolls, horses and other mounts increase their movement speed by 10 feet, and other items are possessed of unearthly beauty and preternatural durability. All common magic items can be easily found here, and any uncommon magic item has a 50% chance of being found here in the ward's many market stalls. Finding magic items of greater rarity requires a character to make a DC 21 Charisma (Investigation) check to find a rare item, or a DC 25 (Investigation) check to find a very rare item. These items are rarely for sale, and can only be bartered for—typically by completing a dangerous quest for the person who possesses them.

Emerald Citadel. The great palace of Syngorn looms high over the north of the city—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 of polished stone. Beautiful portraits and busts of past Wardens line the walls, along with opulent tapestries of Yenlara and the creation of Syngorn. 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 overwrought gifts— the latter given by emissaries uncertain of how to present a gift fine enough for an elven monarch. 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.

Feygrove. A once-splendid manor house in southern Syngorn is 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 Fey Realm after the Conclave's defeat, the elves unintentionally brought a little of the Fey Realm with them. A number of fey creatures slipped through a gate from the Fey Realm to Exandria, then wriggled through Syngorn's defenses and made their home in the mansion of an elven noblewoman named Lady Ladri Il'shavfa. She has tried for years to reclaim her home, but even the patience of elves wears thin; the fey are simply too numerous and too tenacious to be kicked out for good.

The fey interlopers, however, are having the time of their lives. Far from merely throwing nightly parties—though they do that, too—they have made Il'shavfa Manor 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 a living, breathing, thinking thing—a new friend for the fey! It keeps the elves out and it's a great conversationalist! To the fey, this arrangement has no downsides! The fairies have named this manor after the Archfey who first allowed them into the city. To them, their new home is Artagan's Lodge (and it's said that the Archfey Artagan occasionally stays within its walls when he visits Tal'Dorei).

Since the Feygrove was first "founded" over twenty years ago, the fey have spilled out of Il'shavfa Manor and made an entire district of the city into their home. By this point, only the most stubborn of elven nobility still gripe about "the fey menace" within their midst. Most of Syngorn's residents are delighted to have a district filled with the fey, even if it causes the southern end of the city to be a little more chaotic than usual. The fey here seem to have kind hearts, and their chaos rarely crosses the line from churlish pranks into cruelty.

Reverie Walks. The artistic and spiritual center of Syngorn is a winding labyrinth of living trees and stones. Elves who seek a day-long (or days-long) journey of meditation may wander the Reverie Walks, 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 Arch Heart 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 Arch Heart that swore to be their god's eternal wardens.

Points of Interest

Syngorn has a number of famous landmarks. They are keyed to the map of Syngorn.

1. Elvencraft Alliance Guildhall. The Elvencraft Alliance is supposedly the oldest guild in Syngorn. They are entrusted with creating works of art that spread the culture of Syngorn far and wide across Tal'Dorei. The front rooms of their guildhall are a museum of fine elven crafts from ages past, and they're open to all who wish to appreciate Syngorn's cultural heritage.

2. Guildrunner's Mansion. Guildrunner Rawndel, Warden of the Tarn Ward, makes his home within a permanent *magnificent mansion*. Its exterior is a magnificent façade of stone and leering fey statues, yet if one were to look inside, they would find it completely empty. The door, which is constantly locked to all but the Guildrunner and his guests, is actually a portal to an extradimensional space containing a manor of supernatural beauty and luxury.

3. Mithral Fellowship Guildhall. The master metallurgists and smiths of the Mithral Fellowship are tasked with arming the Verdant Guard and the armies of Syngorn. In peacetime, they turn their talents to creating things of beauty from metal and jewels, sometimes in tandem with the artists of the Elvencraft Alliance. Due to their military involvement, none but authorized members of the fellowship are allowed within their guildhall.

4. One Thousand Steps. This winding stair is the only way in or out of the Memory Ward. Each step is inscribed with an ancient elven idiom, aphorism, or impossible philosophical question. Anyone who enters the Memory Ward is told to read the aphorism upon the first step and ponder it the entire time they are climbing the stairway. If they find peace in their answer, they are to read the inscription of the second step on their next journey, and so on. There are few, even among the elves, who have pondered the inscriptions of all of the steps to their satisfaction.

5. Spires of Yurek. Roads lined with dormitories and vendors radiate out from the branches of the Sequoia of Remembrance to the walls of the Memory Ward, 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 Pansophical 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 by studying its tomes for one hour and then making a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check. They can even uncover hints toward long-lost secrets by completing a day's study and then succeeding on a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check. New spells are constantly being invented here, and countless tomes filled with ancient spells can be found within the libraries.

6. Tower of Moonlight. Most visitors to Syngorn doubt that Ouestra, the Voice of Memory, truly dwells in a tower of moonlight. It is the truth. Her tower does not exist under the light of the sun, and then appears as a semi-solid pillar of Catha's silvery glow, occasionally veined by lines of Ruidus's ruddy light when the smaller moon is full. Its inside has supposedly never been seen by any but the other Wardens of Syngorn, and a thousand rumors circulate throughout the realm of the magical and divine marvels that must be contained within.

7. Spellbenders' Guildhall. The Verdant Expanse is saturated with magic. The ley energies that suffuse the greenwood make it easy for arcanists to create works of spellcraft by themselves, when it might take a half-dozen mages working in concert in other lands. Many of Syngorn's most trustworthy magi are members of the Spellbenders, a guild dedicated to creating new spells and using them to create works of art, defend their homeland, and improve their peoples' lives. Their guildhall is only accessible to those with the express permission of Guildrunner Rawndel.

8. Stone of the Arch Heart. In the heart of the Reverie Walks is a column of pure diamond, carved in the radiant likeness of an androgynous elf. Though the Arch Heart is worshiped throughout Tal'Dorei as a god of magic and art, they are something more to the elves of Syngorn: a progenitor of their people, a deity of fatherhood and motherhood, yet also of neither—a liminal god that by their very nature both embraces and destroys binaries. Elves that are "born of the Arch Heart" 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 Arch Heart always makes their wisdom known to those who truly need it.

Syngorn Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Syngorn can use this plot hook for inspiration.

The River Does Not Run Through It (low-level). 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 appears to be crumbling at an accelerated pace, and the air below smells of decay. What could be the source of this rapid destruction, and how can it be remedied?

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 Orencleft 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 squad of Verdant Guard patrols the base of the falls, and many have explored the caverns in the past. Some return with nothing; others discover old relics and trinkets from the earliest days of Tal'Dorei, or even from the time of the Calamity. It's rare for a patrol to fail to return, but when they do, no search party has ever been able to make contact with survivors, or to reclaim their remains. The guard has begun to whisper that the cave entrances move, shifting with each rising sun. The superstitions surrounding the caves around Tormor Falls have grown so great that expeditions which fail to return are no longer searched for at all, and no patrols go inside the caves without a critically important reason.

Tormor Falls Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Tormor Falls can use this plot hook for inspiration.

This Cave Was Made for Me! (mid-level). Characters that travel the edge of the Verdant Expanse hear distressing news that people from small villages, and even from Syngorn, have disappeared in the night—and now, a friend of the party has joined the ranks of the missing. 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. The beings that emerge from those caves are no longer humanoid, but nightmarish mockeries of life.

Vues'dal Waters

Scattered Villages: Population 2,420 (52% elves, 28% goblinkin, 12% lizardfolk, 5% humans, 3% other races)

The volcano known as Mt. Vues'dal 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, 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 Basin is among the most fertile farmland in southern Tal'Dorei. The villages of the Vues'dal Waters are known for their prize produce, exporting tomatoes, cherries, pumpkins, lentils, sweet potatoes, and dozens of other foods, both staples and luxuries, to Syngorn—and from there, to the rest of Tal'Dorei.

The people of the Vues'dal Waters are mostly elves, but over the years they've been joined by some of the local lizardfolk that have dwelt in the marshes, as well as goblinkin fleeing the Iron Authority to the south. All of these various people have banded together to create something beautiful around the caldera of this long-dead volcano—and to repel bandits and monsters from the nearby marshes. The lizardfolk hate fighting their kin, but human and lizardfolk bandits alike have made the wetlands their home, and prey upon these honest farmers from encampments that shift from week to week.

Vues'dal Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Vues'dal Waters can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Legions of the Reptile God (mid-level). 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 Stormcrest Mountains to rally the lizardfolk tribe in the name of the Cloaked Serpent. Vues'dal will soon be overrun, and the Verdant Guard has called for Emon's aid in driving back the legions of this monster with delusions of godhood.

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 (see page 112) that grants her uncanny cosmic powers.

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. This coast is where humans, halflings, and gnomes first set foot on the continent of Tal'Dorei, and it bears the marks of their first steps on this land. It's also home to the present heart of the Republic of Tal'Dorei.

The shoreline is a hub of international trade, for the western coast of Tal'Dorei is closest to the continents of Issylra and Marquet. Dozens of tall-masted trading ships set sail to and from its calm shores each day—as well as the majestic skyships that daily soar in and out of the resplendent capital city of 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 presence lends the region stability. Nevertheless, the yeomen living beyond the city's walls struggle to defend their small plots from burrowing ankhegs, corrupting fiends, and the various folkloric spirits and monsters that lurk in the shadows of their minds.

Majority Faiths: Lawbearer, Wildmother, Platinum Dragon
Minority Faiths: Moonweaver, Matron of Ravens, Dawnfather, Lord of the Hells, Scaled Tyrant
Imports: Precious and industrial metals, lumber
Exports: Stone, lumber, ships, fish, grain, produce, cobalt, gold, livestock



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. Centuries later, the bay is now naught but a haunting reminder of darker days. It is home to hundreds of sunken ships and the bodies of their lost crew, deep below the depths of the reef. Those who know of their history say that the waters are cursed, and the nearby settlers spread rumors of ghost ships and sirens calling looters to their grave should they wander too close to the ominous waves.

Daggerbay Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Daggerbay can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Stormbringers (mid-level). A society of banished **merfolk** have claimed Daggerbay as their domain. They harass any treasure hunters that seek to loot the wreckage at the bottom of the bay. While the characters are traveling nearby, a terrible storm forces them to take shelter in the ruins of Daggerbay.

In truth, the storm was caused by the renegade merfolk. Some weeks ago, they discovered a relic of the Stormlord with the power to summon and direct storms. The coast is now shrouded in an endless

maelstrom. That night, when the characters take shelter in the ruins, they're assailed by the merfolks' land-dwelling humanoid **thugs**. These brutes attempt to capture the characters and deliver them to their leaders.

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 *lyren'alsi* in Elvish, were known to be desolate and devoid of material worth. Prospectors from O'Noa came home empty-handed, if they came back at all. The survivors returned with tales of bands of bloodthirsty, one-eyed giants that roamed the peaks: cyclopes. Issylran settlers and Syngornian elves both learned to leave the lyren'alsi well enough alone.

Decades later, the Emerald Outpost was established as a major trading post for the people of Emon and Syngorn. With such a valuable settlement nearby, the Daggerbays' hazardous peaks suddenly garnered the interest of adventurers and fortune-seekers. Small hunts for undiscovered riches grew into vast expeditions. These incursions into the mountains aggravated the mountains' territorial inhabitants; elven scouts reported cyclops raiders and cyclops stormcallers 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

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Daggerbay Mountains can use these plot hooks for inspiration.

Eye of the Storm (mid-level). Groups of **hill giants** are migrating into the mountains, leaving their foothill settlements empty of warriors, civilians, and the infirm alike. A half-elf **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 235) planning beneath the concealing stormclouds of the Daggerbay Mountains?

A Metal of Memory (high-level). The ancient molten beast that was sundered beneath these rocky peaks left behind pockets, located far below the surface, of an incredibly rare metal with mysterious properties, called orichalcum. The sudden discovery has sent local entrepreneurs into a frenzy, and the ensuing rush has already sparked violence among the bands of treasure hunters. As the adventuring parties dig deeper, they discover that some essence of the ancient creature still lives, and it is seeking vengeance.

Emerald Outpost

Town: Population 1,470 (76% elves, 19% humans, 3% halflings, 2% other races)

Originally established by the elves of Syngorn as a hidden outpost to protect their homeland from the growing empire of Drassig, the Emerald Outpost fell out of use after the Scattered War. This former military outpost is now an intermediary trading post and a place for merchants traveling between Emon and Syngorn to rest. The Emerald Chambers, once used as a war room, and more recently used as a diplomatic chamber for the allied governments of Emon and Syngorn, have these days been converted into a stylish bazaar, in which Emonian and Syngornian traders can sell their wares without making the full journey to either city.

Emon, the City of Fellowship

Metropolis: Population 365,026 (63% humans, 8% dwarves, 7% elves, 22% other races)

Emon stands defiantly against all who would threaten Tal'Dorei and its people. It is the cultural and political heart of the Republic of Tal'Dorei, as well as a nexus of commerce, entertainment, travel, education, and adventure.

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.

Government

Emon is the seat of the Tal'Dorei Council, 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 starting on page 42.

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.

Current Events

The Tal'Dorei Council is best known for their policies that affect the whole of Tal'Dorei. It is often ignored that the council also governs Emon and resolves the day-to-day issues of the city. These are some current events both great and small affecting Emon today; these topics can add flavor to the discussions and rumors the characters hear around town, and could even inspire new adventures for them to take on.

Elemental Disturbances. Over twenty years have passed since Thordak the Cinder King was killed in the caverns beneath Emon. His wreckage in the Cloudtop District, as well as the Scar of the Cinder King, a swath of elemental destruction outside the city walls, have been tended to by members of the Fire Ashari, gradually healing the stubborn wounds of his influence. Yet the primordial fires that seeped from his body continue to linger in the caverns beneath the city where he died. Every year or two, an incursion of wild fire and hateful cinderslag elementals (see page 231) burst through the city streets, causing mass chaos, expensive damages, and life-or-death battles for the city guard.

Mercenary Mages. A generation ago, the fledgling League of Miracles hired hundreds, if not thousands, of mercenary mages to aid in the reconstruction of Emon and other cities across Tal'Dorei. These days, Tal'Dorei is rebuilt, and the few infrastructure problems aren't enough to employ all the mercenaries left behind by the league. These out-of-work mercenaries now linger around dismal dive bars and make trouble for the locals. Most people would rather see them gone, but it's hard not to feel sorry for their situation.

Walls and Slums. The city's outer walls have fallen under heavy criticism from politicians and civilians alike in recent years. Many people are concerned that the walls' true purpose these days is to separate the slums outside the walls from the "respectable" districts within them. Popular opinion is now that the great City of Fellowship should do more to help its less fortunate, but council politicians continue to stall. In private, Master of Commerce Vex'ahlia de Rolo fumes that she wants to help, but can't cut through political red tape with her legendary bow and arrow.

Society

While in antiquity Emon was the heart of a human empire, the city has grown to encompass people from all over Tal'Dorei, and all over the world. Its citizens include people of nearly all known races from Exandria's many nations, thriving on the new innovations and ideas of its citizenry. It has been this way since the sovereignty of Zan Tal'Dorei, when the alliances she formed invited dozens of displaced elves, dwarves, orcs, and goliaths into her city. Since then, Emon has developed into a city whose people valued innovation and collaboration, especially in small, cohesive groups—virtues that some historians within the Alabaster Lyceum believe have 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, 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."

Rebirth

Emon has mostly recovered from its destruction at the talons of the Chroma Conclave and Thordak's subsequent occupation. A number of Tal'Dorei's most significant factions played a role in Emon's rebirth, and their members enjoy positions of prominence throughout the city. Emon was rapidly rebuilt to its former glory, due to the expensive but effective intervention of mercenary mages serving the League of Miracles. Thanks also 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.

And the Tal'Dorei Council, formerly an advisory council to the sovereign, is now the ruling council of the land. Folk heroes and career politicians alike sit on the council. Over the past two decades, the council has, with many missteps, enacted the will of the people—allowing Tal'Dorei to transition from a monarchical power to a republic without war or insurrection.

However, the swiftness of Emon's rebirth has put the Tal'Dorei Council in a precarious position. Not only are they socially indebted to a criminal faction—one whose members now command immense celebrity among the common folk—the council now owes vast amounts of gold to mages of

the League of Miracles. League conjurers created thousands of tons of stone and steel, and each one of their transmuters rebuilt everything from taverns to townhouses and sewers to stately manors as quickly as a hundred laborers. Thordak's hoard of plundered wealth has dwindled to nothing, repaying the league, and they have done the same in cities across the land. Some members of the council have already caved to pressure from factions within the Clasp and the League of Miracles, and subsequently turn a blind eye to the crime and magical abuse that run rampant throughout the city. Barely a single human generation old, the young republic is already struggling under the weight of ruling in a just and noble manner.

Defenses

The Republic of Tal'Dorei has no standing army, and doesn't elect a Master of War—a military commander-in-chief—to its council outside of wartime. In peacetime, the Master of Defense is responsible for the acquisition of mercenaries and adventurers for tasks which require the use of force. They also have the ability to conscript existing militias and town guards into military service and call them to Emon's defense at any time, though typically only while the Master of War is being elected.

The only standing forces pledged exclusively to the defense of the realm are the elite forces of Fort Daxio. Mobilizing the armies of Fort Daxio to Emon's aid generally requires the city to withstand a week-long siege. However, in case of internal strife, there are stables positioned every fifteen miles along the Othen Trail, allowing Daxio's legendary outriders to arrive at Emon in a mere two days' time by switching out their exhausted steeds.

Emon is encircled by 60-foot-high stone walls that stretch from the eastern fields to the western shore—though a number of discussions in the Tal'Dorei Council have revolved around the strategic irrelevance of great stone walls. They didn't protect Emon against the Chroma Conclave over twenty years ago, and they wouldn't have done much against an army of cultists and winged gloomstalkers had the Whispered One led an army against Tal'Dorei. As skyships grow more popular and affordable around the world, even the council's Master of Defense is considering demolishing the city's walls—making the strange case that such fortifications are prized more for their historic and cultural value than for their strategic importance.

These walls are patrolled by lightly armed and armored members of the Arms of Emon, the city's official watch and constabulary. They are divided unofficially into the Arms upon the Wall and the Arms on the Streets, the latter of which are assigned to patrol the city streets to dissuade petty criminals and respond to violent crime.

Crime

Hundreds of miles of tunnels of varied provenance run beneath Emon. Most are the forgotten remnants of paved-over neighborhoods and secret passageways made by thieves' guilds during the reign of Drassig. Others are the lairs of tunneling monsters. The origins of others still are lost forever, for they have already long since been turned into sewer passages to whisk away the refuse of Emon's citizens.

The vast majority of the tunnels closer to the surface are known to the Clasp and used to rapidly move about the city unseen. Somewhere deep in this network of unlabeled roads is the Clasp's secret headquarters, where all manner of thieves, cutthroats, fences, and spies gather beneath their banner. Though the Clasp operates in major cities across Tal'Dorei, Emon has always been their home, and saving their neighbors from Thordak's reign of terror gave the Clasp the dubious benefit of a heroic reputation.

However, the Myriad crime syndicate from Wildemount has spent over two decades relentlessly clawing their way into the Clasp's territory across Tal'Dorei—dismantling their networks, poaching their clients, and assassinating their informants. The Myriad hasn't managed to completely eliminate the Clasp's hold in any of the cities they've targeted, but that hasn't stopped them from bringing the ongoing power struggle to the Clasp's doorstep. Myriad agents bargain in shadowed alleys, gamble in upscale taverns, and lurk in the very tunnels that the Clasp relies on, waiting for their chance to unseat the Clasp once and for all.

Geography and Climate

Emon is not a tourist destination for its climate—the city is known for sudden, pounding rainstorms just as much as for its beautiful, sunny days. 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 made up of the following districts:

Abdar's Promenade. The Promenade is an open marketplace district and massive bazaar that dominates eastern Emon, named for the legendary spicemonger from Marquet who helped fund the construction of Emon. To this day, the name of Abdar is synonymous with both generosity and business savvy. Nearly everything a person could want can be found within the tents, carts, warehouses, and shops of the promenade. Its intertwining roads stretch for miles, and it has dozens of tiny neighborhoods, each with their own distinct cultures and identities. The promenade is heavily patrolled by the Arms of Emon, for its sunny reputation is shrouded by an equally



significant reputation for literal back-alley criminal deals.

Central District. This is the largest residential district within Emon's walls. It houses most of the city's merchant class, including traveling traders, ship captains, and guild journeymen. The Central 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 a recent rise in crime, 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.

Cloudtop District. Out of all of Emon's districts, the Cloudtop has, in some ways, changed the most over the decades. In Drassig's time, a monstrous fortress loomed over the manors of his sycophants. In the age of Zan Tal'Dorei's descendants, countless mages transfigured that decadent citadel into a sleek, elegant palace. By the time the Chroma Conclave came, decadence had once more crept up on Emon, and though the Palace of the Sovereign remained much the same, the Cloudtop District was once again a nest of luxury and the throne of the social elite. The latest additions in that era were skyship platforms, so that the wealthiest and most connected in Tal'Dorei could travel in exclusive luxury—soaring through the skies rather than enduring arduous journeys over land or sea.

All of that was reduced to slag by the advent of the Cinder King. Thordak made the Cloudtop District his home, and the palace itself his throne. His very presence caused magma to surge from the caverns beneath Emon, where previously no fires burned. Thordak ruled there for only a matter of months, but those few months were enough to annihilate unknown millions of gold pieces' worth of art and creations of untold value—though the greedy dragon took care to command his minions to save the most beautiful works for his treasure hoard.

Today, the Cloudtop District is rebuilt, though the most stubborn elemental influences of the Cinder King linger in Thordak's Crater. A new castle called Cloudwatch Palace has been built atop the city of Emon, and it contains the chambers of the Tal'Dorei Council, as well as grand dining halls and guest quarters for visiting dignitaries. Much of the castle is a museum, displaying what regalia and objets d'art survived the wrath of the Cinder King. The private chambers of the palace also contain a number of teleportation circles that leading councilmembers can

use to return to their homes at night—particularly if they live in far-off cities such as Whitestone.

Temple District. Some say that this northern district contains more temples than in the rest of Tal'Dorei's cities combined. This is a flagrant exaggeration, but at first glance, most people believe it. Emon is a city of many people, from many different places, with many different faiths. Even folk who worship the same gods worship them differently, and have built their own temples. Legend has it that shrines and temples used to be built all across Emon (and there are still some small sanctuaries elsewhere in the city), but a cleric of the Dawnfather declared her temple the greatest in all Emon. Her boast was met with scorn from a nearby church of the Stormlord. Their clerics, always eager to rise to a challenge, built an even greater temple across the street, and soon, people of all faiths were building the most magnificent structures they could, all in one tiny corner of Emon.

Today, 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. All Prime Deities have at least a moderately sized house of worship here, and even some of the Betrayer Gods are worshiped in secrecy.

Anyone who seeks shelter here, be they rich or poor, can find sanctuary in the Temple District. Even the faithful of gods of strength, such as the Stormlord and the Platinum Dragon, have mercy for those who need the aid of others to help them stand on their own.

Travelers and sailors come to leave tokens and gifts at shrines to bless their journeys, while people of all walks of life seek the graces of the Changebringer before undertaking risky endeavors. The meek search for wisdom in the great halls of the Knowing Mentor, as the artists and wistful folk give praise to the Arch Heart. However, not all folk are drawn toward religion, nor trusting of it, and temples past have been exposed as frauds—or worse, cults who venerate power.

Recently, an off-kilter faith to a lesser idol called the Traveler has found purchase in the Temple Ward—primarily in the form of puerile graffiti in back alleys. Other quasi-religious spiritual entities have small cult followings in the Temple Ward. They are generally allowed to flourish to whatever degree they can, so long as their beliefs don't advocate for any behavior that would break the laws of Emon.

Erudite Quarter. This district is home to members of the educated upper-middle class and destitute academics alike. Several institutions of higher learning have their stately campuses here, ranging from well-to-do boarding schools to Tal'Dorei's most premiere academic and arcane institutions.

Beautiful towers in ancient Syngornian style stretch to the sky across a cityscape of centuries-old halls of learning and student boardinghouses. Here, the finest schools and colleges draw the wealthy, the gifted, and the brilliant—and none more so than the Alabaster Lyceum, often lauded as the largest and most accomplished institute of arcane study on the continent. Though the district's 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.

Members of the Lyceum, under the direction of Headmaster Thurmond Adlam, performed the reconstruction themselves not simply because they sought to project an image of good work ethic and self-sufficiency, but because the heads of their colleges distrust the League of Miracles. Their motives and sources of funding are, in the eyes of the Lyceum, too opaque to be trusted. Their suspicion has often been derided either as elitism over the diverse array of mercenary mages the league hires, or as sour grapes over losing out on countless lucrative reconstruction contracts.

Military District. Since Emon has no standing army, the Military District is one of the city's smallest wards. Nevertheless, it has the capacity to house and train a vast number of soldiers if an army needs to be levied from the people of Tal'Dorei. The Military District is mostly filled with several prisons and jails, including the infamous Black Bastille, as well as tightly locked barracks and instructional facilities for the Arms of Emon.

Cemetery District. This smaller section of the city is filled with graveyards and small religious sanctuaries so that people with means to purchase a gravesite or a mausoleum can bury their dead in whatever luxury they can afford. Countless gravestones line the rolling hills of the district. They are sectioned off from the roads by tall iron fences, with mausoleums of more affluent families dotting the grassy hillsides. As surface space grew limited in centuries past, the city excavated a network of catacombs called the Undervaults. Upkeep, expansion, and general safeguarding of the sites are all overseen by the Gravewatchers, a guild of gravekeepers that have held political and social hegemony over the district for generations.

Their attempts to expand the Undervaults have had mixed results over the centuries. Most new excavations meet without incident (likely because the Clasp has learned to keep their tunnels far from this district). However, excavations in recent decades have broken into the Crystalfen Caverns, an eerie cave system filled with mind-bending inscriptions and horrific beings. The breach was promptly sealed off.

Yet the sealing of the caverns did not stop some members of the Gravewatchers from seeing an opportunity to gain fame and glory. Most who ventured into the caverns were never seen again, and those who have returned shudder unspeakably of the horrors they escaped. Still, passage is occasionally granted to the Clasp or adventurers willing to pay the Gravewatchers for entry to the dangerous realm below.

Port of Emon. Emon is bordered on the west by the Ozmit Sea and is generally sheltered from the worst of its storms. The vast Port of Emon allows hundreds of thousands of gold pieces' worth of goods to flow through the city every single day. Well 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 empty vessels for exportation. The northern sector of the Port is mostly allocated to the Everline, a powerful fisherfolk's guild. They frequently feud with the Onyx Banner, Emon's most powerful shipping guild, over which docks they are permitted to use. Both guilds keep their hands clean, but it's an open secret that both hire adventurers and mercenaries to trash the other's ships and warehouses to intimidate them. Adventurers in need of fast cash who don't mind dodging the Arms of Emon can find good work as muscle for either of these two guilds.

Outwall. During the reign of Drassig, a massive city of tents and hovels grew outside of Emon, filled with those too poor to pay Drassig's extortative taxes. By the end of the Scattered War, the slum had grown to a third of the city's size, and nearly half its population. Even during the reign of Zan Tal'Dorei, these slums continued to grow, as refugees of the Scattered War tried to earn enough money to find stability within Emon's walls.

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 of Emonian society now exists within the city of Outwall, including its own trade square, shrines for worship, and makeshift farms on the outskirts.

As early as two decades ago, Outwall was called the Upper Slums—a derogatory name given to it by Emon's Cloudtop elite. People within Outwall tried to transform the term "Upper Slums" into a symbol of civic pride, but it never stuck. The name Outwall eventually emerged after community leaders demanded an audience with the Tal'Dorei Council in an event that came to be called the Outer Wall Debates—for they demanded the council convene in the slums' own town square.

These days, Outwall is becoming a trendy place to live, thanks to its vibrant culture and relatively inexpensive housing. Its locals are fighting hard to keep young people with money to burn from the Central District from gentrifying their home. It hasn't come to violence yet, but the angrier members of the Outwall community clandestinely meet with adventurers to burn down the stylish houses and mansions that are driving out local residents and businesses.

Southgate Farms. Inspired by the civic action of the people of Outwall, the farmers of Southgate were able to break from the ugly name of "slum" in the past decade. This community of farmers and ranchers, formerly known as the Lower Slum, exists outside Emon's southern gates. It first formed when a large refugee band from Othanzia was barred entry into the city in the midst of the Scattered War. Instead of dispersing, they decided to lay down roots while Drassig's armies were out fighting a losing battle against Zan Tal'Dorei. These squatters eventually formed a community of farmers who petitioned Zan Tal'Dorei for land in exchange for providing produce and grown goods to the people of the city.

Thanks to the aid of the First Sovereign, the descendants of those Othanzian refugees have become one of the most significant sources of fresh food for the people of Emon. Frustrated by being saddled with the name of "slum," and inspired by the Outer Wall Debates, the leading families of the Lower Slums demanded recognition by the Tal'Dorei Council as well. They were met with little debate, and these humble farmers are now a respectable part of Emonian society—even if they live outside the city's defensive walls.

This southern region of the city is also home to a famous site of modern history: Greyskull Keep, the former base of operations for Vox Machina in Emon. This fortress was gifted to them by the Last Sovereign as thanks for saving his life. The various heroes of Vox Machina have moved on to other homes (and now typically gather in Whitestone for holidays), and they allowed the keep to be turned into a museum of their heroic exploits.

Shoreline Farms. Less respectable than the Southgate Farms are the communities along a stretch of murky shore north of Emon. These people of Outwall have tried for decades to turn terrible, salty land into effective farmland, to mixed results. They have successfully cultivated the few vegetables that grow in saltwater-soaked soil, leading to bountiful harvests of savory quattet gourds and the hard-to-grow brineroot. However, the farms' distance from the city gives them little protection from dangers that city folk think little of. Adventurers are always wanted to protect the farms from petty criminals and wandering monsters, but the farmers have little to pay. Generally, only utterly novice

adventurers find their start in a place like the Shoreline Farms—but all heroes have to start somewhere.

The Grotto. This sprawling series of underground chambers composes the Clasp's headquarters beneath the city of Emon. It's rumored that over a dozen entrances to the Grotto are concealed amidst the labyrinthine tunnels, which are both naturally occurring and a part of Emon's sewers. That doesn't even begin to get into the hundreds of other entrances and access shafts 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.

Points of Interest

A number of both popular and historically significant landmarks can be found in Emon. They are keyed to the map of Emon.

1. Laughing Lamia Inn. While the city is home to countless taverns and inns for the weary traveler or practiced performer, few are as grand and well known as the Laughing Lamia. Almost as old as the city itself, this fine establishment has traded hands numerous times over the years, and has expanded with each transition, leaving the massive, four-story institution a hodgepodge mass of odd rooms and themes, all centered around a raucous central tavern room filled with dozens of tables. Currently under the ownership of a brash and cheerful lass called Luthania Wells, this hot spot for traveling traders and adventurers alike rarely sees an hour in the day (or night) where there isn't something interesting going on within.

2. Azalea Street Park. Azalea Street, within Abdar's Promenade, is one of Emon's oldest neighborhoods, and is full to bursting with small businesses, quaint homes, and hole-in-the-wall restaurants, such as the Laughing Lamia. 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 statue of the Wildmother and Lawbearer dancing together graces a fountain in the center of the park. Once per week, a character can gain inspiration (as described in the fifth edition rules) by taking a short rest in Azalea Street Park.

3. Anvilgate. Made of stark black stone and adorned with intricate brass metalwork, this grand blacksmithy is one of the most striking buildings in Abdar's Promenade. Decades ago, a restless craftsman from Kraghammer of the name Grahf Tiltkettle grew weary of solitary pursuits and worried that interest in blacksmithing would give way to the emerging trend of mass-production. Tiltkettle retired in Emon and dedicated his respectable fortune to ignite the spark of inspiration in those who wished to learn the ways of the hammer and anvil, hoping to instill the joy of the All-Hammer in a new generation. He funded the creation of Anvilgate, a massive, public blacksmithy where any folk who wished to try their hand at the smithing of metals could do so under the All-Hammer's guidance.

Cheaper ores and materials were often donated by friends of Tiltkettle to aid the volunteer mentors in teaching their craft to the less fortunate, while folks who wished to bring their own ingots were welcome to do so. The location has become popular enough to begin expanding its facility to include kilns for ceramics and looms for weaving. While the tools are open for anyone to use on the premises, all are warned of the curse that will beset any wanton thief who steals from under the All-Hammer's gaze.

4. Traverse Junction. The most magically active structure in Tal'Dorei shines like a pyramid of pure sapphire in the bustling center of the Erudite Quarter, its walls thrumming with arcane energy. It is the Traverse Junction, and all visitors to the Erudite Quarter stop to see it when they visit.

In nearly every major Exandrian city, there are teleportation circles that link mages to other such 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 (for 50 gp, if they can't cast *teleportation circle*), allowing them to travel to major cities such as Westruun, Syngorn, Kraghammer, and Whitestone in Tal'Dorei; Port Damali and Rexxentrum in Wildemount; Ank'Harel in Marquet; and Vasselheim in Issylra.

The telemagi who curate the circles are always in search of new teleportation sigils to different lands; they are willing to pay a handsome sum for the services of powerful and magically skilled adventurers willing to seek out and catalog new circle sigils for their records.

5. Alabaster Lyceum. The gleaming white halls and elaborate gardens of the Alabaster Lyceum signal to all who see them that they gaze upon the greatest institute of higher learning in Tal'Dorei—though numerous scholars in Kraghammer and Syngorn would heatedly dispute that claim. Regardless, this place is the heart of homegrown academia in the Republic of Tal'Dorei, boldly striving to make a name for itself alongside the ancient scholarly traditions of Issylra, Marquet, and Wildemount. The

Skyships



Within the Cloudtop District lies the Skyport, a series of landing pads and observation towers that form a raised harbor for docking skyships. These beautiful vessels come in a wide variety of sizes, 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 closely guarded secret by the Alsfarin Union within the Marquesian city of Ank'Harel, and while the Alsfarin Union does occasionally sell skyships to foreign businesses, they retain absolute control over their maintenance—and of the total number of skyships in operation.

Skyships are generally reserved for goods and individuals who require expedient travel without the hassles of sea-faring dangers, but the cost to utilize a skyship is prohibitively expensive for anyone but wildly wealthy merchants and landed nobility, fomenting 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.

Purchasing a skyship costs 100,000 gp, and requires a personal connection with the Alsfarin Union in Ank'Harel. A skyship travels at a top speed of 10 miles per hour, can carry total cargo of 10 tons, and requires a crew of six to ten humanoids to operate at peak performance. Most skyships have maximum accommodations for up to 30 passengers. Most skyships only travel between existing skyports (see "Emon Skyport," below), and charge a fee of 2 gp per mile for a passenger ticket. Chartering a skyship to a destination off the standard sky routes costs 15 gp per mile, if the captain is available and willing to undertake the journey. Shipping cargo costs 1 gp per mile per 100 pounds of cargo along normal sky routes, and twice that to other destinations.

Lyceum (for those who can afford the impressive tuition) is an unparalleled center for study and research of history, economics, alchemy, art, and—most of all—magic and the arcane. Many of Tal'Dorei's greatest scholars and bards paid their dues in these halls, and the history of the Lyceum and its graduates are featured in all manner of superstitions and folktales.

6. Cloudwatch Palace. In the wake of the Chroma Conclave's destruction of Emon, the towering palace that stood as home to the sovereign and the center of governance within the city fell to fire and ruin. In the decades since, construction began with the aid of the League of Miracles to construct a new palace to help house the Tal'Dorei Council and be a symbolic center for all major political affairs within the region. The Cloudwatch Palace now sits atop the once-smoldering hill where Thordak once claimed his roost, a symbol of Emon's enduring will and optimistic hope for the future. Within these high-arched halls, countless chambers hold space for diplomats, meetings, and in the case of holidays, grandiose celebrations that draw the attention of powerful figures all across Exandria.

7. Thordak's Crater. One last unsettling element of the Cloudtop District is the elementally scarred remains of Thordak's Crater. Even after two decades

of healing from the Ashari of Pyrah, Thordak's fires still burn beneath the Cloudtop. The smoldering entrance to the caverns remains cordoned off from the public because of its unsightly appearance and sulfurous stench, and because fiery creatures occasionally try to claw their way out into the fresh air. The crater is often forgotten, but every few months an adventuring party makes their way inside to seek treasure or glory within the volatile caverns—and such expeditions are a favorite topic of conversation (and clandestine betting) among the politicians, political aides, remaining city nobility, and nouveau riche of Emon.

Why Thordak's magic lingers enough to create these mindless cinderslag elementals (see page 231) is a mystery; but it seems to be limited to the crater, as the elementals cannot go beyond it without collapsing into inert slurry.

8. Emon Skyport. This elevated port is complete with docking platforms solely for the use of skyfaring vessels. The original Emon Skyport was the first of its kind in Tal'Dorei, and its successor is every bit as revolutionary as the original.

The Emon Skyport was destroyed when the Cinder King claimed the Cloudtop District as his fiery throne, but like so much of Emon, it has since been rebuilt. Unlike other parts of Emon, this reconstruction was a joint venture between the Arcana Pansophical and the Alsfarin Union, a Marquesian guild responsible for the engineering and distribution of all skyships in Exandria.

Booking passage on a skyship isn't cheap (see the "Skyships" sidebar), but the privilege is available to everyone that can pay. Generally, one passenger skyship leaves Emon per week to each of the following locations:

- Vasselheim, Issylra (passenger ticket costs 2,500 gp)
- Whitestone, Tal'Dorei (passenger ticket costs 900 gp)
- Port Damali, Wildemount (layover in Whitestone; passenger ticket costs 2,000 gp)
- Ank'Harel, Marquet (passenger ticket costs 2,500 gp)

Members of the Tal'Dorei Council can also usually pull strings to grant adventurers they hire free passage when on vital business.

9. Tomb of the Last Sovereign. Uriel Tal'Dorei II, the Last Sovereign, 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.

Over twenty years ago, the Gravewatchers closed the tomb to all, supposedly to prevent vandalism, but have not reopened it after more than two decades. The Last Sovereign's eldest daughter, Odessa Tal'Dorei, is furious. Despite her position of power on the Tal'Dorei Council, she is unable to dispute the act because of the power the Gravewatchers have as keepers of the dead. It has come to the point where she seeks to secretly employ adventurers to uncover the Gravewatchers' true intentions—which involve the psychic influence of an aberrant creature of the Crystalfen Caverns.

10. 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 god of athleticism's holy day, the brawny 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 (but rarely fatal) final round.

11. The Black Bastille. Named for its ash-blackened walls, the ominous Black Bastille is a single-story prison within the Military District that holds Tal'Dorei's most dangerous and irredeemable criminals. 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 (see page 62).

12. Walls of Tribute. Anyone who wishes to uphold justice and keep the peace can apply to join the Arms of Emon. But before a recruit is given their armor and takes a vow to protect the city and its people, they must endure a grueling training


To the Othen Trail
To Outlying Farms
EMON
The City of Fellowship
OZMIT WATERWAYS
SHORELINE FARMS
OUTWALL
TEMPLE DISTRICT
MILITARY DISTRICT
CEMETARY DISTRICT
ABDAR'S PROMENADE
CLOUDTOP DISTRICT
CENTRAL DISTRICT
PORT OF EMON
ERUDITE QUARTER
FAIRE GARDENA
SOUTHGATE FARMS
OZMIT SEA
To the Silvercut Roadway
To Outlying Farms
To the Emerald Path
LEGEND
1 Laughing Lamia Inn
2 Azalea Street Park
3 Anvilgate
4 Traverse Function
5 Alabaster Lyceum
6 Cloudwatch Palace
7 Thordak's Crater
8 Emon Skyport
9 Tomb of the Last Sovereign
10 Godsbrawl Ring
11 The Black Bastille
12 Walls of Tribute
13 House of Discipline
14 Gilmore's Glorious Goods



regimen within the tall, featureless stone barricades of the Walls of Tribute, referred to wryly by recruits as the Quarry. There, they are trained in the physical aspects of peacekeeping, instructed on the habits of the city's criminal underbelly, and drilled in the laws and ideals of Emon.

13. House of Discipline. Emon does not have a standing army of its own. The skills imparted to the Arms of Emon are sufficient to maintain a rowdy populace, but they are carefully trained to use nonlethal force to restrain, rather than kill, all those whom they apprehend. Thus, when war comes to Tal'Dorei, the council appoints a Master of War and levies an army from the Arms of Emon, as well as the militias of its constituent settlements. They must report to the House of Discipline, where they are taught martial combat alongside the harsh realities of warfare. Those who endure their time in the House of Discipline are forged into an army ready to protect Emon and the rest of Tal'Dorei from the greater dangers of Exandria.

14. 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. Those who enter the shop are first met by Gilmore's long-time 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.

Even rarer a sight than Sherri or Gilmore is the latter's husband, a handsome elf named Darius. He is shy in public, a perfect counterbalance to Gilmore's bombast, but is said to have a singing voice and skill with the lyre that can make any mortal weep. Whether or not his husband is present, Gilmore is ever eager to recount his part in the fall of the Chroma Conclave, often winkingly embellishing his role in the final battle with Thordak himself.

Gilmore's Glorious Goods sells all manner of magic items. Its stock varies, but typically includes magic items of very rare rarity and lower for the price range listed in the fifth edition core rules. Additionally, there are always unidentified items in Gilmore's vast back-room storage that he says he'll "get to eventually;" these may include one or two long-lost legendary items. Artifact-quality items are beyond even Shaun Gilmore's usual fare, but he might know clues to a specific artifact's location, whether through his own extensive knowledge or his rumored relationship with the Tal'Dorei Council as an expert consultant on matters of arcane objects. Magic items are expensive, and those strapped for cash may inquire about sponsorships and quests done in Gilmore's service.

Emon Adventures

Every district, point of interest, and scrap of current events described earlier in this section could be a plot seed you can turn into an adventure. In addition to those, you can use these adventure hooks to involve your players in an Emonian adventure.

Primordial Children (any level). Rumors of terrible creatures of fire and teeth stalking the sewers spread throughout Emon's taverns. Such mutterings have gone largely ignored; however, an investigator has recovered what looks to be the broken remains of a large, leathery red egg, not far from a collapsed tunnel beneath the Cloudtop. It seems one of Thordak's primordial dragon spawn survived its father's demise and is lurking in the city's tunnels.

Council Business (any level). The Tal'Dorei Council—particularly Tofor Brotoras, Master of Defense, and Allura Vysoren, Master of Arcana—frequently hire adventurers to undertake dangerous quests for the benefit of the realm. Once the characters do a deed great enough to catch the council's attention, they are contacted the next time they're in Emon to undertake a quest; choose from any of the other story hooks in this book or make a new one of your own. The council offers a reward equal to 1,000 gp × the average character level of the party.

Miraculous Escape (high-level). Master of Arcana Allura Vysoren covertly contacts the characters with a worrisome claim. In the middle of the night, a former Remnant cultist named Hammond Kraith escaped the Black Bastille, apparently with the aid of an invisible monster. She provides the party with the magic-inhibiting manacles he wore within the prison, in hopes that they can use them to follow his trail. What she doesn't know is that the League of Miracles broke Kraith out of prison using an invisible **master adranach** (see page 225). He is hiding out on an island in the Lucidian Ocean, aided by a number of Myriad mercenaries and a captured **mage hunter golem** (see page 239) he has reprogrammed to serve him.

The Sisters Grast

Mythic tales of a pair of ancient hags swirl through learned circles within Emon, typically to frighten Lyceum students off of wandering forbidden vaults at night. Some folk, however, take these whispers seriously. A number of explorers and treasure seekers wandering the subterranean ruins of 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 who 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. The elder, Trysta, remains below to continue to excavate and study, while her sister Forscythia travels back and forth from Emon under the veil of a half-dozen illusions 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, but those who stumble upon them often find themselves temporarily in service to them, a pact made out of fear and self-preservation.

Crystalfen Caverns

Deep beneath the Bladeshimmer Coast is a sprawling network of natural caverns and rivers that predate the Age of Arcanum. These tunnels reach even below the ocean, and have roots in early colonization by denizens of the Realms Beyond.

An ancient society of psychically powerful aboleths and other aberrations sprung up from a door between worlds and conquered this subterranean web, drove their slaves to construct Salar, the Unseeable City, and slowly pressed upward toward the surface. Their plot was 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. Fragments of the City Which Eyes Cannot See still remain, however, with surviving terrors slowly rebuilding from the dust within their once-great capital.

The ruins of this sprawling city are now known as the Crystalfen Caverns. These caves are home to scattered veins of azuremite, a gorgeous blue crystal that formed from millennia of psychic energies existing near element deposits. Curious explorers who discovered the veins found that, when mined and refined into a fine dust, the azuremite powder is



a strong mind-altering agent and induces temporary visions and other psychic phenomena.

While a number of small, isolated entrances to this labyrinth of tunnels have been discovered and adventuring parties have attempted to chart the mines, the caverns are so vast and deep that either they gave up for fear of becoming lost, or they were assailed by the terrible denizens of the caverns, never to return. Most who now brave the caverns are foolish treasure hunters or criminals seeking to mine more azuremite to sell on the black market.

Crystalfen Caverns Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Crystalfen Caverns can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Mining The Past (any level). When the characters finish a short rest in the Crystalfen Caverns, they must each make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, a woman's voice fills their minds, saying, "I sense someone...are you truly here, too? Please...I am lost, and alone in the dark." The voice guides them down the twisting caves to a 120-foot-deep mine shaft. The stones at the bottom shimmer with faint azure light. Should they descend into the azuremite mine, they travel through an uncharted tunnel and find a lone, dying **aboleth** with five levels of exhaustion that has wandered too far from its ruined domain.

The aboleth doesn't seek to kill them—yet. Its only priority is self-preservation, and it needs help fending off the **kobolds** that have made the mine their home in order to reach a subterranean lake where it can recover. Do the characters kill it or save it? If it reaches the lake, or dies, they are rewarded with a haunting premonition of the Ruins of Salar, and a murky vision revealing the depths and expanse of the Crystalfen Caverns.

Ruins of Salar

In the lightless nadir of the Crystalfen Caverns, directly beneath the splendid Port of Emon, rest the eternally slumbering ruins of Salar. No mortal has beheld these ruins— once the capital of a mighty aboleth dominion—and returned to the surface with wits to tell the tale. Salar is known only in myth and legend as the Unseeable City, because mortal eyes cannot look upon its alien architecture without destroying their fragile minds. Salar is treated as an urban legend by Emon's scholars and archeologists. Nevertheless, many believe in its existence, for numerous scholars have returned from expeditions into the deep caverns with their minds shattered by otherworldly power.

Those who have returned from Salar brought back journals filled with increasingly crazed notes. The most intelligible of their writings indicate that all that survives of the ruined city are emerald marble structures of unfathomable design, seeming 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 claimed to have visions of Salar, describing a subterranean city with twisting pillars that stretched higher than any tower, kissing the seat of the surface world from the bedrock of the earth. At the peak of the central pillar floats a giant pearlescent disc. This so-called Moon Disc bathes the entire city in unsettling, milky light that refracts eerily through the emerald spires.

Karaline von Ethro is long since dead, and her journal—by far the most coherent record of the Unseeable City—is an apocryphal artifact. The Arcana Pansophical kept it in a closely guarded vault, which only added to its mystique. However, the journal was stolen long ago, and since then, dozens of manuscripts said to be the Von Ethro Journal have been sold in black markets across Tal'Dorei. Anyone lucky—or unlucky—enough to find the genuine journal would learn a terrible secret that the Pansophical has held onto in silence for decades: dozens, perhaps hundreds, of aboleths survive within Salar. Their master, Durrom of the Emerald Eyes, lives on in secrecy while expanding its army of thralls and learning all it can about the ignorant surface dwellers. Durrom's ultimate goal is to shatter the forgotten Pillars of the Earth beneath Emon and cause the city to collapse into its subterranean domain.

Karaline von Ethro

Archeologist, 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—a very useful tool when exploring subterranean territory. However, despite her discoveries and inventions, she is most remembered for going mad after allegedly having visions of the Ruins of Salar. Karaline's madness eventually led to her tragic demise at the young age of 37.

Ruins of Salar Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Ruins of Salar can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Secrets Within Secrets (mid-level). The characters are approached by Jomen Tash, an earnest half-elf mage of the Arcana Pansophical, who claims to have obtained pages from the lost Von Ethro Journal. He shares his research with the characters and hires them to accompany him into the ruins, promising that he will guard their minds from any alien influence. But in truth, though Jomen was once a member of the Pansophical, he has recently aligned his interests with the mysterious goals of the League of Miracles. Is he leading the characters into danger with only counterfeit scrawlings to guide them, or does he actually hold part of Karaline von Ethro's description of Salar and its dangers?

Scar of the Cinder King

It was thought that the lands surrounding Emon would never fully recover from Thordak's overwhelming elemental power. His presence not only incinerated his enemies—it wounded the land itself. After the Cinder King's defeat, the Tal'Dorei Council beseeched the Fire Ashari to travel from the distant lands of Issylra to Emon and lend their wisdom.

The frightful Scar of the Cinder King and Thordak's Crater, both twisted by the red dragon's cancerous, fiery magic, were healed by the druids of the Fire Ashari over the course of about fifteen years—an act that the brightest minds of the Arcana Pansophical thought would take an epoch to achieve. Clouds of white ash still occasionally blow across the fields surrounding Emon, but the last lingering reminders of the Cinder King's terror are beginning to vanish.

Nevertheless, the Fire Ashari left behind a group of four druids, led by a female half-orc named Lorkathar. They dwell in a small stone fortress known as Flamereach Outpost—a defensive fortification used when the scar was still spawning beings of flame and hatred. They vehemently warn all who enter to avoid using elemental magic of any sort—especially fire magic—as these evocations could cause the still tender division between the Material Plane and the Elemental Plane of Fire to resonate and tear.

Scar of the Cinder King Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Scar of the Cinder King can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Reopening Wounds (any level). The Ashari of Pyrah have claimed that the Scar of the Cinder King is healed—yet rumors have spread through Emon's Erudite Quarter that a representative of Pyrah has been seeking counsel with the Arcana Pansophical regarding the scar. While the characters travel through the once-scarred lands east of Emon to find their next adventure, they are shocked by a sudden earthquake, as the ground erupts with a serpentine, fiery crack. Magma and **cinderslag elementals** (see page 231) slowly seep from the crevasse, turning all they touch to ash.

Ruins of O'Noa (New O'Noa)

Village: Population: 310 (83% humans, 17% other races)

The first human colonizers of Tal'Dorei journeyed across the Ozmit Sea, weathering terrible storms and deadly waves, and made landfall in Daggerbay. From there, they founded the port city of O'Noa, and though the city quickly grew in wealth and influence, the early settlers were greeted with mistrust by the elves of Syngorn. When King Warren Drassig took the throne of Emon, no city suffered greater devastation than the contested region of O'Noa. It was the site of one of the Scattered War's bloodiest battles, and the arcane energies unleashed reduced the city to ruins and permanently scarred the land. Built within a cursed bay, and deprived of fertile land, 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 outlaws and exiles, who named their refuge New O'Noa. They took this place of destitution and dust and made it into a refuge for all rejected by society. Though some of New O'Noa's people were exiled from their homes due to fear and prejudice—like people of ill fate born under the full light of Ruidus (see page 9)—most are thieves and delinquents. New O'Noa is ruled by a charismatic tiefling called Waken, who rose to prominence through honeyed words and selective murders.

New O'Noa still appears abandoned to the eyes of outsiders. Its inhabitants live and hide away from prying eyes, amidst ancient stone ruins and their catacombs. Those who venture too deeply into the ruins are rarely seen or heard from again—unless their loved ones can offer up a princely ransom.

Ruins of O'Noa Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Ruins of O'Noa can use this plot hook for inspiration.

This Too Solid Flesh (mid-level). New O'Noa is a seedy town filled with strange magic. A suude dealer named Shef Silverleaf is in major debt to Waken, the leader of the outlaw village. The characters enter the picture when Waken surreptitiously hires them to collect on his debt—perhaps under false pretenses to hide his illegal operation.

When the party tracks down Shef, they find more than they bargained for: his body has been turned to solid silver. A **Remnant cultist** (see page 252) lurks in the shadows of New O'Noa, and has been purchasing suude from Shef for nearly three months. Shef uncovered his secret identity and confronted him—but the mage's magic, made chaotic by the suude, transformed Shef into solid silver. 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? And what of the cultist who transformed him?

Seashale Mountains

A curious range of mountains runs along the Bladeshimmer Shoreline north of Emon. The Seashale Mountains are named for their unique shape, akin to a tidal wave about to crash on the inland territories, frozen in dynamic stone.

Crashing waves and salty sea breezes have carved miles of twisted valleys between these jagged peaks, creating an unusual home for the 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 valuable bevy of deep-sea fish on occasion, which gave birth to the fishing community of the Shalesteps. The mountains' strange peaks are decorated by copses of scraggly trees, stunted by the gravelly soil and stripped nearly bare by salty ocean breezes.

The Shalesteps

Village: Population 770 (40% humans, 35% halflings, 32% dwarves, 3% other races)

The Shalesteps are a series of small, allied villages whose inhabitants chose to live a more simple life outside of the bustle of the capital city, but close enough to enjoy 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 peaks for avian quarry and other sources of meat and natural resources. Those who live here are sturdy and ready to defend themselves against the dangerous wilds surrounding them—and against the occasional monstrosity that washes in with the tide.

Shalesteps Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in the Shalesteps can use this plot hook for inspiration.

From Hell's Heart (low-level). 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 grand 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

Forty 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 civilization. Some say that every night, the island burns to ash—giving it a distinctive orange glow—and that 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 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 the Chroma Conclave descended upon the city. Their leader, a half-orc archaeologist and spiritspeaker named Jorlund Vohr, survived the destruction of Emon, but all his notes and the artifacts he recovered were stolen. Decades later, the aging professor is still hard at work creating endless proposals for expeditions to Visa Isle.

Visa Isle Adventures

Game Masters who set their adventure in Visa Isle can use this plot hook for inspiration.

Awakening the Sleepers (mid-level). In ancient times, Vos'sykriss was the seat of a serpentfolk empire that dominated southern Tal'Dorei. Before the Calamity, their seers had visions of the coming destruction and desperately sought a way to survive it. The serpents constructed a magical stasis field beneath their city and chose their strongest and most powerful to slumber and rebuild the empire when the danger had passed.

They are now awoken. The **Vos'sykriss serpentfolk** (see page 257) now prowl the island, being prepared by the lingering **Vos'skyriss serpentfolk ghosts** (see page 258) to claim the world for their own. 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.

Other Lands 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. Though Tal'Dorei is a land rife with grand tales, the world of Exandria is far larger and more ancient than just the lands between the Lucidian Coast and the Bladeshimmer Shoreline. Many of the people who live here either descend from or are immigrants to this realm.

Some of these other lands have been explored by Vox Machina and the Mighty Nein in *Critical Role,* but are beyond the scope of this book. You can populate these lands with dungeons, cities, characters, and stories of your own creation—or be inspired by the history of Exandria in chapter 1 of this book, and the stories in the campaigns of *Critical Role,* to create a version of Exandria entirely your own.

Issylra

Northwest of Tal'Dorei, across the freezing waters of the Ozmit Sea, lies Issylra, home to Vasselheim, commonly called the oldest surviving city on Exandria. 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. It was also where most of the flying cities of the Age of Arcanum first rose from the ground. Its people rose high—and fell hard from those dizzying heights, and to this day, many there still hate and fear the power of arcane magic.

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 Vesper 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 is ruled by a coalition of high priests of the many Prime Deities. These hierophants are viewed by their people as the defenders of their virtuous society, and of all of Othanzian culture.

Beyond Vasselheim's ancient walls are frigid, untamed wilds, some of which are untouched since the Founding itself. These lands are populated by ancient monsters and dire beasts. Smaller camps, communities, and townships are scattered across the surrounding snowy plains, and those who call Othanzia home have become hardy and self-sufficient.

Elsewhere in Othanzia, the lands of Issylra are sparsely populated by scattered republics of varying morality. Traveling between these city-states is difficult, due to the lingering beasts of the Calamity that stalk the lands beyond Vasselheim.

Marquet

Following the winds and waves to the southwest of Tal'Dorei across the Ozmit Sea eventually leads one

to the chain of islands called the Hespet Archipelago and to the shores of the continent of Marquet. The pebble beaches of the Bay of Gifts greet travelers with the charming sights of untouched nature, and the port city of Shamal invites all to engage in the pleasures of civilization, with beautiful ballrooms and gilded gambling halls.

Beyond the port of Shamal lies the rocky edge of the Aggrad Mountains, whose canyons and caverns house untold numbers of predatory creatures, before giving way to the immense Marquesian Desert. This sandy wasteland is rumored to have once been verdant jungle brought to ruin by the spear of the Ruiner in the Calamity. Some stories tell of a great hero that sacrificed himself to save Marquet from utter annihilation, but only scattered fragments of this tale endure.

Near the center of this intense desert, surrounded by a sprawling network of small villages, is the grand city of Ank'Harel, known as the Jewel of Hope. This city, built atop the Drowned City of Cael Morrow, is the center of culture, history, and power for all of Marquet. Ruled by the mysteriously undying J'mon Sa Ord, Ank'Harel is a magnificent haven of music and culture. It's not without its dangers, but it is a paradise compared to the monster-infested sands that surround it.



The Hands of Ord, the city's guards, also protect nearby villages and townships within the desert, but they can only reach so far. Further south, beyond the reach of Ank'Harel and the Hands of Ord, 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. Westward, beyond the arid desert, lies a vibrant landscape of verdant jungles, craggy mountains, and magical mysteries that the people of Marquet have spent eons unraveling. Within the jungles of Marquet are dozens of cultures, some nomadic, some seafaring, and some with great cities of their own. One such city, founded by orcish survivors of the Ruiner's wrath during the Calamity, is known across Exandria for its mathematically immaculate architecture. This realm welcomes scholars and travelers from across Exandria, who are eager to learn from the minds of some of the greatest architects the world has ever seen.

The Shattered Teeth

Few sail into the dangerous waters southeast of Tal'Dorei, past the ever-present fog bank called the Fool's Curtain, and into the Shattered Teeth. This cluster of broken lands is made up of forty-three islands, varying in size from small, mile-wide reef-toppers to the large, city-holding isles like Ruukva. Two societies dwell within the Shattered Teeth. The first is the Ossended Host, a vast fishing culture that values their independence—even to the point of isolationism—and self-empowerment through the worship of the power of dreams and nightmares. The second is the Wanderman Assembly, a centuries-old trade company that, upon being stranded across the Shattered Teeth after losing their way in a typhoon, grew into a brutal, ruthless society dedicated to gaining profit at all costs. It masquerades poorly under the banner of honor and brotherhood.

This tension has led to bloodshed in recent years, and each group is paranoid that the other is bent on destroying 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.

Wildemount

Due east of Tal'Dorei, the lands of Wildemount are highly geologically varied, from the tropical Menagerie Coast, to the dour and rainy valleys of Western Wynandir, to the blasted wastes of Eastern Wynandir—better known as Xhorhas. The people of

Tal'Dorei trade frequently with Wildemount, though the waters of the Lucidian Ocean are prowled by pirates, sea monsters, and forgotten aquatic demigods. Such a journey leads to the Clovis Concord, a federation of city-states that govern the Menagerie Coast, where a lively culture of trade, entertainment, and the arts flourishes amidst the illicit activities of local smugglers and the ever-present Myriad syndicate.

The Dwendalian Empire, an authoritarian power that seeks to expand its reach across all of Wildemount, reigns over the center of the continent. The empire is ruled by King Bertrand Dwendal, but tensions boil between the Crown and the Cerberus Assembly, the empire's league of arcanists and covert operatives. Though the assembly's power waxes and wanes, they are constantly maneuvering to become the true, shadowy power behind the Dwendalian Crown.

The empire's control over the resource-rich valleys in the center of Wildemount has helped make it a military superpower. Likewise, the natural defenses of the surrounding mountains make their lands easily defensible. For centuries, the idea that the empire is invincible has fueled recruitment propaganda for its military, the sanctimoniously titled Righteous Brand. King Dwendal's edicts have created a highly nationalistic society—one which permits only the worship of Crown-approved deities, submits to mandatory military service, and jingoistically endures immense taxes to support the Crown's wars.

Across the mountains east of the Dwendalian Empire are the wastes of Xhorhas, ruled by the Kryn Dynasty. This society was founded by dark elves who escaped the grasp of the Spider Queen through the grace of a supernatural being of light called the Luxon that granted them the ability to reincarnate into new bodies, life after life. Those who are reincarnated seek to broaden the knowledge of the Luxon by living bold lives and gaining new experiences. Today, the Kryn Dynasty is filled with not just dark elves, but goblinkin, orcs, ogres, kobolds, and all manner of other peoples considered to be "monsters" by the Dwendalian Empire.

Beyond the Kryn Dynasty and the Dwendalian Empire, and the tensions that burn between them, are the lands of the Miskath Strand and the islands of Eiselcross. Both are realms twisted by forbidden magic, and inhabited by eldritch abominations and other creatures that are anthema to mortal life. Yet, despite the danger, the most courageous adventurers of Wildemount—and indeed, all of Exandria—see exploration as the pinnacle of heroism. At the fringes of the known world, where monsters from the edge of reality lurk...this is where true adventure begins.





CHAPTER 4

Character Options

The sprawling lands and endless challenges of Exandria forge heroes and villains of curious vocations and abilities. The dangers of the chaotic world urge stalwart heroes to defend innocents in need of protection, while uncovered fragments of forgotten powers inspire power-hungry villains to seek new ways to bend reality to their will. The material in this chapter offers a number of new options for characters to define who they are and what they wish to become in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Playing in a Tal'Dorei Campaign

This section is for players creating characters for a Tal'Dorei campaign that another player is running as the Game Master. It suggests a number of tips and tricks for how to create a character, and how to make that character's story fit smoothly into the world of Exandria.

Standard Procedure

Start by creating a character as you normally would for any fifth edition RPG campaign. This process typically involves choosing your character's race, lineage, or ancestry; selecting your class, background, starting equipment, and spells (if applicable); and giving the character a name and backstory. If your Game Master has any house rules or special requests that change this process, they'll let you know.

Ancestries

All of the fantasy peoples commonly found in Tal'Dorei, including humans, elves, dwarves, goblins, tieflings, and dragonblood, are described in this chapter. These descriptions don't include game statistics, which can be found in the fifth edition rules, but rather detail the lore of each of these ancestries and how characters of those ancestries fit into the tapestry of Exandrian life.

Classes

All the classes in the fifth edition core rules are fair game in Tal'Dorei, and classes and subclasses found in other supplements might be available with your Game Master's permission. This book also contains the following new subclasses, all detailed in this chapter:

- Barbarian: Path of the Juggernaut
- Bard: College of Tragedy
- Cleric: Blood Domain and Moon Domain
- Druid: Circle of the Blighted
- Monk: Way of the Cobalt Soul
- Paladin: Oath of the Open Sea
- Sorcerer: Runechild sorcerous origin
- Wizard: Blood Magic arcane tradition

Backgrounds

The backgrounds found in the fifth edition core rules are all well suited to life in Tal'Dorei. This fantasy realm is teeming with soldiers, guild artisans, sailors, and nobles, all of whom might make interesting adventurers. This book also presents six new backgrounds, detailed later in this chapter:

- Ashari
- Clasp Member (and the variant Myriad Operative)
- Lyceum Scholar
- Reformed Cultist
- Whitestone Rifle Corps

Session Zero

The cast of *Critical Role* creates great stories by communicating openly with their Game Master before the campaign begins, and maintaining that communication between game sessions. Doing so ensures that everyone's stories are being told in a fun way, and that everyone is having fun at the table. To get that same experience, be sure to talk with your Game Master about what's important to you while you build your character and flesh out their backstory. That way, your GM will be able to build a story that centers you and your allies as main characters, rather than just bystanders.

Session zero is a catchall term for a pregame meetup between the players (including the GM), where everyone can lay out expectations and boundaries for the campaign. Lots of guides designed to give your campaign a strong start with session zero can be found on the Internet and in other fifth edition books. Session zero often includes discussions of the following:

- What each player and the GM like about fifth edition campaigns, and what they're hoping for in this campaign.
- Likewise, what aspects of play people dislike or are uncomfortable with, or simply want to avoid in this campaign for any reason.
- If this campaign were a movie, what would its rating be? PG? PG-13? R?

- Which topics are fun to explore in game, which are absolutely off-limits due to personal discomfort, and which are okay in moderation? Everyone should clearly agree to playing a game that includes topics like extreme violence; romantic or sexual situations; any gender-, race-, disability-, or age-based discrimination or violence; or themes that involve real-life politics or religion.
- What amount of combat, exploration, and social encounters the players want to experience.
- What kind of character each player wants to create, and how the characters might fit together into a cohesive party.
- What type of story everyone wants to experience together, whether that's a meandering episodic tale or a lengthy epic, and whether the story will be driven by player actions and their consequences or by GM-directed plot events.

Additionally, after each game, many people find it helpful to check in with each other and discuss what everyone enjoyed, wants less of, or wants more of, so the GM and players can prepare to bring more of what worked to the next session, and less of what didn't.

Flavorful Details

In addition to discussing your character's backstory with your GM and the other players in your group, you can think about other flavorful details to help ground your character in the world of Exandria.

Gods

A vast pantheon of deities created Exandria in primeval times. Which of these deities does your character worship, if any? Do they worship an obscure god, or one commonly venerated throughout Tal'Dorei? How devout are they in their faith?

The gods of Exandria are described in more detail in chapter 2, though your GM might want to keep some of the details of those gods secret.

Factions

The politics of Tal'Dorei are influenced by a number of factions. Not all are actively hostile toward each other, and many are actually allies.

But all jockey constantly for power—and frequently come into conflict as a result. Do you belong to one of these factions? Are you a card-carrying member? Do you simply sympathize with their cause, or perhaps have friends or family who are part of the faction? Are there factions you actively despise, perhaps because of some slight they committed against you or those close to you in the past?

Tal'Dorei's factions are described in more detail in chapter 2, though your GM might want to keep some of the details of those factions secret.

Races and Cultures

Tal'Dorei is home to manifold humanoid peoples, from the elves who emerged from the Fey Realm into the untouched lands of Gwessar in the wake of the Calamity, to the humans who first came to Tal'Dorei on stout ships from the distant shores of Issylra. The familiar fantasy races of elves, dwarves, humans, and halflings are the most populous beings on Tal'Dorei, but they are far from the only peoples to make their mark in city and wilderness alike.

Over the past thousand years of history, the peoples described in this chapter have left an indelible mark on the world. And though many of these races appear monolithic at first glance, all are incredibly varied. A first-time visitor to Tal'Dorei might initially perceive all elves as haughty and fascinated with heritage, because that's the dominant culture in Syngorn, the largest elf-majority city on the continent. However, the elves living in villages and cities across the land are often exceptions to that apparent rule, and it's dangerous—not to mention rude—for travelers to assume that any of Tal'Dorei's varied peoples fit into simple boxes.

This section is a resource for you to use to inspire your character's backstory—or to inspire your NPCs if you're a Game Master. Whether you enjoy leaning into fantasy archetypes, intentionally breaking them, or ignoring them entirely, this section has something for you. The game statistics of each of the races of Tal'Dorei are identical to those in the fifth edition rules.

People and Monsters

For generations of roleplaying gamers in many different RPG campaign settings, certain of the fantasy peoples in the world of Exandria have long been considered "monsters" or "evil races." Goblins, orcs, and bugbears are examples of peoples whose very nature was supposedly tainted by inherent evil, and were thus morally unambiguous targets for adventurers to kill and loot. This mindset treats these people as no different from monsters like basilisks or giant spiders.

The humanoid people of Tal'Dorei aren't set up that way. Any creature with the humanoid type is a thinking, feeling person. Creatures with the dragon, giant, or fey type are also unambiguously sapient, and thus can have any alignment. It's just as likely for a human to be a neutral evil bandit as it is for an orc to be a chaotic good swashbuckler, or for a hobgoblin to be a lawful good knight. And if you like, you can take this even further in your games and say that any fantasy creature with an Intelligence score of 6 or higher is capable of free thought, and should have just as wide a range of alignments as other sapient beings.

The stories in *Critical Role* are filled with shades of moral gray, but Tal'Dorei still has plenty of unambiguously evil creatures. Most demons, devils, and undead are suffused with cosmic evil, and always try to subvert righteousness. Likewise, unthinking creatures such as oozes and constructs, and creatures of instinctual intelligence such as beasts, many monstrosities, and plant creatures, all make morally unambiguous foes.

Likewise, there are plenty of evil humanoids in the world. Cultists of evil gods, including the Remnants who worship the Whispered One, and merciless, blood-soaked bandits such as the Ravagers are clear and immediate threats to both the safety of the player characters and all free peoples of Tal'Dorei. Depending on the tone of your story, the characters might cut such foes down without mercy—or they might try to rehabilitate them. The difference is that these villains' choices, not their ancestries, determine whether or not they are evil.

Cultures across Tal'Dorei

The various peoples of Tal'Dorei don't have racial cultures. Rather, someone's culture is based on the cities and regions in which they spend their formative years. For most of Tal'Dorei's history, members of the different fantasy races lived in largely monolithic enclaves. However, the more recent past has instilled in people the need to break down old barriers, work together, and live together.

All cities and large towns have a majority population of certain races, typically based on the peoples who founded those settlements. This includes such notable sites as the elf-majority city-state of Syngorn and the dwarf-majority city-state of Kraghammer. Some people in Tal'Dorei might assume that certain races have common cultural traits that unite them, but many others know that this isn't the whole truth. A dwarf raised in Kraghammer and a dwarf raised in Stilben are likely to have very different attitudes about family, food, faith, and all the other factors that make up a culture.

Even when people of the same race gather in neighborhoods within a city, those people don't necessarily share the common culture of their best-known homelands. In many neighborhoods in the great city of Emon, for example, elves and half-elves are a majority. But since not all those elf-kin come from Syngorn, they don't all share a monolithic Syngornian "elf culture."

That said, beings with distinctly magical traits often form cultures that include their unique abilities. This includes folk such as dragonblood, with their ability to channel elemental power. And because goliaths are known for their powerful, muscular bodies, goliath-majority societies often worship the Stormlord, god of strength, and engage in festivals that center around feats of athleticism.

Dragonblood

The dragonblood of Exandria are a people of unknown origin, and countless myths surround their ancestral creation. One particularly pervasive tale states that dragonblood were created by the Scaled Tyrant and the Platinum Dragon during the Calamity, serving as loyal soldiers who eventually earned their freedom. Regardless of how they came into being, though, the dragonblood lived for many centuries in relative isolation in the southern wastes of Xhorhas, on the continent of Wildemount.

Today, dragonblood live all over Exandria, though they remain a scarcer sight in Tal'Dorei than in Wildemount. Their spread across the world was hastened by the assault against the free peoples of Exandria by the Chroma Conclave. During that conflict, the ancient white dragon known as Vorugal the Frigid Doom destroyed the magical city-state of Draconia, the ancestral homeland of most dragonblood.

The destruction of Draconia and the loss of many of its people was a tragedy. But to roughly half the dragonblood of Exandria, it also marked the end of an oppressive regime. Dragonblood of Exandria can either be born with a tail or without. In Draconia, those with tails were called draconians or draconbloods, for they were seen as closer in form and power to true dragons. Those without tails were given the name of ravenites and enslaved. Their



blood and toil built the mighty towers of Draconia, yet the ravenites enjoyed none of their city's splendor.

The ruin of Draconia thus marked the start of an era of freedom and self-determination for the ravenites. In Tal'Dorei, it's apparent that any differences between the ravenites and the draconians have nothing to do with bloodline or draconic power. Those differences are cultural, and rooted in a past whose conflicts still haven't been resolved. The oppression that existed in Draconia remains largely unknown within Tal'Dorei to this day, and outside of major cities such as Emon, dragonblood can go for months, even years, without seeing another of their kind.

Draconians

The tail-bearing draconians who survived the destruction of Draconia have been scattered across the world. In the time that's passed since the fall of the dragonblood city-state, a generation of dragonbloods have grown up in Tal'Dorei's towns and cities, disconnected from their parents' privileged upbringing. Only a scant few draconians—typically ones able to teleport away from Vorugal's attack—escaped with any sort of wealth. Most other refugees were lucky simply to escape with their lives.

Clinging to the Past. A social divide continues to grow between draconians who have wealth and those who don't. Many of those with wealth greedily cling to the shadows of their former tyrannical glory, but other draconians seek instead to bury the past and create their own destiny, on their own merits.

Ravenites

Following the end of the Draconian order, the ravenites ventured into the world eager to make the most of their newfound freedom. In the generation since, many have formed a new homeland in Xhorhas known as Xarzith Kitril, content to reclaim the lands of their birth. Those ravenites who departed Wildemount have found a new home in the cities and the icy north of Tal'Dorei, where they enjoy the freedom and privileges of equality that this land provides.

Rebuilding from Scratch. Most ravenite children grew up poor, either in slum towns at the edges of cities like Emon and Westruun, or helping their parents laboriously carve out rural lives in the Dividing Plains or Cliffkeep Mountains.

Dwarves

When the world was nearly rent asunder by the Calamity, the dwarves of Tal'Dorei disappeared underground to wait out the worst of the conflict. Many dwarven citadels once dotted the subterranean world, but over the centuries, they dwindled, either merging together or falling into decadence and ruin. In the centuries following the Calamity, these dwarf clans, isolated beneath the surface of Exandria, gathered into a single, steadfast redoubt: Kraghammer. In one way or another, just about every dwarf in Tal'Dorei can trace their family back to that great city-state.

The mountainous stronghold still stands as the heart of settlement in the Cliffkeep Mountains, and many dwarves consider it a place all their folk should visit at least once a decade. Kraghammer's legendary status gives it a highly conservative, unchanging culture, but even so, the dwarf people are far from monolithic.

Some dwarves like to distinguish themselves as hill or mountain dwarves, based on whether or not they grew up outside or inside of Kraghammer. *Gurdhe*, a Dwarvish word translated into Common as "hill," colloquially means "beyond the mountains" in most Dwarvish dialects. And many dwarves, even the so-called mountain-dwellers renowned for living their entire lives underground, make journeys out into the "hills" of Tal'Dorei to trade, gain artistic inspiration, or visit the children of long-dead friends they bonded with decades or centuries prior.

Kraghammer Dwarves

The culture of Kraghammer is one of isolationism and tradition—even to the point of xenophobia. As a common saying goes: "Those who live beneath the mountain are as unmoving as the mountain itself." Whether they're dwarves, gnomes, or folk of other ancestries, the people who dwell in Kraghammer typically embody this stubborn, dogmatic stoicism.

Tradition. Kraghammer society is steeped in a culture of dwarves protecting their own, and those dwarves' traditions of meticulous chronicling, geometrically precise artistry, dynastic great houses, and resilience against even the greatest of threats has proved itself a central pillar of their society. For long centuries, new peoples and new ideas in Kraghammer meant potential danger, threatening the death of monarchs and incursion by nefarious subterranean infiltrators. The first time that Kraghammer proudly opened its gates to a new people, the oligarch Warren Drassig led all of Tal'Dorei into the greatest war since the Age of Arcanum. The city's relative safety during the assault of the Chroma Conclave only cemented its people's belief that isolation is strength.

Change. In the present day, many of Kraghammer's residents feel stifled by its dominant culture, which continues to be insular and suspicious of outsiders and new ideas. In the past few decades, a tide of refugees fleeing crises such as the Wittebak disaster and the Cinder King's attack on Emon have brought new voices and perspectives to the formerly unyielding halls of Kraghammer. These people now call the dwarves' ancestral realm their home, and many of Kraghammer's dwarves have seen the

innovation and transformation that new residents can bring. Change comes slowly in Kraghammer, but it does come in time.

Hill Travelers

Dwarves might leave their underground realm for myriad reasons, with many making homesteads in the foothills of the Cliffkeep Mountains or venturing even farther afield. Hill dwarves who left the mountain themselves, or who had parents or more distant ancestors who did so, have a certain shared camaraderie in their connection to the open sky above, the sun and wind around them, and the soft loam beneath their feet.

Exploration. It's common for dwarves who live upon the hills and fields of Tal'Dorei to wander throughout their lives, never putting down roots for more than a decade or two at a time out of their centuries-long lives. Dwarves with tanned skin and sun-bleached hair are so common a sight in taverns across the Dividing Plains that the Dwarvish word *ġurdheledr*, translated as "hill travelers," has come to mean "mercenary" or "bounty hunter" as commonly as it refers to simple wanderers.

Community. Dwarves are a common sight in cities such as Emon and Westruun, and even in smaller towns across central Tal'Dorei. Not unlike mountain-dwelling dwarves, these city dwellers are often as unmoving as a granite boulder on a rock shelf—unable to be budged unless given a tremendous push. Dwarves typically adopt the culture of wherever they live, though their long lives sometimes make them more resistant to social change than shorter-lived peoples.

Duergar of Emberhold

Deep beneath Tal'Dorei is an underground realm lit only by magelight, magma flows, luminescent creatures and fungi, and the roaring fires of duergar forges. It is thought that a group of dwarves delved far into the depths of Exandria countless centuries ago, predating even the chronicles of Kraghammer. Whether by choice or by necessity, they made a home in the caverns they explored there. Something about the magic that suffuses their eerie realm changed the deep dwarves—who are called the duergar now. That name was originally an epithet, bestowed by the mountain dwarves who rediscovered and battled those deep dwarves, but the duergar now wear it with pride.

Survival. The deep caverns of Tal'Dorei are an inhospitable place, filled with creatures whose aberrant forms defy imagination and whose alien minds reject mortal morality. The duergar became hardened by their struggle for survival, and their rejection at the hands of the Kraghammer dwarves hardened their hearts forever. The smiths of the Emberhold do not forge art or works of beauty—only weapons and armor to turn back the onslaught of those who wish to see them dead.

Alliance. The duergar have suffered alone for so long, hating all and hated by all. Nevertheless, in the undercurrents of the Emberhold, the idea spreads that there must be more to life than fire and death. Many duergar nurture a secret hope of finding some way to ally with their other dwarf kin—if only someone were brave enough to reach out a hand without fear of it being cut off.



Elemental Ancestry

Exandria's lands are rife with elemental power. Primordial energy constantly flows into the world from elemental rifts, and such primal power inevitably alters its surroundings. This is also true of peoples who spend long years in proximity to such sources of power, and of those who travel the planes long enough to find the seed of elemental power take root within their blood. Such folk are the beginning of an elemental ancestry, harboring the potential to give birth to children who are suffused with latent magic.

Children of an elemental ancestry bear the features of their parents' ancestry, but have clearly become something new. Their appearance is altered by their power, granting them skin that shines like the sun on the surface of the sea, hair that crackles like flame, or eyes that glitter like gemstones. Then comes the manifestation of elemental powers, which can make a child the envy of their peers—or someone to be feared.

While people of elemental ancestry are rare in Tal'Dorei, they are most common among the Ashari due to the elemental affinity of that folk. Some possessed of elemental power enjoy the attention their uniqueness garners them. But for others, even the most benign interest draws painful attention to their otherness.

Belonging. People with an elemental bloodline are often raised by parents in a regular community, and so grow up with all the aspirations and prejudices inherent to their culture. For many such people, the traits that make them unique also make them a pillar of their community—for example, a baker who instinctually understands the will of her oven's fire. Within superstitious lands and cultures, however, a person's elemental powers might make them the target of scrutiny, fearmongering, or jealousy, eventually driving them to strike out into the world to seek a place where they truly belong.



Called to the Ashari. Those elemental-touched people who leave their communities often seek out the Ashari, the isolated keepers of rifts to the Elemental Planes. Elementally attuned children are born with great frequency to the Ashari, who understand the utmost importance of giving those children the education and training that will let them understand their gifts.

All people of elemental ancestry are welcome among the Ashari, including the Air Ashari and Earth Ashari found in Tal'Dorei. However, even those whose elemental ancestry connects them to water or fire can seek out Tal'Dorei's Ashari peoples to help them on their journeys of discovery. In time, such a journey might lead them to the Fire Ashari on the continent of Issylra, to the Water Ashari on the Islands of Anamn in the Ozmit Sea, or to Ashari who have journeyed from those lands to Tal'Dorei.

Elementally attuned folk who don't seek or can't find the Ashari might instead find their way to the reclusive giants of Tal'Dorei. Though the giants do their best to keep their distance from the lives and problems of humanoids, they have been known to take a shine to people whose shared elemental affinities give them common ground.

Elves

When the Calamity threatened to annihilate all life on Tal'Dorei, the elves of this land gathered in their last remaining city, Syngorn, and used long-forgotten magic to transport themselves into the Fey Realm. Time runs strangely in that realm, and for an unknown stretch of history, the elves of Syngorn lived with their fey kindred in peace. When they eventually returned to Exandria, they found a land devoid of all but animals and the grandeur of nature. The rotten majesty of the Age of Arcanum, burned away by the wrath of the gods, had given way to new growth.

To the elves, the lands of Tal'Dorei are still called Gwessar, and elves who dwell here are called the *gwes'alfen*—the elves of the Fields of Joy. For centuries, this folk watched with delight as other peoples populated Gwessar, beginning with dwarves, then humans from across the sea, and so on. Then they looked on in horror as mortal ambition was perverted into greed, and war followed in its wake.

Syngorn and the Verdant Expanse that surrounds it are the ancestral homeland of Tal'Dorei's elves, many of whom never venture beyond that homeland. Young elves are most likely to journey afield to see what else the world has to offer, and while most of them return to Syngorn, some make new homes in the many towns and cities of Tal'Dorei—or they become hermits, their status as mystical beings with a thousand-year life span commanding an almost mythic reverence from other folk.

The elves' tendency to focus on the past has given rise to many stereotypes of those folk being haughty, aloof, and unconcerned with the day-to-day joys and sorrows of the shorter-lived races. But though this is certainly true for some elves, it's hard for other folk to consider the perspective of an elf who has personally witnessed whole cultures and civilizations rise and fall. Most elves are born with the same passion for life as any other being. But as centuries pass, life becomes a stream of historic events to be witnessed and contemplated, and not to be interfered with unless absolutely necessary.

Syngorn Elves

The *syn'alfen*, as the elves of the Verdant Expanse call themselves, almost universally revere the ancient history of Syngorn, and the story of how its escape to the Fey Realm saved their culture from extinction. No elf who lives in Syngorn can forget this past, and Syngornian culture can sometimes feel overbearing to those who see it only from the outside. More than a few woodland elves also feel stifled by their homeland's unrelenting focus on history, magic, the fey, and the preservation of elvenkind. Such elves are most likely to leave Syngorn and make their homes in other parts of Tal'Dorei.

Departure. Many elves who leave Syngorn (or who had parents who left) still consider themselves syn'alfen, whether they live in Emon or other cities, or even the ancestral homes of other folk, such as Kraghammer. The cultural imprint of Syngorn is hard to escape, and most of these expatriate wood elves hold a certain amount of love for their home even as part of a complicated relationship.

Reunited Family. South of the Stormcrest Mountains lies the massive jungle of Rifenmist, home to the nomadic elf Orroyen tribes. The Orroyen believe that they split off from the Syngorn elves centuries ago, with both peoples meeting each other again only within the past century. Though initially suspicious, both elf lines soon came to see one another as long-lost family.

The onslaught of the Chroma Conclave disrupted communication with the Orroyen elves, and news from the south has grown more dire since. Orroyen refugees continue to flow into Syngorn, fleeing the tyrannical Iron Authority that rules Rifenmist.

Lyrengorn Elves

The *lyren'alfen*, known alternately as Lyrengorn elves or high elves, are a people who broke off from Syngorn long ago, and who journeyed from southern Tal'Dorei to settle in the frigid Neverfields, north of the Cliffkeep Mountains. The city of Lyrengorn that they founded is every bit as majestic as Syngorn in the south, but for better or worse, Lyrengorn lacks its sister city's millennia of culture—and its cultural baggage.

Art and Expression. Lyrengorn is nestled in the spires of the Elvenpeaks, spreading under the mysterious northern lights known as the Moonweaver's Ribbons. The city is always aglow with magical light, and its people are taught spellcraft from a young age, for magic is the foundation upon which Lyrengorn was built. The spells of heat and comfort woven into its residents' clothing and architecture are essential to living comfortably in such relentlessly cold lands.

The elves who make their home within the pines of the Elvenpeaks are best known for riding through the wintry skies on wyverns. Every year, people from across Tal'Dorei travel to the Elvenpeaks to watch skyswimmers, elite wyvern riders who shape the glow of the Moonweaver's Ribbons from the air.

Magic and Transformation. High elf culture values magical prowess above almost all else, but



the high elves lack the dogma of many of their Syngornian cousins. Their society encourages experimentation, both in terms of magic and self-expression. Likewise, lyren'alfen who become adventurers often do so in pursuit of inspiration or self-discovery. High elf societies are filled with elf magi who use magic to transform their bodies, exploring different gender expressions and social roles—and they encourage all who visit Lyrengorn to join them in discovering all the different facets of one's self.

Many high elves become religious sorcerers, exploring their latent powers through their faith. Others develop their arcane skill by seeking admission to the Alabaster Lyceum in Emon, where they study the theory of magic with the best minds from across Tal'Dorei.

Dark Elves

The *myrk'alfen*, also known as drow or dark elves, have a complicated relationship with the other elven societies of Tal'Dorei. Though the elves are one people by heritage, the dark elves refused to join with the elves of Syngorn during the Calamity, instead escaping into the trackless caverns that stretched beneath Tal'Dorei. There, they became the unwitting prey of the Spider Queen, a Betrayer God of immense cruelty.

Betrayed by the Gods. In times long past, the drow were a wise, beautiful folk with long, silvery hair and radiant ashen or violet skin. But their underground enclaves grew decadent and cruel, and their leaders fell to the alluring whispers of the Spider Queen. The *myrk'alfen* allied with their venomous goddess against the Arch Heart and their elves in the Calamity. When the Spider Queen was defeated, the *myrk'alfen* of Tal'Dorei were exiled permanently from the surface world, confined to their imperious realm within the earth.

Struggle to Survive. More evil powers than just the Spider Queen lurk beneath the surface of the world. With the drow in exile, the whispers of the Crawling King and the Chained Oblivion first reached the ears of their nobility as the dark elves struggled to stave away the aberrations that encircled their cities. Now, generations later, the dark elves are a people seemingly on the brink of annihilation. Neighbors slaughter one another in the streets as they succumb to paranoia. For when aberrations can take or shape any form, who can be trusted? Unable to stop their citizens from rioting, the drow elite have grown ever more authoritarian, commanding their royal guards to keep order by violently suppressing their people.

Against this ongoing chaos, some dark elves who fall deep into the abominable thrall of the Spider Queen become truly monstrous, their skin and eyes turning deathly pale as they become little more than puppets for their tormenting goddess. Others willingly offer themselves to the aberrations to end their suffering, and are transformed into shapeshifting doppelgangers. And the most power-hungry drow nobles often succumb entirely to their devotion to the Spider Queen, willingly drinking her abyssal blood to become driders in her service.

New Light for the Shadow. The people of Tal'Dorei have recently received emissaries from dark elves who live in the eastern reaches of Wildemount, in a nation called the Kryn Dynasty. Their Bright Queen, Leylas Kryn, broke free of the Spider Queen's corrupting influence and led her people to glory and self-determination in the distant lands of Xhorhas. This rebellion was inspired by the discovery of the Luxon, a mysterious being of light and rebirth that the Kryn drow worship as a god.

Though the dark elves of the Kryn Dynasty have problems enough of their own, some of the Kryn seek the aid of Syngorn and Lyrengorn on expeditions into the depths beneath Tal'Dorei. Their goals are noble, but none can deny that these are missionary expeditions in search of new followers—and in search of new Luxon beacons, the scattered fragments of that new drow god.

Many adventuring drow harbor a violent hatred of aberrations, and have abandoned the Spider Queen's faith to become paladins in service of the Dawnfather or the Luxon, setting aside their affinity for the shadow to search for hope in the light of the sun.

Firbolgs

Fur-covered folk with floppy ears, flat noses, and long faces, firbolgs are a humanoid people with a unique, somewhat bovine appearance. They aren't insular by nature, but they feel most at ease when surrounded by the natural world, leading the vast majority of firbolgs to never leave their forest homes except under circumstances beyond their control. As a result, many folk in Tal'Dorei don't even know that firbolgs exist. Those firbolgs who do live in the realm's cosmopolitan cities either grow annoyed or accepting of people constantly questioning who—or what—they are.

Dwellers of Cold Forests

Firbolgs' fuzzy bodies are acclimated to cold weather, and they often overheat in warm climes. They are most commonly seen in Kraghammer, Zephrah, Whitestone, and Stilben, both as residents and as traveling bards and merchants. But they are otherwise a rare sight south of the Cliffkeep Mountains, though some firbolgs enjoy a comfortable life in Emon after learning a few handy spells to keep cool in the summer.

The largest and densest population of firbolgs in Tal'Dorei is found in the eternally winter-bound forest of the Frostweald. These firbolgs have a friendly but cautious relationship with the capricious fey who also dwell there.

Gnomes

Gnomes and gnomish culture are relatively uncommon in Tal'Dorei, for although humans and rock gnomes both hail from Issylra, relatively few gnomes have the chance or the desire to leave their homeland. Moreover, their short stature has often proved a social hindrance in the lands of taller folk. But where they have settled, gnomes easily prove their mettle through deed and humor, becoming welcome members of the settlements where they choose to make their homes.

Rock Gnomes

The first gnomes to enter Tal'Dorei migrated from Issylra during the Age of Arcanum, and endured the Calamity within the deep caverns of the Cliffkeep Mountains. These folk called themselves rock gnomes, and founded a marvelous settlement called Wittebak. Their society prized cleverness above all other things, eschewing the arts of magic for a focus on tinkering and an understanding of natural phenomena.

Dizzying Heights. By the end of the Calamity, the city of Wittebak was the most technologically advanced place in all of Tal'Dorei, even as the elves and dwarves were emerging from their isolation. However, such greatness could not last. The rock gnomes boasted of their superiority to the "ignorant" stone giants who also called the mountains home, and incurred their elemental wrath. In the earthquakes that followed, Wittebak and most of its people were destroyed.

Eyes Ahead. Most of those who survived the Wittebak disaster made their way to Kraghammer, relying upon the generosity of the dwarves to survive. A few others traveled to Emon and Kymal, and helped build those cities in their earliest days. To this day, most gnomes with any connection to the heady era of Wittebak still call themselves rock gnomes in its honor. These gnomes carry a certain cultural memory of their city's fall from grace, which drives many of them to strive constantly toward greatness.

Eyes Behind. A fair few rock gnomes dwelling in Kraghammer—elders in particular—take a different view of their people's fall from grace and glory. These gnomes work bitterly and tirelessly, fueled by spite and pride, with the intention of either reclaiming Wittebak or proving that the city's lost technology is superior to any magic or other force on Exandria.

Forest Gnomes

Forest gnomes are not native to Tal'Dorei, but unlike rock gnomes, they are believed to hail from the Fey Realm, much like the elves. A half dozen small forest gnome communities can be found in the Verdant Expanse, hidden from the prying eyes of elves and human explorers alike. But how gnomes ended up in the Fey Realm to begin with is a mystery that even they can't begin to answer.



Firbolg



Forest Gnome

Rock Gnome

Magic, Not Tech. The biggest difference between the gnomes of the forest and their rock gnome cousins are their philosophies toward magic and technology. After spending untold centuries in the Fey Realm, forest gnomes have a great respect for magic, especially capricious, unpredictable magic like that of the fey. Forest gnome culture sees technology as predictable and boring, even if its usefulness must be conceded from time to time.

Forest gnomes respect the rock gnomes' dedication to science, and are more than happy to help their kin in their search to understand how nature works and how to manipulate it. But in the end, knowledge is not as important as canniness in forest gnome enclaves.

Worldly Explorers. Not all forest gnomes are as close to their fey identity as the gnomes of the Verdant Expanse, and a number of more worldly clans have spread to other forests across Tal'Dorei. Most notably, a number of familiesfamilies, including the Trickfoot clan, have made the Bramblewood outside of Westruun their home for generations. These clans are more practical than their fey kin and less uptight than their distant rock gnome cousins, giving these gnomes a curious personality perfect for the life of a traveling adventurer.

Goblinkin

Goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears are three distinct races with a united past. They live across Tal'Dorei, most often in isolated communities, though many people in the realm have become used to the sight of goblin children playing catch in the street, hobgoblin mercenaries hanging around job boards, and bugbear apothecaries running shops in the hills.

The origin of the goblinkin is shrouded in myth and legend, but it's generally accepted that these peoples were created by the Strife Emperor during the Calamity to be his perfect soldiers. The few records of that time hint that the goblinkin were once a single folk called the dranassar, a humanoid people of golden skin and green, violet, or yellow eyes who lived in eastern Wildemount. They dwelled in great numbers in the city of Ghor Dranas, which came to be the seat of the Betrayer Gods' power in the Calamity.

For centuries, goblinkin were viewed as monsters by most other people of Tal'Dorei—particularly explorers and adventurers who regularly invaded and destroyed goblinkin settlements. But this ugly sentiment has undergone a radical shift in the past generation, during which countless goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears have fought alongside the other folk of Tal'Dorei in defense of their homeland against the Chroma Conclave and other threats. Today, goblinkin are a welcome sight in Tal'Dorei's cities, and those folk who nurture old hostilities are invariably taken to task by the people around them.

Goblins

Goblins are a green-skinned people, short of stature and typically having thin, dexterous fingers and strong, nimble legs. They fit easily into settlements with significant gnome or halfling populations, whose residences and furniture are already



appropriately sized. With long traditions of living in isolated family units in forests and mountain caves, many city-dwelling goblins dwell in large houses holding at least three generations of family and many different branches of their family tree.

Hobgoblins

Most hobgoblins are alike in stature to humans and have similar variations in build, ranging from thin and scrawny to broad shouldered and muscular. Their large ears, gleaming yellow eyes, and powerful incisors give them a vaguely feline appearance.

Hobgoblins are often stereotyped as having a warlike, martial nature—a sentiment that arose from rumors surrounding the Iron Authority in the Rifenmist Jungle. That empire is majority hobgoblin, and its cruel leaders have press-ganged the land's entire population into compulsory military service. In ages past, most hobgoblins that became known to the other peoples of Tal'Dorei were scouts or captured legionnaires of the Iron Authority. Today, though, many escapees from the authority's influence live in cities such as Emon, Kymal, or Byroden. Most of these free hobgoblins know only their parents' stories of that distant empire, and are able to live happily free of its influence.

Bugbears

Bugbears are tall humanoids covered with brown, black, or blue-gray fur, which combines with large ears and yellow eyes to give them an even more feline appearance than their hobgoblin cousins. Though bugbears are tall, their posture is generally stooped, so that their heads are still roughly at human height.

Many bugbears are solitary folk, living in forests and mountains where their thick fur protects them against the cold. They typically gather in large groups one to three times a year to socialize and play games with friends, reunite with family, and find love—a tradition that has been reworked by those who live in permanent communities. Such bugbears often live with a number of romantic partners under the same roof, or "adopt" goblin families and dwell in their loving, chaotic, multigenerational households.

Half-Giants

Four peoples were known to exist on Tal'Dorei when the world was reborn out of the ashes of the Calamity. The elves, who emerged from the Fey Realm. The dwarves, who emerged from the earth. The orcs, who endured the Calamity through strength and determination. And the half-giants, who safely rode out that war in mountaintop retreats before eventually descending to the windswept plains below.

Averaging seven feet tall, with hairless, craggy bodies and skin tough as stone, half-giants are often colloquially known as stoneborn or goliaths. Descended from stone giants, these folk have long been viewed as exemplars of rugged endurance and individualism. They are found in settlements across Tal'Dorei, where they are known for their innate strength and their commonly held belief—passed down from the giants of old—that all must take fate into their own hands.

In ancient times, goliaths and orcs lived off the same land, and their nomadic clans frequently warred and intermingled in equal measure. As such, it is common for orcs and goliaths of Tal'Dorei to discover common ancestors somewhere in their family trees.

Nomadic Herds

Stone giants believe that physical perfection is the world's greatest virtue, and this belief has been passed down culturally to the goliaths who live in the mountains and upon the Dividing Plains. These plains-dwelling half-giants call their clans "herds," and unite behind the stone giants' philosophy of "might makes right." Though at one time these herds were mostly made up of stoneborn almost exclusively, recent generations have come to include humans, orcs, dwarves, and even physically diminutive people such as halflings—as long as they agree with the philosophy of strength above all.



Rivermaw. The greatest of the half-giant herds is the Rivermaw, whose members use their strength of arms and political cunning to protect their ancestral lands from incursion. The Rivermaw herd includes many goliaths from the now-broken Herd of Storms, whose folk suffered at the hands of the tyrant Kevdak many years ago, and who now seek to protect others from ever suffering as they did.

Ravagers. Opposing the Rivermaw are the Ravagers—a group that the Rivermaw have stripped of the title of "herd" in disgust. The Ravagers are more a death cult dedicated to the Betrayer God called the Ruiner than a true clan. Just like the contemporary Rivermaw, the ranks of the Ravagers are filled with people of many different ancestries, from goliaths to humans to bloody-minded firbolgs—all of them rejecting order to embrace slaughter and cruelty.

Towers of Stone

Tal'Dorei's most famous goliath, the legendary hero Grog Strongjaw, is renowned for being a warrior first and a thinker second. But goliaths are no less intelligent or canny than Tal'Dorei's other peoples. Despite being known as nomadic folk, many half-giants understand that stone is sturdiest when formed into towers, walls, and bridges, and cities such as Kraghammer and Emon have long been filled with the works of goliath masons and architects not given the historical recognition they deserved.

Great advances in mathematics and civil engineering have been made by other city-dwelling stoneborn, and scholars of the Cobalt Soul are working to confirm which of the beloved Emonian and Westruunian structures that survived the Chroma Conclave are actually the result of pioneering goliath minds. Westruun has long been home to vast numbers of half-giants dwelling there to be close to their former herds, but many others have set down more recent roots after the Battle of Westruun, helping rebuild in the wake of the destruction wrought by the dragon Umbrasyl and the Herd of Storms.

Halflings

No one really knows how halflings appeared on Exandria, nor is it known how they first arrived in Tal'Dorei. Some halfling scholars are eager to trace the origin of their people, but many of those who live out in the countryside are more keen on inventing increasingly tall tales regarding the roots of their ancestry. One popular creation myth is that when the All-Hammer made the dwarves, a little bit of leftover clay slipped from his hands and landed on the rolling fields beyond the dwarves' mountains, where it became the first halflings. Though most people dismiss this story as nothing more than folklore, a sense of the halflings having humble beginnings fits with the place they've found for themselves in Tal'Dorei.

The historical records of the Cobalt Soul assert that halflings journeyed across the Ozmit Sea from Issylra with Tal'Dorei's first humans, with both peoples coexisting in peaceful harmony in this realm's earliest cities and idyllic agrarian towns. Humans and halflings likewise fought together—and against each other—when the Iron Rule of Drassig swept across the land.

The Scattered War divided halflings across the continent in two ways. Thousands of humans and halflings were impressed by Drassig's strength and joined his armies, even as many of those who refused to join turned away from their old allegiances. One group of halflings decided that humans had betrayed them and that Warren Drassig was emblematic of all humanity's evils, and formed the Stoutheart Clan in response. They stockpiled weapons and began a campaign of guerilla warfare against Drassig's armies—even battalions that held former friends and family among their ranks.

Another clan, the Lightfoots, asserted that all humans couldn't be condemned for the evil actions of one king, and pointed to the thousands of halflings and other non-humans who had allied themselves with Drassig's evil regime as proof. The Lightfoots advocated protecting as many people as possible while waiting the war out. In the end, it became clear to both halfling clans that in a conflict against a tyrant such as Drassig, neutrality was not an option. They banded together behind Zan Tal'Dorei's banner of rebellion.

These two clans dissolved after the Scattered War, but many contemporary halfling families can



trace their genealogies back to one or the other, and proudly proclaim that their great-grandparents were there when history was being made. Most halflings treat this sense of history only as idle fun, though, and few feel any real animosity over old ills and grudges.

Lightfoot Clan

The Lightfoot Clan dissolved into its many component families after the war, but the spirit that created the clan still survives. Those halflings who strongly identify with their Lightfoot identity look out for number one first, and are more likely to try to evade conflict than to meet an oncoming storm head-on. Yet a contradiction lingers within the Lightfoot spirit, for despite all their love of the comforts of home, many Lightfoot halflings feel a certain unquenchable hunger to explore. Many adventuring halflings are Lightfoots who have given in to this compulsion.

Stoutheart Clan

The Stoutheart Clan also dissolved in the wake of the Scattered War, but its ideals and identity still endure. Brashness and courage even in the face of absurd odds embodies the Stoutheart spirit. Recalling the guerilla army that stood against the legions of Drassig, any halfling with the fortitude to stand up to a warrior three times their size has more than earned the honor of calling themself a Stoutheart—even if their family tree doesn't have true roots in that historic clan.

Stouthearts often surprise other people who know of halflings only from experiences with more laid-back Lightfoot folk—and many use this surprise to their advantage to become truly cunning diplomats. The proud Stoutheart named Assum Emring, a former member of the Tal'Dorei Council, once boisterously claimed that he was so rude, so brash and so defiant in his first meeting with the late Sovereign Uriel Tal'Dorei II, that he was very nearly arrested—before being offered a position on the sovereign's staff the very next day!

Humans

Humans are the most populous race in Tal'Dorei today, though at one point in this land's history, all of humankind's holdings were naught but a speck on the western coastline.

If humans ever lived upon Tal'Dorei in the Age of Arcanum, they were wiped out entirely by the end of the Calamity. But after the world had begun to recover from the devastation wrought by that war of gods and mortals, an expedition of human explorers departed from Vasselheim in Issylra, thought to be the only bastion of humanoid culture on the surface of Exandria to survive the Calamity. Sailing eastward, they reached the land that would eventually come to be called Tal'Dorei, and were shocked to find elves, dwarves, orcs, and half-giants already living there—shattering their belief that the Calamity had washed away all mortal life except the people of Vasselheim.

Over the years, humans and their ambition have been responsible for bloody wars, weapons of unimaginable devastation, and spells that have reduced entire cultures to ruin. Yet humans have also driven great advances in art, music, poetry, and theater, and have shown love and compassion to the other mortal peoples of the world. The course of human history is never straight, and can turn at any time. After all, humans' lives are short and their minds are chaotic—a fact that troubles many of the long-lived elves and dwarves of Tal'Dorei. Still, despite these weaknesses—or perhaps because of them—humans have produced some of the most innovative and forward-thinking figures Tal'Dorei has ever known.

A Far-Reaching People

Humans can hail from anywhere in Tal'Dorei, for although their presence on the continent began as a small colony in the west, that presence quickly



spread. Humans were eager to trade, to forge alliances, and to find love with the elves, dwarves, orcs, and goliaths of Tal'Dorei. Their lands quickly grew in size and power. But then a human despot by the name of Warren Drassig broke the peace of trade and coalition in favor of conquest.

Drassig's betrayal nearly condemned humankind to an eternal reputation for villainy. However, one human rebel named Zan Tal'Dorei forged alliances of renewed trust between her rebellious faction and the other beleaguered peoples of Drassig's kingdom. Her forthright idealism and steadfast determination won the Scattered War, and laid the foundations for a new society that enshrined the alliances she created.

Though human adventurers can hail from anywhere in Tal'Dorei, humans are most commonly found in the lands connected by the Silvercut Roadway: the Bladeshimmer Shoreline in the west, the Lucidian Coast in the east, and the Dividing Plains that separate them. A number of humans from Wildemount also sailed across the Shearing Channel long ago and settled in the Alabaster Sierras, where they founded the city-state of Whitestone.

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. Human-dominated cities in Tal'Dorei are typically highly diverse, because they were founded with the aid of many allies of other ancestries. Today, members of all Exandria's other peoples come together in great cities such as Emon, even as humans from the distant continents of Issylra, Marquet, and Wildemount travel to exchange goods and ideas with the vast and bountiful lands of Tal'Dorei. Beyond the cities, dozens of human-founded outposts spread along the fringes of lands better known by Tal'Dorei's older ancestries—the elves, dwarves, orcs, goliaths, and even the reclusive giants. Outlanders, explorers, and hermits take refuge here from the hectic pace of city life, but still find danger enough in the wilderness to keep them on their toes.

Many humans likewise live in settlements founded by non-humans, ranging in size from tiny gnome-majority villages in Torian Forest to the ancient and stately cities of Syngorn and Kraghammer. These humans absorb the cultures of their homes, just as people of other ancestries raised in cities such as Emon can grow up with a distinctly human outlook on life.

Orcs

Orcs survived on Tal'Dorei during the Calamity through sheer determination and strength. Unlike the elves and dwarves who hid in their secret retreats, and the goliaths who watched the destruction from their mountaintops, great clans of orcs fought endless bloody battles on the Dividing Plains as the gods and their loyal minions clashed, wielding magic sufficient to rip the world asunder. And the orcs endured—perhaps in part because of the divine power behind that people's creation.

The myth surrounding the orcs' origin is a grim one. It is said that they were created by accident when the Arch Heart, god of the elves, shot out the eye of the war god known as the Ruiner. The Ruiner's blood poured from his wound and rained upon the armies of elves who served the Arch Heart—and those unsuspecting mortals were transformed. Their muscles bulged, tusks grew from their jaws, and their minds burned with a thirst for blood.

Yet after that battle's end, the fury within these new humanoids burned away, and the orcs survived as a hardy, physically powerful people. In the early days of Gwessar, orc clans warred with anyone who invaded their territory, especially the goliaths who descended from the mountains to the plains, and who rivaled the orcs in both strength and stature. But once more, fury cooled in time, and reasonable voices won out over those of even the most passionate warmongers.

Today, orcs and other folk with orcish heritage can be found all across Tal'Dorei. Many orcs find their natural athleticism an asset in specific trades,



but they can be found in every guild and profession. Though orcs and humans have an ancient legacy of conflict that lives on in a prejudiced few, the realm is filled with people who denounce and ostracize any who discriminate against their orc neighbors.

From Near and Far

Though many of Tal'Dorei's orcs are related to clans that have lived nomadically on the continent since time immemorial, the major cities of the land are also home to orcs who've traveled to Tal'Dorei from across the sea. Many of those orcs originated in the lands of Xhorhas, in Wildemount, and the continent of Marquet—places where orcs have never been denied the opportunity to become great scholars or leaders.

Tieflings

Though Tal'Dorei was once awash with fell legends claiming to detail the evil origin of tieflings, the more progressive parts of the realm have long since stomped out such ugly myths. Still, many folk can't help but show surprise the first time they see a person with horns curling from their brow, gleaming eyes of a single solid color, and lustrous, brightly hued skin of red, purple, or blue.



Scholars have scoured thousands of years of Issylran history in search of the origin of tieflings, to little avail. The most complete extant records suggest that during the Age of Arcanum, a cabal of power-hungry Issylran warlocks consorted with extraplanar entities, and that many of these unions resulted in children who shared the qualities of human and fiend. These progeny of the Lower Planes eventually came to break away from that origin to become a people unto themselves.

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. Many tieflings in Tal'Dorei refused to fight during the Calamity, embracing a nihilism which said that if the world could reject their kind, perhaps it was better to just let it burn. Yet the world and the tieflings survived.

In the centuries after the Divergence, tieflings who had grown weary of gods and demons rejoiced, feeling that the gods' imprisonment had effectively freed them from their cursed past. As such, when Warren Drassig and his sons conquered the elven lands of Gwessar, countless tieflings rose in rebellion against the tyrant. They had seen his kind before, they knew his methods, and they knew others would suffer as they once had.

Tiefling Children

Tieflings who form a union always have tiefling children, and most tieflings belong firmly to that ancient ancestry. Yet to this day, any humanoid—whether famous hero or common farmer—who makes a deal with fiends might give rise to children, grandchildren, or even more distant descendants born with the horns, eyes, and colorful skin of a tiefling.

Perhaps the most famous tiefling born in the past generation is Gwendolyn de Rolo, the youngest daughter of the renowned heroes Percival and Vex'ahlia de Rolo of Whitestone. It is an open secret in the city-state that Percival had dealings with fiends as a young man. Yet though none of the rumors have precisely pinpointed the nature of Percival's supernatural bargain, all who know Gwendolyn agree that she is the sweetest and most innocent de Rolo to roam the halls of Castle Whitestone in many years.

Mixed Ancestry

Even the oldest records of the Cobalt Soul are unclear as to whether the ancestries of elves, dwarves, orcs, and goliaths routinely mixed before the arrival of humankind on Tal'Dorei's shores. But it's easy to assume that explorers and ambassadors would inevitably find love or companionship among the folk of unfamiliar lands—and it is well known that the arrival of humans changed Tal'Dorei forever.

From the earliest days of human exploration on the continent, love and passion began to blossom between all of Tal'Dorei's people. The children that spring from the unions of folk of different heritage bear the traits of each of their parents, so that a human child might gain patches of scales and reptilian eyes from a dragonblood parent, or an orc and a dwarf might raise a child of squat, stout stature and olive-green skin, and bearing wisps of a coppery beard even as an infant.

In the modern age, love unites all folk. People of mixed ancestry can be found all across Tal'Dorei, though they are most common in the realm's cosmopolitan cities. Some ancestries are biologically improbable (such as a goliath and a gnome having a child), but sufficient application of magic makes even those unions possible. However, money can be a limiting factor in such things, as having a skilled mage on hand during conception and childbirth is an expensive process.

Non-humanoid creatures with the magical ability to assume humanoid size and form, such as dragons, can also sire or give birth to mixed-ancestry children.

Mixed Ancestry Statistics

Only certain combinations of ancestries, such as half-elves and half-orcs, already have racial traits described in the fifth edition core rules. You can use these racial traits as is, or create your own mixed ancestry from any two races by choosing one or two racial traits from one parent's race and exchanging them for the same number of traits from another parent's race.

When you build a character of mixed ancestry, keep in mind that some racial traits are more mechanically powerful than others, while some are largely flavorful or narrative focused. As such, focus on swapping a narrative trait for another narrative trait, or a combat-focused trait for another combat-focused trait. Additionally, you must have your Game Master's permission to use your replacement traits. As with any house rule, you and your Game Master might want to revisit your unique combination of traits later in the campaign if they feel overpowered or underpowered.

Other Races

In addition to humanoids, countless other sapient beings walk the lands of Tal'Dorei. Many of these are rare creatures, never building communities of folk who share their appearance and abilities. Some are wholly unique creations of unpredictable magical effects. Others are mighty beings such as dragons and giants, who can take on the role of hero or villain with equal ease but who intentionally separate themselves from the affairs of Tal'Dorei's other mortal peoples.



Hemocraft

Two of the subclasses in this book, the cleric's Blood Domain and the wizard's Blood Magic arcane tradition, use the magical art of hemocraft. This involves using your own blood and the blood of other creatures to heal, hex, and even bend bodies to your will.

Blood and Session Zero

Self-harm and the removal of agency can be an incredibly sensitive topic, regardless of whether it's happening to someone's own character, to another player character, or to an NPC. Additionally, many people have blood phobias that they may not want to disclose. Because of this, if any player or the GM wants to use one of these options, it's important that you bring it up in a pregame session zero (discussed at the start of this chapter) and get everyone's affirmative and enthusiastic buy-in. These options are exciting and flavorful, but the comfort of your group is essential to making the game fun for everyone.

Blood and Spellcasting

If everyone in your group is okay with using blood magic in your game, consider how you can describe your spellcasting in fun and eerie ways. When casting divine spells as a Blood Domain cleric, you can flavor your descriptions to tailor the magic's effect on an opponent's blood and vitality. The *hold person* spell might involve locking a target's body into place from the circulatory system out. *Cure wounds* might feature lines of blood knitting lacerations together like a needle and thread. As a Blood Magic wizard, your *find familiar* spell could conjure a horrific crimson spirit of congealed ichor and pulsing veins. Have fun with the theme!

I Don't Have Blood!

Some characters don't have blood. It might be because they're a living construct, or have become undead through some macabre magic. If you want to play a blood mage but don't have blood yourself, consider your hemocraft to be a unique variant that channels the power of your life force, the necromantic energy that animates you, or even the oil that pumps through your artificial form. This is a purely flavorful change, and doesn't affect any of your subclass features.

They Don't Have Blood!

On the other hand, some hemocraft features require the targets of your magic to have blood themselves. It's generally up to the Game Master to decide what does and doesn't have blood, but for the most part, all beasts, dragons, giants, and humanoids need blood to live. Most celestials, fey, and fiends have blood or magical ichor, as well as some elementals. However, constructs and undead don't have blood, and are unaffected by hemocraft.

Most aberrations, monstrosities, and plants also need blood or some type of vital sap or ichor to survive. It's recommended that the Game Master rule in the players' favor in cases like these. That said, one way to show that hemocraft is more difficult to use against such creatures is to give them advantage on any saving throw against the feature the character is trying to use.

Subclasses

This section features new subclass options for some of the familiar fifth edition character classes. These subclasses grant you new options not available to all members of your class. Information on your full class features, as well as other subclasses, can be found in the fifth edition rules.

Barbarian

You are a wild warrior whose emotions and instincts guide you in combat far more than logic or tactics. When your barbarian character chooses a primal path at 3rd level, the Path of the Juggernaut is a new option for use in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Path of the Juggernaut

Barbarians who follow the Path of the Juggernaut stand so resolutely that none can deter them, and they swing their weapons with such force that all who stand against them are flung aside. In might and in spirit, juggernauts are immovable object and unstoppable force all at once.

Juggernaut barbarians can be found all over Tal'Dorei, and are common among the goliath warriors of the Rivermaw herd that wanders the Dividing Plains. Some dwarves and humanoid survivalists of the Cliffkeep Mountains adopt this fighting style as an extension of their rugged determinism. And a number of stalwart juggernauts hail from the jungles of the Rifenmist Peninsula, having cast off the oppressive yoke of the Iron Authority.

Thunderous Blows

Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, your rage instills you with the strength to shove and smash your way through your foes, making any battlefield your domain. When you hit a creature with a melee attack while you're raging, you can push that creature up to 5 feet away from you in a direction of your choice. A creature that is Huge or larger makes a Strength saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier. On a success, the creature is not pushed.

Starting at 10th level, you can push a creature up to 10 feet when you hit it with a melee attack while you're raging.

Spirit of the Mountain

At 3rd level, you harness your fury to anchor your feet to the ground, becoming a bulwark of strength. While you are raging, you can't be knocked prone or moved along the ground against your will.

Demolishing Might

Starting at 6th level, your melee weapon attacks deal an extra 1d8 damage to constructs, and deal double damage to objects and structures.

Rules Tip: Forced Movement

Usually when one creature moves out of a hostile creature's reach, the hostile creature can use its reaction to make an opportunity attack. However, forced movement—such as being pushed by a Path of the Juggernaut barbarian's Thunderous Blows feature—doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Likewise, a juggernaut barbarian's Hurricane Strike feature allows an ally to make a melee weapon attack as a reaction only if the foe ends its forced movement within 5 feet of the ally. If a foe is pushed through other spaces within 5 feet of your allies, those allies can't make normal opportunity attacks against the foe.



Resolute Stance

Also at 6th level, you can temporarily refocus your combat ability to make yourself a bulwark of defense. At the start of your turn (no action required), you can assume a defensive stance that lasts until the start of your next turn. While in this stance, you can't be grappled, attack rolls against you have disadvantage, and your weapon attacks are made with disadvantage.

Hurricane Strike

Starting at 10th level, your blows can hurl foes through the air and into the attacks of your allies. As a reaction when you push a creature at least 5 feet, you can then leap into an unoccupied space next to the creature. If you do so, the creature must succeed on a Strength saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or be knocked prone. This leap costs no movement and does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Additionally, whenever you push a creature into a space within 5 feet of one of your allies, the ally can use its reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature.

Unstoppable

At 14th level, your fury in battle makes you unstoppable. While you're raging, your speed cannot be reduced, and you are immune to the frightened, paralyzed, prone, and stunned conditions.

If you are frightened, paralyzed, or stunned, you can still use a bonus action to enter a rage (even if you can't otherwise take actions). You aren't affected by any of these conditions while you're raging.

Kel'jaia Uloeh

Female gnome Path of the Juggernaut barbarian

When Kel'jaia sets her eyes on something, nothing can stop her from achieving it. Her small size has no bearing on her unbelievable strength, which can overpower creatures many times her size. She came to Tal'Dorei after the village on the Rifenmist Peninsula she was defending was razed by the Iron Authority. She first arrived in Syngorn, and through the connections and friendships she made there, was chosen to be a Syngornian delegate to the Tal'Dorei Council. She strongly believes that Tal'Dorei should take a stand against the cruelty of the Authority. Should strife come to Tal'Dorei, Kel'jaia is thought by all to be the council's first choice for the Master of War, due to her valor, tactical cunning, and battle prowess.

Bard

You are a charming performer whose wit and words can inspire heroism in your allies and a rising sense of dread in your foes. When your bard character chooses a bard college at 3rd level, the College of Tragedy is a new option available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

College of Tragedy

Not all grand stories conclude in triumphant victory. Many tales end with death and despair, and bards of the College of Tragedy know that sorrow and pathos are emotions just as potent as joy and delight. These bards specialize in the power of tragic storytelling, weaving words and spells together to dramatic and devastating effect.

Poetry in Misery

When you join the College of Tragedy at 3rd level, you learn to harness the beauty in failure, finding inspiration in even the direst twists of fate. Whenever you or an ally within 30 feet of you rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, you can use your reaction to soliloquize and regain one expended use of your Bardic Inspiration feature.

Sorrowful Fate

Starting at 3rd level, you exploit a foe's peril to instill deep feelings of sorrow and doom. When you or an ally you can see forces a creature to make a saving throw, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to change the type of saving throw to a Charisma save instead.

If the target fails this save, roll a Bardic Inspiration die. The target takes psychic damage equal to the result, and is plagued with regret for 1 minute. If the target is reduced to 0 hit points during this time and can speak, they are magically compelled to utter darkly poetic final words before succumbing to their injuries.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Tale of Hubris

At 6th level, you learn to weave a magical narrative that draws out the fatal arrogance of your foes. When a creature scores a critical hit against you or an ally within 60 feet of you that you can see, you can use your reaction and expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to target the attacking creature and evoke the story of their downfall. For 1 minute or until the target suffers a critical hit, any weapon attack against the target scores a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

At 14th level, the critical hit range of this feature increases to 17–20.

Impending Misfortune

Also at 6th level, your words can twist the power of fate to create triumph from the promise of future despair. When you make an attack roll or a saving throw, you can gain a +10 bonus to the roll, but the next attack roll or saving throw you make takes a −10 penalty. If not used, this penalty disappears when you finish a short or long rest.

You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest, or until you are reduced to 0 hit points.

Balthasar Bleakskull

Male half-giant College of Tragedy bard

Born in Westruun and raised by two loving goliath parents—a towering warrior and an equally massive astronomer of the Yuminor Observatory—Balthasar Bleakskull was exposed to the adventuring lifestyle and academia from an early age. He tumbled into the art of theater when he was but a child, and followed his passion for drama into adulthood—when he was entangled in a bloodcurdling academic conspiracy that left eight dead, including his dramatic mentor and his lover. Since then, he has devoted his dramatic skill to the art of tragedy, to grant his audiences the catharsis that he one day hopes to give himself.



Nimbus of Pathos

Upon reaching 14th level, you can touch a willing creature as an action and empower it with tragic heroism. For 1 minute, the creature is surrounded by mournful music and ghostly singing, granting it the following benefits and drawbacks:

- The creature has a +4 bonus to AC.
- It has advantage on attack rolls and saving throws.
- When the creature hits a target with a weapon attack or spell attack, that target takes an extra 1d10 radiant damage.
- Any weapon attack against the creature scores a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

When this effect ends, the creature immediately drops to 0 hit points and is dying. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



Alasterre de Vitrevos

Cleric

You are a wise disciple of one or more of Exandria's gods, whose divine hands can no longer shape the world on their own. When your cleric character chooses a divine domain at 1st level, you can consult your god's entry in chapter 2 for suggestions on which domains they might grant. The Blood Domain and Moon Domain are new options available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Blood Domain

Developed in Wildemount by the Claret Orders, the Blood Domain centers around the understanding of the natural life force as it exists within the body, and the divine conduit it can become. Those who take up this domain understand that the power of blood is the power of sacrifice, the balance of life and death, and the spirit's anchor within the mortal shell.

Gods who grant the power of the Blood Domain, including the Ruiner and the Matron of Ravens, direct their followers to tap into the connection between body and soul, exploit the hidden reserves of will within one's own vitality, and corrupt the bodies of others through the secret rites of hemocraft. Clerics of good gods use hemocraft to fill their self-sacrifice with purpose and power, while clerics with fewer morals use the blood of others to achieve their own malevolent ends.

Domain Spells

You gain domain spells at the cleric levels listed in the Blood Domain Spells table.

Blood Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*false life, sleep*
3rd	*hold person, ray of enfeeblement*
5th	*haste, slow*
7th	*blight, stoneskin*
9th	*dominate person, hold monster*

Alasterre de Vitrevos

Male human Blood Domain cleric

The director of Tal'Dorei's Claret Order is a meticulous, orderly man. He believes that he deserves all the good that comes to him in the world—and, in fairness, all the bad as well. He wields the unsettling magic of hemocraft created by his order in service of both his organization's interests, and the divine interests of the Matron of Ravens. His goals are simple: purge the world of undead, particularly vampires, and make his name one sung across Exandria in the process.

Bonus Proficiencies

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons.

Bloodletting Focus

Starting at 1st level, your divine magic draws the blood from magically inflicted wounds, worsening the agony of your foes. When you cast a damage-dealing spell of 1st level or higher whose duration is instantaneous, any creature with blood that takes damage from the spell takes extra necrotic damage equal to 2 + the spell's level.

Channel Divinity: Crimson Bond

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to form a supernatural bond with a creature you can see, or with a creature for which you possess a blood sample. This bond lasts for 1 hour or until your concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell).

While the bond is in effect, you can use an action to learn the target's approximate distance and direction from you, as well as its current hit points and any conditions affecting it, as long as the target is within 10 miles of you. Alternatively, you can use your action to attempt to connect with the target's senses. You take 2d6 necrotic damage and the target makes a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC. On a successful save, the bond ends. On a failure, you can choose to either see or hear through the target's senses for a number of minutes equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1 minute). During this time, you are blinded or deafened (respectively) with regard to your own senses. When the connection ends, the bond is lost.

Regardless of the outcome, the target feels a wave of unease pass over it when it makes this save.

Channel Divinity: Blood Puppet

Starting at 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to briefly control a creature's actions—whether that creature is living or dead. As an action, you target a Large or smaller creature or corpse within 60 feet of you that has blood. A creature you target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become charmed by you. An unconscious creature automatically fails its saving throw, and isn't incapacitated while you control its actions. A corpse targeted by this effect gains a semblance of life that you control.

On the affected creature or animated corpse's turn, you can command it (no action required) to move up to half its speed and use its action to do one of the following:

- Interact with an object
- Make a single attack
- Do nothing

An animated corpse or an unconscious creature takes its turn immediately after yours, but can't move or take actions unless you command it to do so. Its statistics are the same as when it was alive or conscious.

An affected living creature makes a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. For any target, your control lasts for 1 minute or until your concentration is broken (as if concentrating on a spell).

At 17th level, you can use this feature to target a Huge or smaller creature or corpse.

Sanguine Recall

At 6th level, you can sacrifice a portion of your own vitality to recover expended spell slots as an action. The spell slots can have a combined level equal to or less than half your cleric level (rounded up), and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher. You take 1d8 necrotic damage for each spell slot level recovered, which can't be reduced in any way. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

For example, if you're an 8th-level cleric, you can recover up to four levels of spell slots—a single 4th-level slot, two 2nd-level slots, a 3rd-level slot and a 1st-level slot, or four 1st-level slots. You then take 4d8 necrotic damage.

Divine Strike

At 8th level, you gain the ability to cause the physical wounds you deal out to bleed profusely. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 necrotic damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

Vascular Corruption Aura

At 17th level, you can use your action to emit a deathly aura of necrotic energy that causes the veins of nearby foes to burst and bleed. For 1 minute, any hostile creature with blood that moves within 30 feet of you for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 3d6 necrotic damage. If a hostile creature with blood regains hit points while in the aura, it regains only half as many hit points as expected.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Moon Domain

Since the Founding, all mortal creatures have looked to the skies and sensed the power and mystery carried by Catha and Ruidus, the two moons of Exandria. The Moonweaver herself is said to guide her worshipers from within the pale glow of Catha, revealing hidden paths and granting inspired dreams to those who pray to that moon. Distant, dark Ruidus is often regarded with awe and apprehension, considered a portent for fell deeds and bad luck.

Clerics of the Moon Domain draw on their divine connection to the moons to wield light and shadow, invoke good fortune and ill favor, and reveal or conceal as they see fit. Most Moon clerics worship the Moonweaver herself, but her followers are as varied as the stars in the sky. Some seek to protect the vulnerable and do good in the world, while others meddle with impunity and distort the truth for selfish gain. Other Moon clerics worship not the gods but the moons themselves, especially those with an innate connection to the lunar cycles through lycanthropy.

Domain Spells

You gain domain spells at the cleric levels listed in the Moon Domain Spells table.

Moon Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*faerie fire, silent image*
3rd	*invisibility, moonbeam*
5th	*hypnotic pattern, major image*
7th	*greater invisibility, hallucinatory terrain*
9th	*dream, passwall*

Clarity of Catha

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you learn to shine light upon the mind's most dire moments, shielding those you protect. When a creature within 30 feet of you that you can see makes a Wisdom saving throw, you can use your reaction to grant that creature advantage on the save.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Nalys Ildareth

Nonbinary (they/them) elf Moon Domain cleric

The moons of Exandria show their faces for all to see, yet hide a secret face from the world. Nalys Ildareth, leader of an obscure Syngornian sect of the Moonweaver, believes that true reverence requires all faithful to have a face they show to the world—represented by a mask of silver they never remove—and one they keep to themselves, beneath the mask. Nalys believes that it is their duty to enact the Moonweaver's will upon Exandria, and keep the world safe within the balance of Catha's calm order and the ill-fated chaos of Ruidus. They are thoughtful and calculating, seeming an impassive observer while they wait for the proper moment to strike, but then transforming into a furious avenger when that moment arrives.

Channel Divinity: Blessing of the Full Moon

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to infuse your allies with bestial power. As an action, you instill a willing creature of your choice within 30 feet of you that you can see with one of the following blessings of your choice:

Blessing of the Watchful Moon. For 1 hour, the blessed creature's speed increases by 10 feet, and it has advantage on Wisdom (Perception or Survival) checks involving smell or made to track a creature.

Blessing of the Blood-Drenched Moon. For 10 minutes, the blessed creature has advantage on attack rolls against a target if at least one of the blessed creature's allies is within 5 feet of the target and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Channel Divinity: Mind of Two Moons

Starting at 6th level, you can use your Channel Divinity to invoke the twofold arcana of Exandria's moons. By expending one use of Channel Divinity, you can cast a second concentration spell while already concentrating on a first spell, as long as both spells are on your list of Moon Domain spells. If you



need to make a Constitution saving throw to maintain your concentration on both spells, you make the save with disadvantage. On a failure, you lose concentration on both spells.

Empowered Cantrips

Starting at 8th level, your cleric cantrips deal extra damage equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1).

Eclipse of Ill Omen

At 17th level, you can call upon the vermillion moon Ruidus to flare in the sky above you, eclipsing all other light. Its power surrounds you even where the sky can't be seen, and even on other planes. As a bonus action, you can manifest an area of reddish, dim light in a 60-foot radius around you. In addition to the normal effects of dim light, creatures in the area make saving throws with disadvantage. When you create this eclipse, you can choose any number of creatures that are unaffected by it.

This eclipse lasts while you concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell) for up to 1 minute. Concentrating on this feature counts as concentrating on a Moon Domain spell for the purpose of your Mind of Two Moons feature.



Camellia Springshower

Additionally, once per turn when you deal radiant damage to any creatures in this area of dim light, you can curse one of those creatures until the eclipse ends (no action required). A creature cursed in this way has its speed halved and can't regain hit points.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Druid

As a druid, you are a keeper of the old ways, attuned to nature and channeling power that grants you spells and allows you to transform your body. When your druid character chooses a druid circle at 2nd level, the Circle of the Blighted is a new option available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Circle of the Blighted

Those who channel the magic of life and nature often find themselves drawn to a particular shrine or natural site, binding their body and spirit to these places of power. Such druids draw vitality from their chosen location, protecting it with their lives—but not all succeed in defending these sacred realms.

Whether through the subtle corruption of vile magics, the tainted presence of an ancient terror, or a terrible mistake unleashed by druids themselves, a land can become cursed with magic that warps any druid bound to that land. Twisted by their connection to an unhallowed territory, these guardians come to embody the defiled nature they serve, exalting the natural process of decay and using it to further their goals—or sometimes to seek a means to end the curse that plagues them.

Camellia Springshower

Female firbolg Circle of the Blighted druid

Life was beautiful under the light of the sun for Camellia Springshower. The sun caused her flowers to flourish, and the rains nourished them so they could grow when next the sun arose. One day, however, she wandered too far from her family while they traveled the Dividing Plains, and tumbled into the bleak depths of Shadebarrow, a forgotten, accursed tomb. She ran for the light, but a specter reached out from the walls and touched a ghastly finger to her chest. She felt her blood run cold, and the flowers within her basket wither away. Though she escaped the Shadebarrow, she was never able to find her family again, and she now wanders the Dividing Plains like an untethered shadow—hoping to use the blighted powers granted to her by the shade to do some semblance of good in the world, even if all life seems to wither beneath her touch.

Defile Ground

Starting at 2nd level when you choose this circle, you can use a bonus action to corrupt a patch of land or an area of water in a 10-foot radius centered on a point within 60 feet of you. This corruption lasts for 1 minute. The corrupted area is difficult terrain for creatures that are hostile to you. Additionally, when a creature in the area takes damage from an attack or spell for the first time on a turn, it takes an extra 1d4 necrotic damage. You can move this patch of corruption up to 30 feet as a bonus action. Flying creatures are unaffected by the corruption.

Starting at 10th level, the area of your defiled ground increases to a 20-foot radius. Additionally, the extra damage dealt by your defiled ground increases to 1d6 when you reach 10th level in this class, and 1d8 at 14th level.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Blighted Shape

Also at 2nd level, your physical form begins to show effects of the corruption you wield, tracing blackened veins across your skin, producing gnarled, bony protrusions, or other eerie phenomena. You gain proficiency in the Charisma (Intimidation) skill.

Additionally, while you are transformed by you Wild Shape feature, you gain a +2 bonus to AC as gnarled spines protrude from your body. Your beast form also gains darkvision with a radius of 60 feet, or an additional 60 feet of darkvision if it already has that sense.

Call of the Shadowseeds

At 6th level, you learn to summon the feral children of the forest from the life force of your enemies. When a creature that is not undead or a construct takes damage within the area of your Defile Ground feature, you can use your reaction to summon a blighted sapling in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the creature. You can direct the sapling to make an attack against any creature within 5 feet of it as a part of this reaction. The sapling then acts on your initiative, obeying your verbal commands.

The blighted sapling remains in your service until it's reduced to 0 hit points, until the end of your next long rest, or until you summon another sapling, at which point it crumbles into foul-smelling mulch. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

The sapling uses the statistics below. Its features scale based on your level and proficiency bonus (PB).

Blighted Sapling

Medium plant

Armor Class 10 + PB (natural armor)
Hit Points twice your druid level
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	4 (−3)	8 (−1)	3 (−4)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9
Languages understands the languages you speak
Challenge — Proficiency Bonus (PB) equals your bonus

ACTIONS

Multiattack. When you reach 14th level in this class, the blighted sapling makes two claw attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* your spell attack modifier to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d4 + PB piercing damage.

Foul Conjuration

Starting at 10th level, the creatures you conjure are malformed and bloated with toxins. Any beast, fey, or plant (including your blighted sapling) summoned or created by your spells or class features gains the following traits:

Blighted Resilience. The creature has immunity to necrotic and poison damage and to the poisoned condition.

Toxic Demise. When the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes in a burst of toxic mulch or fetid viscera. Each creature within 5 feet of the exploding creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or take necrotic damage based on the creature's challenge rating (see the table below). As an action, you can also cause a summoned creature to explode, immediately killing it.

Toxic Demise Damage

Creature CR	Damage
1/4 or lower	1d4 necrotic damage
1/2	1d6 necrotic damage
1 or higher	A number of d8s of necrotic damage equal to the creature's challenge rating
No challenge rating	A number of d6s of necrotic damage equal to your proficiency bonus

Incarnation of Corruption

At 14th level, your physical form begins to take on the tainted traits of the land you are bonded to. Your skin grows ashen, and your eyes darken or turn completely white. Spines and jagged spurs emerge from your body, granting you resistance to necrotic damage and a +2 bonus to AC.

Additionally, whenever you start your turn within the radius of the corruption created by your Defile Ground feature, you can use a bonus action to gain temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

Monk

You are a canny martial artist whose connection to the unseen energy of life grants you supernatural insights and the ability to manipulate your foes. When your monk character chooses a monastic tradition at 3rd level, the Way of the Cobalt Soul is a new option available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.



Cressida Holt

Way of the Cobalt Soul

Driven by the pursuit of knowledge and its scholars' worship of the Knowing Mentor, the Library of the Cobalt Soul is one of the best-respected and most heavily guarded repositories of tomes, history, and information in all Exandria. People from all lands come to the library to seek knowledge, and those particularly dedicated to the virtues of truth often pledge their minds and bodies to the Cobalt Soul's cause. To become a member of the Cobalt Soul is to give oneself over to a quest dedicated to unveiling life's mysteries, bringing light to the secrets of concealed evil, and guarding the most powerful and dangerous of truths from those whose unwholesome thirst for knowledge might bring death and suffering to others.

The monks of the Cobalt Soul are the embodiment of the maxim: "Know your enemy." Through tireless research, they steel themselves against the unrelenting tides of evil. Through rigorous training, they learn to break through their foes' mental and physical defenses. Then, once the fight is done, they record their findings for future generations of monks to study.

Cressida Holt

Nonbinary (she/they) orc Way of the Cobalt Soul monk

A freshly titled expositor of the Cobalt Soul, Cressida Holt has already made a name for themself as a suave, stylish secret agent. Their assignments as an expositor take them across Tal'Dorei, though they are most often seen in Emon, Kymal, and Westruun, where they infiltrate political galas, high-stakes games of two-card, and other dens of high-society corruption.

Though most Cobalt Soul expositors are expected to keep a low profile and gather intelligence, Cressida has found success with a flashier method. She strides into a room in a fine cobalt-blue suit, makes sensual eye contact with the most beautiful person in the room, and casually makes herself someone from whom no one can keep a secret.

Extract Aspects

Starting at 3rd level, you can strike pressure points to intuit crucial information about a foe. When you hit a creature with one of the attacks granted by your Flurry of Blows, you can analyze it. Whenever an analyzed creature misses you with an attack, you can immediately use your reaction to make an unarmed strike against that creature if it's within your reach. This benefit lasts until you finish a short or long rest.

Additionally, when you analyze a creature, you learn all of its damage vulnerabilities, damage resistances, damage immunities, and condition immunities.

Extort Truth

Starting at 6th level, you can precisely strike a hidden cluster of nerves on a creature, temporarily preventing it from masking its true thoughts and intent. When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 1 ki point to force it to make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is unable to speak a deliberate lie, and all Charisma checks directed at the creature are made with advantage for up to 10 minutes. You know if it succeeded or failed on its 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.

If you wish to impose this effect on a creature without injuring it, you can attack the creature to simply touch it, dealing no damage on a hit.

Mystical Erudition

Also by 6th level, you have extensively studied the history and lore within the archives of the Cobalt Soul. You learn one language of your choice, and you gain proficiency with one of the following skills of your choice: Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature, or Religion. If you already have proficiency in one of the listed skills, you can instead choose to double your proficiency bonus for any ability check you make that uses the chosen proficiency.

You gain an additional language and an additional skill proficiency from the above list (or you can double the bonus of an existing proficiency from the list) at 11th and 17th level.

Mind of Mercury

Starting at 11th level, you've honed your awareness and reflexes through mental aptitude and pattern recognition. Once per turn, if you've already taken your reaction, you may spend 1 ki point to take an additional reaction. You can use only one reaction per triggering effect.

Debilitating Barrage

Upon reaching 17th level, you've gained the knowledge to manipulate a creature's ki to undermine their fortitude. When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 3 ki points to cause the creature to gain vulnerability to one damage type of your choice for 1 minute, or until the end of a turn in which it has taken damage of that type.

If a creature has resistance to the damage type you choose, this resistance is suppressed for 1 minute, rather than gaining vulnerability. A creature that is immune to the damage type you choose is unaffected. A creature who is affected by this feature cannot be affected by it again for 24 hours.

Paladin

You are an honorable warrior whose devotion to a cause or ideal empowers you with righteous magic. When your paladin character chooses a sacred oath at 3rd level, the Oath of the Open Sea is a new option available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Oath of the Open Sea

The Oath of the Open Sea calls to seafaring warriors, swashbuckling sailors, and traveling guardians who seek the thrill of a limitless horizon. Driven to search for adventure and mystery across and beneath every endless oceanic expanse, paladins who swear this oath stand against those who would deny liberty to likeminded travelers, rooting out tyranny and corruption wherever it is found.

Such guardians believe in the natural beauty of the sea, often making offerings and prayers to entities or deities such as the Wildmother or the Stormlord who influence safe passage. At the same time, they answer the call to hunt the monstrous creatures that too often bloody the waters with wanton violence and ill intent, and which terrorize the folk of the sea and shore.

Shirkuh Marín

Male human Oath of the Open Sea paladin

Though he is only in his early 30s, famed sailor Shirkuh Marín is well on the way to having his life become an epic sung in taverns all over the Lucidean Ocean. Born a girl to Marquesian immigrant parents in Nicodranas on Wildemount's Menagerie Coast, Shirkuh took his present name from his great-granduncle, an infamous Marquesian pirate. He swore to wear that name with pride, and has followed his own code of honor and ethics ever since. He has worked hand-in-hand with both honest sailors and pirates of the Revelry—and clashed swords with both, too.

Of the many tales that surround Shirkuh, it's unclear which are true—if he truly outran a juvenile kraken in the Shearing Channel, if he indeed cheated the Plank King in a game of two-card and lived to tell the tale, and if he actually managed to steal the heart of a Clasp Spireling in Kymal. But most agree that even if the stories are made up, he possesses both the talent and the recklessness to have accomplished them if he set his mind to it.

Tenets of the Open Sea

Freedom can be a selfless virtue or a selfish want. For paladins who swear the Oath of the Open Sea, freedom is the highest calling, and a gift to be granted to all.

No Greater Life than a Life Lived Free. One should be free to chart their own path without oppression. Those who would exert their power to dominate others shall be smote.

Trust the Skies. The guidance of a strong breeze. The rumbling warnings of a coming storm. Nature is a source of portent and council that should be heeded.

Adapt Like the Water. The waters of the ocean can shift around any obstacle—or become the most impassable obstacle of all. They carve away the land to reveal the secrets of the past, or swallow the truth and hide it forever. To embrace this fluidity is to be ready for any challenge.

Explore the Uncharted. The world is filled with mystery. Through the pursuit of enigmatic ends, one can uncover those who hide their foul deeds, and find the path to becoming something great.

Oath Spells

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed in the Oath of the Open Sea Spells Spells marked with an asterisk are new spells described at the end of this section.

Oath of the Open Sea Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*create or destroy water, expeditious retreat*
5th	*augury, misty step*
9th	*call lightning, freedom of the waves**
13th	*control water, freedom of movement*
17th	*commune with nature, freedom of the winds**

Channel Divinity

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Marine Layer. As an action, you channel the sea to create a thick cloud of fog that surrounds you for 20 feet in all directions. The fog moves with you, remaining centered on you and making its area heavily obscured. You and each creature within 5 feet of you instead treat the area as lightly obscured. This fog lasts for 10 minutes, spreads around corners, and cannot be dispersed unless you choose to end this effect (no action required).

Fury of the Tides. As a bonus action, you channel the powerful might of the waves to bolster your attacks for 1 minute. Once per turn for the duration, when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can choose to push the target 10 feet away from you. If pushed into an obstacle or another creature, the target takes bludgeoning damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Rules Tip: Visibility

Fog and other effects can obscure vision for you, your enemies, and your allies. When you heavily obscure an area using your Marine Layer Channel Divinity option, all creatures within the area have their vision completely blocked, and creatures outside the area can't see in. Creatures that can't see automatically fail ability checks that require sight. Also, attack rolls against creatures that can't see have advantage, and their own attack rolls have disadvantage.

Creatures in a lightly obscured area have disadvantage only on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. The rules for when your vision is obscured are described completely in the fifth edition core rules.



Shirkuh Marín

Aura of Liberation

Starting at 7th level, you fill nearby creatures with the energy of movement. While you're not incapacitated, you and creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you cannot be grappled or restrained, and ignore penalties on movement and attacks while underwater. Creatures that are already grappled or restrained when they enter the aura can spend 5 feet of movement to automatically escape unless they are bound by magic restraints.

When you reach 18th level in this class, the aura affects creatures within 30 feet of you.

Stormy Waters

At 15th level, you can call on the force of crashing waters as a reaction whenever a creature moves into or out of your reach. The creature takes 1d12 bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or be knocked prone.

Mythic Swashbuckler

At 20th level, you learn to channel the spirits of historic sea captains to briefly become a paragon of heroic adventure. As an action, you embrace these spirits of the sea to gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks and you gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. If you already have a climbing speed, it is doubled.
- If you are within 5 feet of a creature and no other creatures are within 5 feet of you, you have advantage on attack rolls against that creature.
- You can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action.
- You have advantage on Dexterity checks and Dexterity saving throws against effects you can see.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Oath of the Open Sea Spells

Paladins of the Oath of the Open Sea automatically gain two new spells through their Oath Spells feature. These spells can also be learned by druids, rangers, and sorcerers of the appropriate level, at the GM's discretion.

Freedom of the Waves

3rd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a strand of wet hair)
Duration: Instantaneous

You conjure a deluge of seawater in a 15-foot-radius, 10-foot-tall cylinder centered on a point within range. This water takes the form of a tidal wave, a whirlpool, a waterspout, or another form of your choice. Each creature in the area must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or take 2d8 bludgeoning damage and fall prone. You can choose a number of creatures equal to your spellcasting modifier (minimum of 1) to automatically succeed on this saving throw.

If you are within the spell's area, as part of the action you use to cast the spell, you can vanish into the deluge and teleport to an unoccupied space that you can see within the spell's area.

Freedom of the Winds

5th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a scrap of sailcloth)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Wind wraps around your body, tugging at your hair and clothing as your feet lift off the ground. You gain a flying speed of 60 feet. Additionally, you have advantage on ability checks to avoid being grappled, and on saving throws against being restrained or paralyzed.

When you are targeted by a spell or attack while this spell is in effect, you can use a reaction to teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space you can see. If this movement takes you out of range of the triggering spell or attack, you are unaffected by it. This spell then ends when you reappear.

Sorcerer

You are a spellcaster to whom magic comes as naturally as breathing, possessing an instinctive grasp of its power—for that power flows through your very veins. When your sorcerer character chooses a sorcerous origin at 1st level, the Runechild origin is a new option available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Runechild

The mysterious weave and flow of magic is feared by many folk across Exandria. But while some spellcasters must study the essence and nature of magic in the hope of learning to harness it, sorcerers possess an innate talent to sculpt and wield the errant strands of power that shape the world. For some sorcerers, the body becomes a conduit for this power, which is collected and stored in the form of natural runes—and which sees a sorcerer named as a Runechild.

The talents of a Runechild are rare, and sorcerers with this origin are sought after for study by mages and scholars alike, driven by a prevalent belief that the secrets of their runes can help understand the mysteries of magic. Others sometimes seek to enslave Runechild sorcerers, using their bodies

as tortured spell batteries for diabolic pursuits. Runechild sorcerers were subjugated throughout the Age of Arcanum, and many of their contemporaries now search for ways to hide their essence—a task that isn't easy given the revealing nature of their gifts.

Karzadrawn "Karzy" Sunscale

Male brass dragonblood Runechild sorcerer

When you're a model in a city as big as Emon, you've got to find a way to stand out. Being a broad-shouldered, heavyset dragonblood with brass scales that twinkle in the sun is a good start, but Karzy Sunscale has another ace up his sleeve: he's a runechild. Ever since he was an infant, he has manifested strange magical abilities, and when he expresses intense emotions through his magic, mysterious runes flare to life upon his scales. All of these traits have always made Karzy the center of attention, and he basks in other peoples' interest like a lizard in the sun. He goes out of his way to dress in outrageous fashions and emote as vividly as he can. He works as a fashion model in Emon, but the idea has worked its way into his head that he could make an even bigger splash if he were to also become a celebrity adventurer by completing a truly monumental quest.



Essence Runes

At 1st level, your body begins to express your innate magic as runes traced out across your skin. You start with 1 essence rune, and gain an additional rune whenever you gain a level in this class. These runes can manifest anywhere on your body, though the first usually manifests on the forehead. Your essence runes remain invisible when inert.

At the end of a turn during which you spent one or more sorcery points, a number of your essence runes equal to the number of sorcery points you spent begin to glow with stored energy, becoming charged runes. You use these charged runes to power your Runechild subclass features. Also, as a bonus action, you may spend a sorcery point to convert two essence runes into two charged runes.

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.

If you expend a charged rune to use one of your Runechild features, it returns to being an inert essence rune. Any charged runes also revert to inert essence runes after you finish a long rest.

Runic Magic

Beginning at 1st level, you learn additional spells when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown on the Runic Spells table. Each of these spells counts as a sorcerer spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of sorcerer spells you know.

When you gain a level in this class, you can replace one spell you gained from this feature with another spell of the same level. The new spell must be an abjuration or transmutation spell from the sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell list.

Runic Spells

Sorcerer Level	Spells
1st	*longstrider, protection from evil and good*
3rd	*lesser restoration, protection from poison*
5th	*glyph of warding, magic circle*
7th	*death ward, freedom of movement*
9th	*greater restoration, telekinesis*

Glyph of Aegis

Starting at 1st level, you can release the stored arcane power within your runes to absorb or deflect threatening attacks. Whenever you take damage, you can expend any number of charged runes as a reaction. Roll a number of d6s equal to the number of runes you expended, and reduce the damage by the total.

When you reach 6th level, you can touch a creature as an action and expend up to 3 charged runes to

transfer your protective power to it for up to 1 hour. The next time that creature takes damage within the next hour, it rolls 1d6 per charged rune spent and reduces the damage by the total. You can't transfer this power to a creature already under the effect of Glyph of Aegis.

Your Glyph of Aegis die becomes a d8 at 14th level.

Sigilic Augmentation

At 6th level, you can channel your runes to temporarily bolster your physical capabilities. When you make a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution ability check, you can expend a charged rune as a reaction to gain advantage on the roll.

In addition, when you are forced to make a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throw, you can use your reaction and expend a charged rune to gain advantage on the saving throw. Once you use this feature in this way, you can't use it in this way again until you complete a long rest.

Manifest Inscriptions

Also at 6th level, you can reveal hidden glyphs and enchantments that surround you. As an action, you expend one charged rune to reveal hidden or invisible arcane traps, marks, runes, wards, sensors, or glyphs within 60 feet of you. They glow with dim light in a 5-foot radius for 1 minute.

You have advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks to discern the nature of any magic revealed in this way for the duration. If the glyphs you reveal mean something in a language you can't read, you can understand them while they are glowing as if you knew that language.

Runic Torrent

Upon reaching 14th level, you can channel runic energy to overpower even the staunchest defenses. When you cast a spell, you can expend 2 charged runes to cause the spell to deal force damage instead of its usual damage types. Additionally, all creatures targeted by the spell or within the spell's area must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or be knocked prone or pushed up to 15 feet away from the spell's point of origin (your choice).

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

Arcane Exemplar

Starting at 18th level, you can use a bonus action and expend a charged rune to become a being of pure magical energy. While in your exemplar form, you gain the following benefits:

- You have a flying speed of 60 feet.
- Creatures have disadvantage on saving throws against your sorcerer spells.
- You have resistance to damage dealt by spells.
- Whenever you cast a spell of 1st level or higher, you regain hit points equal to the spell's level.

Your exemplar form lasts until the end of your turn. However, you can expend a charged rune at the end of your turn (no action required) to extend the duration until the end of your next turn. When your exemplar form ends, you are stunned until the end of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

Wizard

You are a studious spellcaster who has earned your influence over arcane power through long hours of rigorous learning. When your wizard character chooses an arcane tradition at 2nd level, Blood Magic is a new option available in a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Blood Magic

Considered taboo by many societies and magic practitioners, the use of blood magic—also known as hemocraft—is a rare art that harnesses the latent powers of a creature's vitality to fuel and amplify the caster's own capabilities, while manipulating and weakening the bodies of enemies from the inside. Some of the more macabre mages seeking to empower their arcane pursuits turn to hemocraft as a means of bolstering their spells, giving their own life's blood to reach new heights of frightening magical prowess.

The secrets of hemocraft and other forms of blood magic were once the sole purview of the mysterious Claret Orders. In recent years, however, these secrets have begun to spread beyond the order's members and into the hands of less scrupulous mages. Blood magic has a bad reputation in Tal'Dorei, even though its powers can be used for much more than evil.

Blood Channeling

When you choose this arcane tradition at 2nd level, you are able to use your own depleted life essence to channel your magical abilities. Whenever your current hit points are below your hit point maximum, you can use your own body as an arcane focus.

In addition, when casting a wizard spell that requires a costly material component, you can forego the component by taking 1d10 necrotic damage per 50 gp of the cost of the component (minimum 1d10). This damage can't be reduced in any way. If this damage reduces you to 0 hit points, the spell fails but the spell slot is not expended.

Sanguine Burst

Also at 2nd level, you learn how to weave your life force into a spell you cast, boosting its intensity at the cost of your vitality. Whenever you roll damage for a spell you've cast of 1st level or higher, you can choose to take necrotic damage equal to the spell's level to reroll a number of the damage dice up to your Intelligence modifier (minimum one). This damage can't be reduced in any way, and you must use the new rolls.

Bond of Mutual Suffering

At 6th level, when a creature you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to bind your vitality to the attacker and force them to share your pain. The attacker takes damage equal to the damage you took.

This feature cannot be used against constructs or undead. You can use this feature once. You must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

At 14th level, you can use this feature twice between rests.

Glyph of Hemorrhaging

Starting at 10th level, when you damage a creature with a spell, you can choose to curse that creature for 1 minute. While cursed in this way, whenever the creature is hit by an attack, it takes an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. At the end of each of the creature's turns, it can make a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC, ending the curse on a success.

This feature cannot be used against creatures that are undead or constructs. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Thicker than Water

Upon reaching 14th level, the blood that flows through your veins is empowered with arcane vigor that mends wounds and helps preserve your life. Whenever a spell or magical effect causes you to regain hit points, you regain an additional number of hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

In addition, while you are concentrating on a spell, you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Honor Kinnabari



Honor Kinnabari

Female tiefling Blood Magic wizard

It's not easy being the youngest spellwright in the League of Miracles, especially when you've got a conscience. Honor Kinnabari was enamored with the league since she was a child in Westruun, when she saw the spellwrights and their adranach constructs rebuild the entire Market Ward in a matter of days after it was reduced to a slag pit by a hoard of magma landsharks. She was raised by dwarf parents from the Alabaster Sierras, and wears wizardly robes in the style of their clan in honor of them. Honor has just constructed an adranach of her own, and has begun leading small-scale operations for the league, but she's starting to worry that something cultish and sinister lurks beneath her compatriots' practiced smiles.

Backgrounds

Every player character in a fifth edition fantasy roleplaying game has a background. While your class represents your role in an adventuring party, your background represents who you were and what you learned before you began your adventuring career. Your background doesn't necessarily have to be confined to the past, though, as the way it marks your connections to the world might involve ongoing commitments to an organization or even an entire people.

The new backgrounds in this section each grant your character new proficiencies, languages, and equipment, as well as a unique background feature. Tables of characteristics can also help you quickly generate personality traits, ideals, character flaws, and bonds to tie your character to the people, places, and causes of a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Ashari

Isolated from the political struggles of urban Tal'Dorei, you are a member of the Ashari people—a society bound to an ancient covenant protecting the Material Plane from the chaos of the primordial elements. You've been raised to revere and protect the natural world, and to shepherd the tumultuous elemental forces that give it life. When the elements threaten to overwhelm the delicate balance of nature, it is the role of the Ashari to restore harmony.

You grew up in a tight-knit society, bound to a leader who successfully returned from the traditional journey to the Elemental Planes known as an Aramante. By contrast, you might well have never traveled more than a few days from your home, and thus have closer bonds with your family and neighbors than many people of Tal'Dorei.

In your early life, you likely took up one of the many roles that make up your society, whether homemaker, hunter, explorer, or protector. If you have the ability to use elemental magic, you might have had one of the most important duties of all: protecting and soothing the elemental rift at the heart of your home. And even as an adventurer now traveling far beyond that home, your loyalties still lie with the continued safety of your order. Whatever else you do as you learn about the new world around you, you're conscious of the need to gather allies to your cause.

Each Ashari is tethered to one of the four elemental orders and their settlements. You must select Pyrah (fire), Vesrah (water), Terrah (earth), or Zephrah (wind). The rifts of earth and air are both in Tal'Dorei. If you live or lived among your people, then you are familiar with the remarkable sights of Air Ashari on *skysails* above the Summit Peaks, or Earth Ashari erupting from the solid stone of the Cliffkeep Mountains on their *earthboards* (see page 198 for these magic items' game statistics).

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, plus your choice of Arcana or Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit

Languages: Primordial (Aquan, Auran, Ignan, or Terran, depending on the elemental affinity of your tribe)

Equipment: A set of traveler's clothes, a staff carved with symbols of your tribe, an herbalism kit, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Elemental Harmony

Growing up surrounded by wild elemental magics has attuned your senses to those chaotic forces, enabling you to subtly bend them to your will. As an action, you channel minor magic involving the element of your chosen Ashari order, giving you one of the following abilities:

Pyrah. You instantaneously create and control a burst of flame small enough to light a candle, a torch, or a small campfire. Alternatively, you snuff out a flame of the same size.

Terrah. You instantaneously create a small rock no larger than a gold coin. The rock appears in your hand, then turns to dust after 1 minute.

Vesrah. You instantaneously create enough hot or cold water to fill a small drinking vessel.

Zephrah. You create an instantaneous puff of wind strong enough to blow papers off a desk or mess up someone's hair.

Suggested Characteristics

The Ashari hold themselves removed from the rest of Tal'Dorei by their own choice. This makes many Ashari naive to the ways of the world beyond their homes—but it can also make them determined, steadfast, and tightly focused on their goals. Ever since Keyleth, Voice of the Tempest and leader of the Zephrah, became a world-renowned hero, the Air Ashari at least have become more familiar to Tal'Dorei's other peoples. They are known to welcome outsiders to their mountaintop enclave, and to take on quests that force them to leave their isolated home.

To learn more about your character's Ashari order, see "The Ashari" on page 48.

Ashari Personality Traits

d8	Personality Trait
1	I like to keep my hands busy, no matter where I am.
2	I love to explore new places and meet new people.
3	I meditate at dawn each day—and I can't stand it when my routine is interrupted.

d8	Personality Trait
4	I like noticing patterns in the world around me, whether or not they mean anything.
5	I don't let anything—or anyone—stand in the way of my mission.
6	I'm a plain talker, even with people who outrank me.
7	I've always got some of my native element with me in some form. (This might be modeling clay, pure water, special burning incense, or a bottled cloud.)
8	I talk with everyone like I've known them all my life. Because most people I know, I have known all my life!

Ashari Ideals

d6	Ideal
1	**Destiny.** I believe that everyone has a role to play. Now I just have to find mine. (Neutral)
2	**Community.** It's important to surround yourself with people you can count on, and who will support you. (Good)
3	**Knowledge.** I want to learn everything I can about the Elemental Planes—and maybe even visit them myself. (Neutral)
4	**Freedom.** I don't care what anyone says. Even if it causes problems, the elements must be free. And so should I. (Chaotic)
5	**Structure.** The elements are in harmony when they are free to act as they will, within the safe boundaries set by the Ashari. People are much the same. (Lawful)
6	**Virtuous Cycle.** If I see someone who needs help, I feel compelled to assist them. Surely they'll return the favor someday! (Good)

Ashari Bonds

d6	Bond
1	I have a cousin in another Ashari tribe whom I've never met, but someday I want to visit my extended family.
2	The leader of my tribe thinks I could be their successor, but I worry that I don't have enough experience to lead my people.
3	A mysterious person killed a member of my family. I've left home to discover who the killer was—and to seek vengeance.
4	My older sibling set out on their Aramante a year ago, and I haven't seen them since.
5	When I was a baby, a giant eagle brought me to Zephrah. I love my family, but I often wonder who my birth parents are.
6	I trust my animal friends more than any humanoid ally.

Ashari Flaws

d6	Flaw
1	Big cities are overwhelming. I get nervous when surrounded by people I don't know.
2	I know all too well that elemental power is dangerous—but I like playing around with it anyway.
3	I get surly if I go too long without being in contact with my native element.
4	I think the mission of my people is a fool's errand. They should abandon isolation, let the elements be, and enjoy the pleasures of the world!
5	I can't stand it when people say one thing and mean another! Just say what you mean!
6	Ugh, I know it's not right, but I can't help but look down on people who can't manipulate the elements. It's not like it's hard!

Clasp Member

Whether you grew up in the mean streets of Kymal bamboozling foolish gamblers, or spent your youth pilfering loose coin from the pockets of Emon's many tourists, your lifestyle of deceiving-to-survive eventually drew the attention of the Clasp: a storied crime syndicate that has hideouts in every city in Tal'Dorei. In exchange for protection, a modicum of kinship, and a number of useful resources to further develop your craft as a criminal, you agreed to receive the brand of the Clasp and join their ranks.

You might have spent time working the guild's most menial assignments, wandering the alleys as a simple cutpurse and filling your pockets with silver while you waited to climb the professional ladder. Or you might be a clever actor and liar, whose skill at blending in with all facets of society has made you an indispensable spy. Perhaps your swift technique with a blade led you to become a feared assassin for the Spireling leader of a local Clasp sect. Regardless, though the threat of the law is ever looming, the advantages to having a connection to such a powerful cartel greatly outweighs your paranoia. Most of the time.

Since the Clasp is an organization, its members can rise in rank by proving their worth, by making the right friends in high places, or even through blackmail and bribery. You and the Game Master can decide together how your actions affect your rank in the Clasp, and what benefits that rank grants you.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, plus your choice of Sleight of Hand or Stealth

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit, forgery kit, or thieves' tools (one of your choice)

Languages: Thieves' Cant

Equipment: A set of inconspicuous common clothes, a set of tools with which you're proficient, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: A Favor in Turn

You have gained enough clout in the Clasp that you can call in a favor from your contacts whenever you're close enough to a center of syndicate 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 on any form subject to the approval of the GM, who decides how it is fulfilled. If muscle is requested, an NPC member of the Clasp (using statistics found in chapter 6) can temporarily aid your party. If money is needed, a small loan can be provided. If you've been imprisoned, Clasp operatives can look into breaking you out or paying off the jailer.

At some point, the favor will be called in for repayment, often without warning. Refusing the call will result in your termination—literally. You might be called on to commit a specific burglary, or to pressure an Emonian dignitary to reveal a secret at an upcoming ball. The Clasp might even demand that you assassinate a specific person, with no questions asked or answered. It's the GM's prerogative to ensure that the syndicate's request is proportionate to the favor they bestowed—or that they compensate you in other ways for a service that goes beyond the scope of repaying the initial favor.



Variant: Myriad Operative

Your skill set might be similar to that of many members of the Clasp, but you work for a criminal organization that is far more sophisticated—and even less scrupulous. As a Myriad operative in Tal'Dorei, you might have been given a specific task that furthers that syndicate's hunger to expand beyond Wildemount, or which gives them an edge in their rivalry with the Clasp. Moreover, you understand the wisdom of keeping your activities secret from fellow criminals as well as law enforcement, since the agents of the Clasp will show you no mercy if your true identity is ever revealed.

Suggested Characteristics

The Clasp enjoys a strange status in Tal'Dorei. The syndicate is a feared group of thieves and killers, whose name is often invoked only in whispers. But at the same time, the organization has a reputation for guerilla heroism, in response to its members having saved countless lives when the Chroma Conclave attacked Emon. And so like every Clasp member, your own reputation often swings between these two poles.

Your bond is likely associated with your fellow Clasp members or the individual who introduced you to the syndicate. Your ideal probably involves establishing your importance and indispensability to the Clasp.

Clasp Member Personality Traits

d8	Personality Trait
1	What's life without risk? I'm always willing to take a risk if the reward seems worth it.
2	I only show my emotions around people I really trust.
3	I don't need friends; I need allies. When I do make "friends," I only consider what they can do for me.
4	I look for simple solutions. The world's full of tough problems, but a well-placed knife is a one-size-fits-all answer.
5	Money talks. I don't. We've got an efficient relationship.

d8	Personality Trait
6	I used to have one rule—don't get involved in other people's problems. Why are things so complicated now?
7	Crime is a game, and I play to win. I have no sympathy for players who don't get that.
8	This organization has a lot of folks who cling to ugly, brutal practices. I'm not like that. I'm a professional, and professionals have standards.

Clasp Member Ideals

d6	Ideal
1	**By Any Means.** I complete jobs. Collateral damage isn't my problem. (Chaotic)
2	**Ambition.** I will climb to the top of the ladder. Everything I do is a stepping-stone to a Spireling's position. (Neutral)
3	**Decisiveness.** It's important to make up your mind so you can act swiftly and without delay. (Neutral)
4	**Honor.** There's room in the Clasp for both good and evil. Every day, I awake and choose to do what's right. (Good)
5	**Family.** The Clasp is family. Anything that's good for the family is good for me. (Lawful)
6	**Self-Interest.** There are too many bleeding hearts in the Clasp these days. Doing the right thing means doing the thing that makes my life better. (Evil)

Clasp Member Bonds

d6	Bond
1	I'd do anything—*anything*—to protect my comrades.
2	I'll always be grateful to the Spireling who took me in when I was an orphaned kid.
3	I was inspired to join the Clasp by the stories my parents told of being saved from the Chroma Conclave's attack on Emon. I can look past the organization's flaws.
4	I was nearly killed by the Myriad. If the Clasp is the enemy of those villains, then the Clasp is my friend.
5	I've got family back in the old town who are counting on me for money. They don't know how I get it, but they don't need to know.
6	I joined the Clasp to become rich, powerful, and beloved. That's all there is to it.

Clasp Member Flaws

d6	Flaw
1	I'm hopeless at organizing my belongings, and I'm always losing things.
2	I get bored whenever a plan is going too smoothly. A win is always more fun when it's by the skin of my teeth!
3	I've seen Spirelings walk out among cheering crowds of thousands. Gods, I wish that were me. I need that to be me.
4	I'm rubbish with money, and never seem to leave town with a full purse. Keeps me coming back to the life, I suppose.
5	I can't work with shoddy, makeshift thieves' tools. I need everything involving my work to be perfect.
6	Any slight against me, no matter how small, is cause for revenge.

Lyceum Scholar

You most likely came up through money or hailed from a family with social prestige if you were able to afford tuition at the Alabaster Lyceum in Emon. But whatever your origin, your interests and pursuits brought you to the hallowed halls of Tal'Dorei's highest place of learning, where you soaked in every lesson you could, hoping to better make your mark on the world. (Or at least you pretended to. Even at the Lyceum, every class has its slackers.) Eventually, though, the call to adventure pulled you from your studies, and you now face the challenge of keeping up with your education even as the tides of destiny threaten to sweep you away.

You might have come to the Lyceum to better research and understand the history and lore of Exandria and the lands you call home. Perhaps you sought a future here as a professor—or you might hope to do so still. 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. Or perhaps your knack for the arcane inspired you to attend the Lyceum to refine your spellcraft, following in the footsteps of some of the finest wizards to ever practice the arts of magic.

When you choose this background, you could be either an active student seeking adventures for your own research, or a graduated alumnus. With a little modification, you could easily be a professor as well.

Skill Proficiencies: Your choice of two of the following: Arcana, History, or Persuasion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a student uniform, a writing kit (small pouch with a quill, ink, folded parchment, and a penknife), and a belt pouch containing 10 gp



Feature: Academic Requisition

You've cleared enough lessons—and have gained an ally or two among the staff—to enable access to certain private areas within the Lyceum and other allied universities. Whenever you're on Lyceum grounds or at another major academic institution, you can requisition any set of tools found in the fifth edition rules. Each set of tools is magically marked to sound an alarm if they are removed from the university's grounds.

When you seek services such as spellcasting from an NPC at the Alabaster Lyceum or a related institution, you can use those services at a 25 percent discount, at the GM's discretion.

Suggested Characteristics

The Alabaster Lyceum accepts students of all major trades, the fine arts, and the magical arts. Pupils talented and privileged enough to be accepted travel to Emon from all over Tal'Dorei, seeking to study among some of the greatest minds and most talented arcanists in the land. If you came from a smaller city, a rural area, or Tal'Dorei's relatively uncharted wilderness, studying at the Lyceum might have left you with a sense of culture shock, for good or for ill.

Your bond is likely associated with your goals as a student or graduate. Your ideal probably involves your hopes in using the knowledge you've gained at the Lyceum, and your travels as an adventurer, to tailor the world to your liking.

Lyceum Scholar Personality Traits

d8	Personality Trait
1	I can't believe I'm here! At *the* Alabaster Lyceum. Oh, gods, I've dreamed of this my whole life, and now I'm here!
2	I can't believe I squandered all the opportunities I had at school. I was supposed to be learning good stuff, but I wasted it all daydreaming about fighting monsters.
3	Every night at school, I'd knock back a couple of meads and read with my pals! Just a bunch of nerds having fun, and I loved it.
4	Everyone at school was such a stick in the mud. Dressing the same, listening to the same bards...ugh, it's sad. Just be yourself.
5	I'm happiest when I've got my little party with me. At school, it was like we were a squad of heroes, slaying projects like monsters.
6	I'd really rather you didn't bother me. Can't you see I'm studying here?

d8	Personality Trait
7	I don't care. I just don't care about it all. The dates I had to memorize, the formulae I learned...I just want to run away and live!
8	I'm just...tired. All the time. Oh, adventuring, sure, that's fine, as long as I can find time to... nap...goodnight.

Lyceum Scholar Ideals

d6	Ideal
1	**Preparedness.** I can't go out into the world unless I know what I'm up against. Study first, act later. (Neutral)
2	**Stardom.** Having a team is good and all, but you can't win a game of ball without the star charger, and you know that's me. (Evil)
3	**Individuality.** The world keeps us down by trying to put us all into little boxes. I'm tired of living in my box, and I don't care what you think about it. (Chaotic)
4	**Purpose.** I study because there are things I need to know. I'll find my place in the world, and I'll make the world better. (Good)
5	**Code of Conduct.** The student code is there to benefit all students, you know. It's the same for laws! (Lawful)
6	**Recreation.** All this studying crap wasn't worth anything if you weren't partying when you were done. Meet me down at the tavern, okay? (Chaotic)

Lyceum Scholar Bonds

d6	Bond
1	I came to the Lyceum with no one, but I fell in love with the city of Emon. I've finally found a place that feels like home!
2	Most of my professors drove me to frustration, but there's one who was kind and wise. I know they'll always have my back.
3	My family saved every copper piece to give me the opportunities I have now. I can't let them down.
4	I came to the Lyceum with a childhood friend, but we've long been drifting apart.
5	Discovery is the only thing that matters to me. The topic doesn't matter. Books keep me company on my loneliest days.
6	The Lyceum is my life. I'd give up anything—everything—to protect it from harm.

Lyceum Scholar Flaws

d6	Flaw
1	The Lyceum taught me to never want to leave my room. The campus was so huge, and the crowds were so horrible.
2	You think you're so great just because you've got muscles, and endurance, and...shut up! Read a book sometime!
3	Huh? What? Sorry, I was thinking about a test I need to retake when I get back to school....
4	I spent too much time studying. Now I don't have any friends.
5	If you don't match my aesthetic, I'm not interested in you. We can work together, but we won't be friends. Got it?
6	I'm always striving for perfection. I got top of my class, sure, but only with a 98 average. And that's. Not. Perfect.

Reformed Cultist

Two pantheons have battled over the fate of Exandria since the world's founding—the Prime Deities and the Betrayer Gods. During the Calamity, the Prime Deities allied themselves with the mortal races of Exandria, their original creations, to protect their flawed world and its multifarious forms of life. The Betrayers sought to wipe the slate clean.

At the end of that devastating war, the Prime Deities established a Divine Gate that would prevent all gods, good or evil, from directly affecting the world, but which would leave the gods' mortal followers and supernal servants to enact their will. And so the corrupting whispers of the Betrayer Gods have ensnared the minds of power-hungry mortals for centuries, promising them a sliver of the gods' great power in exchange for dedicating their souls to occult lore.

You once belonged to such a cult of the Betrayer Gods. Perhaps this faith only briefly tempted your rebellious, youthful spirit. Perhaps the cult gave you love and family when you had none, asking only your adherence to their prophet in exchange. Or maybe you were raised from birth to pay homage to gods of selfish cruelty—until one fateful day the veil was lifted, so that nothing stood between you and the horrifying truth.

However it happened, you were freed from the shackles of this poisonous sect. Yet you know that this group does not forgive betrayers. As long as you live, you will be hunted—and if the members of the cult think you dead, their hunt will begin again the second they learn they're wrong.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception and Religion
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: Fell Teachings

You were inundated with knowledge about one of the Betrayer Gods, and know by heart everything from their basic commandments to some of their most esoteric secrets. Choose one of the Betrayer Gods described in chapter 2. You have advantage on Intelligence (Religion) checks to know information about their faith, including obscure secrets unknown to most worshipers.

Additionally, you can work with your GM to create a secret that you learned during your time in the cult. This secret might be the seed of a conspiracy, a myth of a legendary hero whose true meaning has mutated over the years, or even the location of a fabled artifact of the gods.

Suggested Characteristics

The life of every former cultist is defined to some degree by the process of fleeing the past, and of trying to make a future away from the beliefs that once claimed them. Your bond is likely associated with those who gave you the insight and strength to flee your old ways. Your ideal might involve your desire to take down and destroy those who promote the evil you escaped, and perhaps finding new faith in a forgiving god.

Reformed Cultist Personality Traits

d8	Personality Trait
1	I need a dagger close at hand at all times. Just in case they find me.
2	I can't believe I'm out here fighting monsters. After everything I've been through, why can't I find a normal life?
3	I need a stiff drink before I do anything stressful these days. I know it's a problem. Just...let me have this.
4	Murder is okay when it's for a good cause! I didn't tear my past out by the roots so I could let evil people cause more harm.
5	My past is filled with stories like you wouldn't believe. Ones that'll really make your skin crawl. Do you want to hear...?
6	Yeah, I'm crying. I do that. Get over yourself.
7	I know you've told me your name twice already, but that's not good enough. How can I be sure you are who you say you are?
8	My mind is always racing. I can't...I just need to...you have to give me a second—or else I can't...organize my thoughts.

Reformed Cultist Ideals

d6	Ideal
1	**Life.** I've spent too long shackled to an evil master. No matter what happened before, I deserve my freedom now. (Chaotic)
2	**Redemption.** People can change, but redemption must be something they choose for themselves. If they do, it is my duty to help them along that path. (Good)
3	**Power.** When I abandoned the cult, it wasn't out of some misguided sense of righteousness. That pathetic organization was merely a shackle on my potential. (Evil)
4	**Vengeance.** The cult has poisoned my life. I will see all its followers suffer. (Any)
5	**Hierarchy.** The cult was vile, but its strength was in stability and organization. As long as good folk lack unity, evil will always triumph. (Lawful)
6	**Reparations.** As a cultist, I harmed people whose names I'll never know. I feel obligated to repay my debt by aiding others. (Good)

Reformed Cultist Bonds

d6	Bond
1	My cousin escaped the cult with me. I lost track of them when we fled, but I know they're alive. I can feel it.
2	I was saved from the cult by a priest of one of the Prime Deities. If not for that sign of faith, I would surely be lost.
3	I was told by the person who saved me that a sage once said: "Life needs things to live." I don't know what that means, but I've dedicated my existence to finding out.
4	One of my cultist parents had a change of heart when I was a teenager, and we fled together in the dark of night. I didn't want to leave, but I understand now that their courage saved my life.
5	I was bested by a warrior when I fumbled a cult-ordered assassination. I don't know why that person took pity on me, but they gave me purpose when I was lost.
6	Now that I've saved myself, the only person important to me is my former cult leader—because I've sworn that they'll die by my hand.

Reformed Cultist Flaws

d6	Flaw
1	I'm haunted by what I saw in those ritual chambers. Every time I see blood, I...oh, gods, I can't bear to even think about it.
2	I ran from the cult long ago. But deep down, there's a part of me that still thinks they were right about certain things.
3	I can't help but feel a rush whenever I see a life snuffed out before me. Just one more kill... just one more.
4	Organized religion terrifies me. Betrayer Gods or Prime Deities...it doesn't matter. The sight of the faithful freezes my blood cold.
5	Oh, I always tell the truth. Always. I've never had to keep a secret from anyone, so of course I'll be open with you.
6	I don't trust easily. If you grew up being lied to about every little thing? The fundamental nature of the world? You wouldn't, either.

Whitestone Rifle Corps

You trained with the elite forces charged with the defense and protection of the isolated city-state of Whitestone, with much of that training focused on how to care for, protect, and safeguard the firearms that are the weapons of the Whitestone Rifle Corps. You are also entrusted with a solemn duty—to never let the secrets of your liege-lord's deadly creations fall into the wrong hands.

You might have come to Whitestone to prove yourself worthy of wielding the secretive and highly coveted firearms created there, and to seek instruction from warriors who have mastered those weapons. Or you might have grown up in Whitestone, perhaps even remembering the brutal days when Lord and Lady Briarwood ruled your homeland—a reign that began some thirty years ago and lasted for six harrowing years.

Alternatively, you or your parents might have come to Whitestone as refugees fleeing the destruction of the Chroma Conclave's attack on Tal'Dorei. If so, your life in the city-state might have been a relatively peaceful one, dwelling among the engineers, artisans, and merchants seeking to capitalize upon Whitestone's reputation as an up-and-coming center of trade, culture, and invention.

When you choose this background, decide whether you were a member of the Rifle Corps, the Pale Guard, or the Whitestone Hunters. The "Whitestone" section in chapter 3 has more information about the Pale Guard, as well as the armaments and militia in the city-state. See below for more information on the Whitestone Hunters.

Skill Proficiencies: Your choice of two of the following: Athletics, Perception, or Survival

Weapon Proficiencies: Firearms

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Your choice of a musket or a pistol, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Legacy of Secrecy

You have been entrusted with the use and care of a weapon both powerful and terrifying. The rifle you wield might transform the face of warfare and life in Tal'Dorei. It is a weapon that haunts the mind of its creator, Percival de Rolo, manifesting as a pain that lives always behind his kind eyes.

You were granted a musket or a pistol (as described in the fifth edition core rules) by your commander in the Whitestone Rifle Corps. This weapon is a symbol of your status, and when you display it, other folk around you—particularly adventurers, mercenaries, guards, engineers, and weapons enthusiasts—treat you differently. You might be seen as a noble defender of the people, a selfish hoarder of power, or anything in between, at the GM's discretion.

Feature: Rifle Corps Relationship

You are—or were—a member of an elite and trusted band of Whitestone's staunchest defenders. Work with your GM to determine your current relationship with the Rifle Corps. If your campaign starts in Whitestone, you might be an active member of that unit. Otherwise, you can use the Rifle Corps Relationships table for suggestions.

Rifle Corps Relationships

d6	Current Relationship
1	I retired honorably from the Rifle Corps—and now it's time for me to pursue my own adventures.
2	I'm on an important mission to protect Whitestone or guard one of our allies.
3	Whitestone is in trouble, and I was sent away to seek help.
4	I don't think firearms technology should be kept secret, so I escaped from the Rifle Corps with my weapon and am on the run.
5	I was on a mission with my company when I got separated from them. Now I need to find my way back home.
6	My weapon was stolen. I built a new one, but I can't return home until I've tracked down the thief and recovered the original. (Whitestone Hunter variant only)

Suggested Characteristics

Those who join the Whitestone Rifle Corps become members of an elite and trusted band known as the city-state's staunchest defenders. But this means working with your GM to determine why you're not at home protecting Whitestone. Perhaps you took on a mission to guard someone on behalf of the de Rolo family, or you might have been separated from your company while on an assignment. Either way, you find yourself embroiled now in a series of new adventures as you try to make your way back home.

Your bond is likely associated with your comrades-in-arms or with Whitestone itself. Your ideal could be tied to justice or protection, but could also be a secretive, selfish perversion of those virtues.

Rifle Corps Personality Traits

d8	Personality Trait
1	I want to make a good impression at all times. That means keeping my clothes and gear clean and in top condition.
2	I don't like being the center of attention. I'd rather let someone else do the talking while I watch their back.
3	I feel safe only if I'm carrying my trusty rifle. And my dagger. And my concealed pistol. Oh, and of course my....
4	I don't trust people with my secrets easily, so it feels like a big deal when someone else shares a secret with me.
5	I like coming up with solutions to problems using my esoteric knowledge of natural philosophy.
6	Everyone around me takes things so seriously. Sometimes I just want to let loose and have fun!
7	Knowing things that other people don't know makes me feel special and important.
8	I'm most at home in woods and mountains, where everything feels at once familiar, always growing and changing.

Rifle Corps Ideals

d6	Ideal
1	**Responsibility.** I have a duty to protect the people of Whitestone and to uphold the trust placed in me by the de Rolos. (Lawful)
2	**Militarization.** Everyone should have access to the most powerful weapons available, so they can defend themselves effectively. (Evil)
3	**Cooperation.** Any problem can be solved as long as people are willing to work together. (Good)
4	**Camaraderie.** It's important to have people you can trust to help out in a fight—and to uncork a bottle together afterward. (Any)



d6	Ideal
5	**Context.** There are no universal rights or wrongs. Every choice depends on the details of the situation. (Chaotic)
6	**Secrecy.** Information is valuable, but it can also be dangerous. I'll keep my mouth shut and gather as much intel as I can. (Neutral)

Rifle Corps Bonds

d6	Bond
1	I never knew what to do with myself until I joined the Rifle Corps. Now I have a purpose and comrades to give me direction.
2	One of my fellow Rifle Corps soldiers saved my life—and then I saved theirs. That kind of bond lasts forever.
3	Whitestone is the best city in all of Tal'Dorei. Nowhere else has been blessed by the Dawnfather and has a clock that tracks the movement of the stars!
4	My quick thinking saved a noble from assassination, and she showed me great kindness in return. I daren't say it, but I'm more loyal to her than I am to the de Rolos.
5	My weapon is my life. I clean it, repair it, and care for it—and it serves me loyally in return.
6	The people of Whitestone cared for my family when we had nothing. I promise to repay their compassion with my service.

Rifle Corps Flaws

d6	Flaw
1	Who cares about keeping this gun safe? "Don't let it fall into the wrong hands!" Ha! It's only a matter of time before someone slips up and these weapons are everywhere.
2	I think being part of the Rifle Corps is so cool. I love telling people about my position so I can impress them.
3	My weapon was stolen. I built a new one, but I can't return home until I've tracked down the thief and recovered the original.
4	I'm tired of protecting spoiled people who don't know how to protect themselves.
5	I shoot first and ask questions later.
6	The first and only time I killed someone, it changed my life. I still dream about it, and I'll never be the carefree person I was before.

Variant: Whitestone Hunter

As elite as they are, the members of the Whitestone Rifle Corps do not represent the apex of firearms skill in Whitestone. A clandestine group of elite soldiers and survivalists is drawn secretly from the Rifle Corps ranks. Called the Whitestone Hunters, these soldiers are special operatives of the de Rolo family, and loyally serve as spies, bodyguards, and even assassins when the job requires it. Though few officially know of them, rumors of the Whitestone Hunters' existence swirl constantly throughout the city-state, often in response to their activities after having been loaned out to protect Whitestone's allies.

You are one of these Whitestone Hunters, even if just a trainee (if you're starting your campaign at low levels). You have the ear of the lord and lady of Whitestone, though you must exercise this privilege graciously lest you lose it.

Supernatural Blessing: Fate-Touched

Most lives and souls find their ways easily along the paths of fate and destiny, oblivious and eager to be a part of the history meant for them. Some souls, however, carry themselves with mysterious influence, the golden threads of their fate subtly guiding history as they pass. Events both magnificent and catastrophic often follow such souls, which take the form of great rulers and terrible tyrants, powerful mages, religious leaders, and legendary heroes. These are the fate-touched.

Few fate-touched ever become aware of their prominent nature. Without the confirmation of the gods themselves, few can know for certain that they bear this blessing. And this is as it should be, for people of renown and power grow easily jealous of those whose gifts outstrip their own. The surviving chronicles of the Age of Arcanum are filled with tales of magical hierarchs who enslaved those they took for fate-touched—or worse, attempted to extract the essence of fate from them by the most horrid means. Being touched by fate can be a blessing or a curse. It is most often those who bear the blessings of fortune who are remembered by history, while those cursed by fate are forgotten. Most cultures of Exandria have legends of those marked by ill fate simply by being born under the full light of Ruidus, the vermilion moon around which countless fell legends swirl.

Player characters and NPCs gain this blessing by having the GM grant it to them, gaining the Fortune's Grace feature as a result. A character might receive the blessing as a gift from the gods, or as a temporary and surprising phenomenon when the campaign shifts into a story arc focused on that character. An NPC ally might bear this blessing to help them survive as the characters protect them from a terrible threat. A previously benign NPC might even become a power-hungry villain as they test the limits of their fate-touched gift.

Fortune's Grace

Your fate-touched essence can cause events to shift in your favor. When you make an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, you can choose to reroll the d20. You must reroll the die before the outcome of the initial roll is determined.

Alternatively, when a creature you can see makes an attack against you or makes a saving throw against one of your spells or features, you can force that creature to reroll the attack roll or saving throw.

If the roll that triggers the reroll is made with advantage or disadvantage, both d20s are rerolled. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

New Feats

The following feats are appropriate for a Tal'Dorei campaign.

Cruel

The challenges and struggles you've faced throughout your life have led you to delight in inflicting pain and anguish upon others. You gain a number of cruelty dice equal to your proficiency bonus. Your cruelty dice are d6s. You can roll only one cruelty die per turn, and a cruelty die is spent when you roll it.

You can roll a cruelty die under any of the following circumstances, with the indicated result:

- When you deal damage to a creature, spend one cruelty die to deal extra damage to the creature equal to the roll.
- When you score a critical hit, spend one cruelty die to gain temporary hit points equal to the roll.
- When you make a Charisma (Intimidation) check, spend one cruelty die and add the roll to your check.

You regain all spent cruelty dice when you finish a long rest.

Flash Recall

Prerequisite: Spellcasting feature from a class that prepares spells

You've developed the ability to instantly recall an unprepared spell in moments of sudden necessity. As a bonus action, you prepare a spell of 1st level or higher from your spellbook (if you're a wizard) or from your class spell list (if you're not a wizard). This spell must be of a level for which you have spell slots, and it replaces another spell of an equal or higher level that you had previously prepared.

Once you use this feat to recall a spell, you can't do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

Rules Tip: Prepared Spells

The Flash Recall feat requires you to be a spellcaster who prepares spells. This includes classes such as clerics, druids, and paladins, who prepare spells each day from their class list, and wizards, who prepare spells from a spellbook. Classes such as bards and sorcerers, who inherently know their spells rather than preparing them, can't benefit from this feat.

Mystic Conflux

You possess an intuitive understanding of the way magic ebbs and flows within enchanted items. Such items attune easily to you, and you are able to sound out their secrets. You gain the following benefits:

- You can attune to up to four magic items at once.
- You can cast the *identify* spell without expending a spell slot or material components. You must finish a long rest before you can do so again.

Remarkable Recovery

Your body has the ability to recover quickly from terrible injuries, and is unusually receptive to healing magic. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you are successfully stabilized while dying, you regain hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1).
- Whenever you regain hit points as a result of a spell, potion, or class feature (but not this feat), you regain additional hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1).

Spelldriver

Prerequisites: Character level 11 or higher; Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature

Through intense focus, training, and dedication, you've harnessed the techniques of rapid spellcasting. When you use your bonus action to cast a spell of 1st level or higher, you can also use your action to cast another spell of 1st level or higher. However, if you cast two or more spells in a single turn, only one of them can be 3rd level or higher.

Rules Tip: Casting Multiple Spells

Normally, when you cast a spell as a bonus action, you can't use your action to also cast a spell that turn unless that spell is a cantrip. The Spelldriver feat removes that restriction, but the focus necessary to channel multiple spells in the same round still limits the overall power of those spells.



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 have the thrown property for you. One-handed weapons have a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet, while two-handed weapons have a normal range of 15 feet and a long range of 30 feet.
- Weapons that already have the thrown property increase their short range by 20 feet and their long range by 40 feet for you.
- When you miss with a thrown weapon attack using a light weapon, the weapon returns to your grasp like a boomerang at the end of your turn, unless something prevents it from returning. You can catch and stow as many weapons as you threw in this way.

Vital Sacrifice

You've learned secrets of hemocraft that grant you esoteric power at the price of your own life force. As a bonus action, you can choose to take 1d6 necrotic damage to gain a blood boon. Your blood boon lasts for 1 hour or until expended.

You can expend this blood boon to gain one of the following benefits:

- When you make an attack roll, you roll 1d6 and add it to the total.
- When you hit with an attack or spell, you deal an additional 2d6 necrotic damage.
- When you cause a creature to make a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throw, roll a d4 and reduce their save by the amount rolled.

The damage you take to gain a blood boon can't be reduced in any way.



CHAPTER 5

Game Master's Toolkit

Game Masters can make use of many different tools to run enjoyable games. A GM is the starting point of the storytelling process, coming up with narratively compelling adventure frameworks that they and the players then turn into a campaign. To do so, a GM works up locations and scenarios that their players will have fun with. They stock adventures with loot and magic items to reward daring characters, villains and monsters to defend those valuable treasures, and NPCs of all kinds who can give clues, help as allies, or oppose the characters in their goals.

This chapter contains storytelling advice for GMs running campaigns in Tal'Dorei. It also contains a number of new magic items, including the legendary Vestiges of Divergence, plus optional rules that GMs can use to fine-tune the tone of a Tal'Dorei campaign. (Chapter 6 of this book presents monsters and NPCs unique to the world of Exandria, which can likewise help give a campaign a distinctly *Critical Role* feeling.)

Creating Adventures

Before reading this section, you should familiarize yourself with "Running a Tal'Dorei Campaign" in chapter 1, which provides information about Tal'Dorei's lore and conflicts that are for the Game Master's eyes only. Chapter 3 of this book also contains dozens of specific story hooks, many of which tie into the big-picture secrets introduced in chapter 1. Some hooks are simple, giving you just enough to inspire your next game session. Some are more complex, and can cascade into an entire campaign's worth of story.

You'll notice that these story hooks present a beginning, and sometimes a hint of a middle, but never a conclusion. That's because they're designed to spark your imagination, but in a way that still leaves you to fill out the rest of the story framework in your own way. The goal of this book is to provide the building blocks with which you can create your own Tal'Dorei, and these open-ended plot seeds will help you set up adventures that feel right at home in the world of *Critical Role*—whether you're a long-time fan of the show or are brand-new to Tal'Dorei.

If you're an experienced GM, you might already have your own approach to creating adventures from story hooks. But especially if you're a beginning GM, this section presents a straightforward approach you can try out for expanding hooks into full adventures. And even as an experienced GM, if you ever feel stuck while planning an adventure, it can help to create a "fill-in-the-blanks" outline of your narrative. Start by dividing a page of your GM journal (whether it's a physical page or a digital one) into three sections labeled "Beginning," "Middle," and "End." Then think about what happens in each of those parts of your adventure as a means of opening up your creative process.

Beginning an Adventure

The beginning of most adventures comes when the characters receive a quest or are plunged headfirst into an unexpected scenario. In the Beginning section of your GM journal, write one sentence about how you want the characters to learn of the adventure. For example: "A member of the Tal'Dorei Council posts an urgent notice about a dangerous creature in every tavern in Emon, promising a 1,000 gp reward." Then write down little notes about other things you want in the beginning scene. Where is this opening scene set? What other NPCs are there? Are there environmental notes or clues you want to communicate to the players?

Creating Conflict in the Middle

The middle of an adventure is filled with conflict, whether episodic events during travel, a dungeon exploration filled with deadly traps and territorial monsters, or intense diplomatic negotiations. In the Middle section, write down notes about what sort of conflict you want your adventure to have. Most story hooks in this book contain a clear antagonist or threat—so start by writing down that antagonist and then brainstorming secondary threats that will challenge the characters on their way to facing their main foe. In addition to the monsters in chapter 6 of this book, the fifth edition rules are filled with useful monsters that are perfectly at home in Exandria.

End with a Reward

The end of an adventure is where the characters gain their reward and return to safety. In the Ending section of your journal, write down ideas for treasure or other rewards that you want to give the characters. You can make use of the new treasures featured in this book, as well as the varied rewards described in the fifth edition rules.

Remember that treasure doesn't have to be gold or magic items, and it doesn't have to be found in

a dungeon. When the characters return to town carrying the head of the monster they've slain, their quest-giver might grant them an audience with the Tal'Dorei Council, give them special use of the Traverse Junction or some other magical marvel of the Alabaster Lyceum, or bestow any number of other immaterial rewards.

Going with the Flow

Don't worry if your plans go awry—they will. No RPG session ever goes totally as planned. The most important skill for any GM is the ability to improvise, because you can never predict everything your players will do. Make your plans loose and variable, and be willing to have fun and change course. Your players are surprised by every challenge you throw at them—so give yourself a chance for the same experience! It can be fun to be surprised, especially when you're the GM who supposedly holds all the important story cards.

Tal'Dorei Treasures

This section presents magic items for use in your Tal'Dorei campaign, including specific items used by the Ashari people of Exandria, and the legendary Vestiges of Divergence.

Magic Items

Tal'Dorei is a land awash with magic. Numerous magical organizations, both stately and shadowy, create enchanted items to aid their members in mysterious quests. Shops in major cities, including Gilmore's Glorious Goods in Emon, openly sell magic items to anyone with the gold to pay their extravagant (some might say exorbitant) fees.

GMs can use the magic items in this section—some of which have appeared in *Critical Role* before; some of which are all new—as treasure to reward the characters during their adventures. Unless otherwise stated, these items abide by the magic item rules laid down in the fifth edition core rules.

Boots of Haste

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

While you wear these boots, you can click your heels together to cast the *haste* spell on yourself as a bonus action. You don't suffer from lethargy when the spell ends when cast using these boots. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until next dawn.

Boots of the Vigilant

Wondrous item, uncommon

While you wear these boots, you can sense impending danger. After you roll initiative, you can choose to roll a d8 and add it to your initiative roll. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Cataclysm Bolts

Ammunition, very rare

These steel crossbow bolts were first created by the Jaggenstrike Clan during the Scattered War, and the secret to crafting them remains well guarded by the Houses of Kraghammer. *Cataclysm bolts* are usually kept in sets of ten, though anyone who holds even one can feel it thrumming with magical power. When you hit with an attack using a *cataclysm bolt*, the attack deals normal damage. Then roll a d6 on the following table to determine its additional effect.

Cataclysm Bolt Effects

d6	Effect
1-2	The bolt explodes in a blast of fire, dealing 3d8 fire damage to the target and each creature within 5 feet of it.
3-4	The bolt freezes the air around the target into jagged ice. The target and each creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d10 cold damage and be restrained until the end of your next turn.
5	The bolt releases a pulse of necrotic energy. The target takes 2d6 necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be stunned until the end of your next turn.
6	The bolt shatters to unleash a burst of shrapnel. Make six additional ranged attacks against the target, each of which has a +7 attack bonus and deals 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

Once the bolt hits, the enchantment ends and it becomes a normal piece of ammunition.

Coat of the Crest

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This exquisite brocade coat is cut in a long, high-collared style popular among nobles of the Clovis Concord—a nation on the west coast of Wildemount whose stylish fashion is often mimicked in Tal'Dorei. Its shimmering lining hints at its magical properties. You gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this coat, which can be worn over light armor.

Additionally, the coat has 3 charges and regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. When you are the target of an attack while wearing this coat, you can spend 1 charge as a reaction to gain resistance to one type of damage from the triggering attack. This resistance is effective against the triggering attack and lasts until the start of your next turn.

Corecut Dagger

Dagger, very rare (requires attunement)

This dark metal blade bends in a wicked, hooked curve. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, you can spend 1 Hit Die to deal an extra 3d6 necrotic damage.

Curse. This weapon is cursed, a fact that is revealed only when an *identify* spell is cast on the weapon or you attune to it. Attuning to the dagger curses you until you are targeted by the remove curse spell or similar magic; disposing of the dagger fails to end the curse. While cursed, whenever you receive magical healing, you must spend 1 Hit Die to regain any hit points. If you spend all your Hit Dice at any point, you die.

Dagger of Denial

Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement)

This silver stiletto blade bears intricate grooves that spiral from its tip to its ivory hilt and handle. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

As an action, you can place the point of the blade into any keyhole and seal it shut. A keyhole sealed in this way can't be unlocked until this dagger is placed into that keyhole once more (though a sealed door or container can still be broken, bypassing the lock). Sealing a keyhole unseals any keyholes previously sealed with this weapon.

Doublet of Dramatic Demise

Wondrous item, common

This striking satin jacket allows you to make the most of your dying moments. When you drop to 0 hit points while wearing this doublet, you do not fall unconscious. Instead, you are incapacitated and your speed becomes 0, but you can speak and communicate. You make death saving throws as normal, but if you roll a 1 on the d20, you swoon with a loud gasp and die instantly.

Echo Stone

Wondrous item, uncommon

This dull-blue river stone is soft to the touch, and makes remarkably little sound if dropped. When an echo stone is squeezed as an action, it glows faintly for 1 minute. The stone records all sound made within 15 feet of it while glowing, then repeats that recorded sound at an equal volume once every 5 minutes. This cycle of repetition continues until the stone is squeezed again as an action, which silences it. Squeezing the stone twice in quick succession as an action causes it to play the sounds it has most recently recorded, rather than recording new sounds.

Graz'tchar, the Decadent End

Weapon (greatsword), legendary (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, which has the following properties.

Corrosive Submission. When you hit a creature that has an Intelligence score of 4 or higher with an attack using this sword, the target takes an extra 3d6 acid damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by you for 1 hour. If you attack the creature again while it is charmed in this way, the extra acid damage increases to 10d6 and the charmed condition ends. If the target succeeds



Dagger of Denial



Graz'tchar, the Decadent End

on its saving throw or the charm ends for it, it can't be charmed again in this way for 24 hours.

Hidden Nature. The acid damage dealt by this greatsword appears to be radiant damage to all who perceive it. A *true seeing* spell or similar magic reveals that the sword is actually a rusted, pitted blade dripping with acid.

Sentience. *Graz'tchar* is a sentient neutral 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 sword can speak, read, and understand Common, and can communicate with its wielder telepathically. Anyone who holds it hears the wise voice of a sorrowful king, beckoning the user to seize their destiny. A creature that succeeds on a DC 26 Wisdom (Insight) check while listening to the blade's voice hears a sliver of malice that suggests the truth: the voice is a corrupting trick of the Demon Prince of Indulgence.

Personality. *Graz'tchar* slowly attempts to sway its wielder to sow chaos in Exandria, telling lies and spreading malign truths about great leaders, and claiming that the members 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.

If the sword's attuned wielder disobeys the urges of the weapon for an extended period of time, *Graz'tchar* can attempt to control the wielder, who must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or become charmed by the sword for 24 hours. While the wielder is charmed in this way, the sword can compel them to take an action of the sword's choice once per hour, though the wielder believes this action is taken of their own free will. If the chosen action leads to the harm of someone the wielder considers a trusted friend or ally, the charmed condition immediately ends. On a successful saving throw or if the charmed condition ends for the wielder, they are immune to this property of the sword for 24 hours.

Inescapable Lash

Weapon (whip), rare (requires attunement)

This braided cord is dull bronze in color, ends in a splayed set of three barbs, and gleams like metal under any light. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, which has a reach of 20 feet. When you hit a creature or object using this whip, you can attempt to grapple the target as a bonus action.

While you have a creature grappled using this whip, you can use your action to either pull the creature up to 20 feet toward you, or cause the creature to be restrained until you let go of the whip. A creature restrained in this way can escape by making a successful Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check as an action. The DC of this check equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier.

Magician's Judge

Weapon (greatsword), rare

An executioner's blade from the Age of Arcanum, this magic greatsword is one of many similar weapons once used to execute magic-wielding criminals. Though most commonly found in the lands now known as Wildemount and Issylra, a few such blades have found their way to Tal'Dorei.

If you hit a creature with an attack using this weapon, you can cast the *dispel magic* spell from the sword against the target as part of the attack. Alternatively, you can use an action to cast *dispel magic* from the sword against a target of your choice. If you need to make a check with your spellcasting ability modifier as part of casting the spell, you make this check with a +3 modifier or your own spellcasting ability modifier, whichever is higher.

Once you cast *dispel magic* using this weapon, you can't do so again until the next dawn.

Mirror of Infinite Transpondence

Wondrous item, very rare

These silver hand mirrors always come in pairs. When activated as an action, a mirror establishes a visual link with its paired mirror for 10 minutes, with the two mirrors acting as opposite sides of the same open window. The mirrors create this connection even if both are on different planes.

When a single *mirror of infinite transpondence* is found, the GM decides where its paired mirror is and who possesses it. A random possessor and location can be determined by rolling on the table below. Named bearers are described in chapter 2.

Mirror Locations

d8	Location	Possessor
1	Emon	Seeker Odessa Tal'Dorei
2	Whitestone	None; the mirror is in an empty dungeon
3	Kymal	Sylker "The Millionaire" Uttolot
4	Westruun	Realmseer Eskil Ryndarien
5	Syngorn	Ouestra, the Voice of Memory
6	The Elemental Plane of Water	Khedive Xundi, Lord of Silver Silt
7	The Plane of Shadow	A **Remnant chosen** (see page 251)
8	An untraceable location	The Wonderworker

Once the connection between the two mirrors has been activated three times from either end, it can't be activated again until the next dawn.

Raven's Slumber

Wondrous item, very rare

This black crystal pendant is a magical gateway to a small pocket dimension. You can use the pendant as an improvised weapon to make a melee or ranged weapon attack against a Large or smaller creature. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be trapped within the crystal. A creature that wants to be trapped can intentionally fail this saving throw.

Only one creature at a time can be held in a *raven's slumber*. That creature is aware of the passage of time and can see the world outside of this talisman as if through a window. You can release a held creature to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you as a bonus action.

If a companion creature granted to you by a class feature, or a beast that you've tamed as a companion, is reduced to 0 hit points while within 100 feet of you, it is immediately drawn into the pendant and stabilized. If the pendant already holds a creature, this effect fails.

Rod of Mercurial Form

Wondrous item, uncommon

This humble steel rod is engraved with tiny symbols representing different weapons, as well as the monogram "T.D." A creature holding this rod can speak the name of any simple or martial weapon aloud as a bonus action, causing the rod to transform into an ordinary weapon of that type. When in the form of a ranged weapon, this rod magically creates its own ammunition, which disappears after a ranged attack hits or misses.



Mirror of Infinite Transpondence

Stormrider Boots

Wondrous item, rare

These dark leather boots look to be of common make, but a subtle pattern of swirling storm clouds upon their soles suggests the potency of their enchantment. You can activate these boots as part of your movement, gaining the following benefits until the end of your turn:

- You have a flying speed of 90 feet.
- Opportunity attacks against you are made with disadvantage.
- Whenever you move within 5 feet of a hostile creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d8 lightning damage. A creature can't be damaged in this way more than once per turn.

Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Summer's Dance

Weapon (scimitar), rare (requires attunement)

This beautiful golden blade appears to bend and flex like a reed with your movements. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Additionally, the scimitar has 3 charges and regains 1 expended charge daily at dawn. While wielding this scimitar, you can expend 1 charge as a bonus action to cast the *misty step* spell.

Tinkertop Boltblaster 1000

Weapon (hand crossbow), very rare (requires attunement)

This strange contraption of gears, wires, and lacquered wood has a handle with a metal grip and crank. Its stock bears a flamboyant maker's mark that reads: "Made in Hupperdook," a city in Wildemount. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When you roll a 20 on an attack roll made with this weapon, you can immediately make another attack with this weapon after resolving the critical hit. When you roll a 1 on an attack roll made with this weapon, you must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 piercing damage as some of its gears and wires spring loose.

Tools of the Ashari

The Ashari people have long used their connection and attunement to elemental power to create unique magic items, helping them in their quest to further understand and control the elements. These items are kept secret by their creators and are rarely given to people not of the Ashari. As such, they can be acquired only as a gift from an Ashari for rendering their people a great service, from the body of a dead Ashari explorer, or for an exorbitant price from someone who has acquired the item through dubious means.

At the GM's discretion, the unique nature of these items might mean that a character not of the Ashari and unfamiliar with elemental magic can't automatically attune to them. Such characters can attune to one of the tools of the Ashari with 24 hours worth of special training from an Ashari familiar with the item's use.

Earthboard

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

An *earthboard* is a slab of granite about three inches thick, nine feet long, and two feet wide, with smooth, tapered ends. However, its mundane appearance belies its unique elemental power, which reduces its weight to 40 pounds while a creature is attuned to it. The Earth Ashari of Terrah can often be seen with these stone boards upon their backs as they trek into the crags of the Cliffkeep Mountains.

While standing on an *earthboard*, you gain the following benefits:

- Your speed increases to 60 feet as the board skims across solid ground (but not liquid surfaces).
- If you ramp off a surface of solid earth, you can long jump up to 60 feet. When you end this jump, you can choose to slam into the ground, creating a shockwave. Each creature standing on the ground within 20 feet of you must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or fall prone.
- You have a burrowing speed of 20 feet that allows you to tunnel through earth or solid rock, leaving a 5-foot-diameter tunnel in your wake. As an action, you can increase this burrowing speed to 60 feet until the start of your next turn.
- The *earthboard* always moves with you until you decide to dismount it (no action required).

These benefits last until you end your turn not standing on the *earthboard*.

Flamefriend Lantern

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This wrought-iron lantern holds a small fire elemental spirit. To attune to this item, you must also succeed on a DC 10 Charisma check to bond with the spirit inside the lantern.

Light and Flame. While attuned to the lantern, you can verbally ask the elemental to glow (no action required), causing the lantern to cast bright light in a radius of your choice up to 60 feet and dim light for the same distance beyond that. You can also cast the *produce flame* cantrip from the lantern at will. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Elemental Essence. The fire elemental spirit in the lantern can grant you a small fragment of its power. As an action, you gain one of the following benefits of your choice for 1 hour:

- You have resistance to fire damage.
- Whenever a creature hits you with a melee attack, that creature takes fire damage equal to your proficiency bonus.
- You can cast the *burning hands* spell (spell save DC 15) from the lantern at 3rd level. Once you cast the spell, you can't do so again until the next time you use this property of the lantern.

Once the elemental has shared its power with you in this way, it can't do so again until the next dawn.

Willful Attunement. Your attunement to the lantern lasts until you choose to end it, or until you anger the elemental (by dousing the lantern in water, attacking another nonhostile elemental being, and so forth). You can attempt to attune to the lantern again and repeat the check to bond with the elemental during a short or long rest, but you make this check with disadvantage until you have made amends to the spirit, as the GM determines.

He was given to me by your father, little one. He kept us warm while your father and I trekked through the Dreemoth Ravine and the ruins of Draconia twenty years ago. Such vicious blizzards, the likes of which are only topped by the Neverfields—or Eiselcross, so I've heard. You should have seen us, marching through the snow, dozens of Ashari cloaked in flame, melting trenches in the rime as they advanced, and me, my furs pulled around my nose, blinking through the snow, holding tight to this little one.

When your father returned to Pyrah, I feared I'd never see our little flamefriend again, but.... Here, hold him, hear his little elemental heart fluttering. Think of your father when you feel that warmth, protecting you, watching over you. No matter where in the world you are, whether you're near Pyrah or far, he'll be a bit of family, and a bit of home.

—Talus Naj, to his goddaughter, Ev of Pyrah



Oceanic Weapon

Weapon (any ranged or thrown), rare (requires attunement)

This elegant weapon is adorned with engravings depicting leaping dolphins and drifting jellyfish. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, and you ignore the normal penalties on ranged weapon attacks while using this weapon underwater. While holding the weapon in front of you with both hands, you have a swimming speed of 30 feet.

Additionally, while you hold the weapon, you can use an action to cast the *water breathing* spell. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Skysail

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These bat-like wings were first used by the Air Ashari to soar through the sky. They are constructed of either leather and bone, or cloth and wood, and are set onto a sturdy wooden pole that helps their user remain stable during flight.

While these wings are open and you are riding the *skysail*, you can glide through the air. You have a flying speed of 60 feet, but you must descend at least 10 feet by the end of each of your turns and you can't gain altitude.

Additionally, while in contact with the *skysail*, you can use an action to cast the *fly* spell on yourself, with a duration of 1 minute and requiring no concentration. The spell ends if you lose physical contact with the *skysail*. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn, or unless the *skysail* is immersed in powerful magic of elemental air. (This includes magic such as that found at the top of the Summit Peaks near the rift of air in Zephrah, or on the Elemental Plane of Air).

When the *skysail* is not in use, its wings can be retracted, and its pole can be used as a quarterstaff.

Oh! Oh gods, are you seriously asking me to explain it? Geez, sure, I'll try, but you really gotta feel it, you know? The sensation of the wind whipping past you as you shoot up into the sky, then—whoa!—your stomach just drops out from you, and it's like you left your heart behind as you start to fall. It's like nothing's holding onto you, then—whoosh!—the wind catches you, and swings you back into the sky.

—Air Ashari druid initiate Kelthai, on skysailing



Vestiges of Divergence

During the wars of the Calamity, destruction rained across the world. Fragmented chronicles of this time recount battles between gods that leveled mountains and sank whole civilizations beneath the waves. Chosen heroes rose up to accept weapons, armor, and other magic items blessed by their patron gods to staunch the inexorable tide of death. Powerful archmages wove the overflowing arcane powers of the war into legendary magic items that could both thwart death and mete it out in equal measure.

These relics of the Age of Arcanum armed mortals with god-like powers, and escalated the Calamity to a fever pitch. Soon after, the war climaxed in a wave of total destruction that left much of Exandria in ruins. Thousands of years of history were reduced to ash—and in that ash were buried many of these selfsame relics. Some of those not lost were passed down through bloodlines for generations, becoming potent symbols of authority and rulership. Others were sealed away by those who feared their power. These mighty echoes of the war that nearly shattered Exandria and the divine banishment that followed are known as the Vestiges of Divergence.

The Vestiges of Divergence are unique even among legendary magic items, for each one touches the defiant soul of its wielder and grows in power alongside them. The base state of a Vestige of Divergence is its dormant state, which the item returns to if sealed away or otherwise kept from being attuned by a worthy individual for a long period of time. A dormant state still imbues a modicum of power to an attuned wielder. But with time, perseverance, and personal growth, the Vestige of Divergence can regain access to some of its lost power in its awakened state. Eventually, if its bearer overcomes personal hardship and transforms their own soul, a Vestige of Divergence reaches its full potential in its exalted state. This shows the true power of the item, as it was when first utilized in the Calamity against gods armed for war.

The point at which a character finds a Vestige of Divergence, as well as the point at which that item starts to unlock its full power, is entirely in the hands of the Game Master—though it is a topic that players and GMs can discuss and mutually scheme over between game sessions. The acquisition of such an item—or the discovery of its true identity—has the potential to be a scene of momentous narrative weight. Those who bear a Vestige of Divergence are respected and feared by those who understand these items' true power. But such an honor can also paint a target on the bearer's back, for many covet such power, and would do anything to obtain it.

Many of the Vestiges of Divergence detailed in this section can currently be found in Tal'Dorei, while

others are scattered elsewhere throughout Exandria. Some of these relics remain lost to time, waiting for someone to find them among the dust and rubble. Others might be in use by powerful heroes ready to pass the item's power onto a worthy successor who fights for the proper cause. Still others might be in the hands of twisted souls using them to terrorize the weak and defenseless. The Vestiges of Divergence are both magic items and narrative devices, and it's the GM's choice as to where any one of them might be found or earned.

Advancement of a Vestige of Divergence

The conditions by which a Vestige of Divergence progresses to its next level of power can vary, and often revolve around the nature of the specific item and its magic. An attuned bearer of a Vestige of Divergence must often symbolically progress to a new state of self-discovery or accomplishment. Alternatively, a Vestige of Divergence might bequeath new power to a character in a state of extreme personal duress or desperation.

Such triggering moments are entirely up to the Game Master to identify and unveil, and as such, will likely manifest in unexpected ways. Players should allow the organic narrative moments that they feel might exemplify such an advancement to occur, and GMs should tailor the triggering moment accordingly to be important, impactful, and memorable.

Examples of the kinds of moments that can trigger the advancement of a Vestige of Divergence include the following:

- A character finally surmounts one of their greatest fears, bravely overcoming a traumatic event to save a party member.
- A character is mercilessly defeated 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 of Divergence.
- A character discovers a facet of their destiny that calls their actions toward a dangerous cause—and against their own fear, they accept their fate and responsibility.
- A character claims vengeance against a rival who has tormented them for ages.
- A character known for restraint gives in to the amoral violence that the relic they bear was dedicated to.

If you want to keep the Vestiges "balanced," in addition to being narratively significant, then characters may find a dormant Vestige before 11th level—perhaps unaware that it's even a Vestige! That dormant Vestige is awakened somewhere between 11th and 17th level, and is exalted at any time after that. Even using these level ranges as a rule of thumb, you shouldn't rely too heavily on those mechanical benchmarks. A Vestige of Divergence's advancement is triggered by character development, not simply by leveling up.

To Suit the Wielder

The Vestiges of Divergence were all created by humanoids or gifted by the gods to their humanoid champions. As such, all of these legendary magic items are sized to suit Medium creatures. However, the mighty magic that thrums within each item allows it to grow or shrink in size to suit the creature attuned to it.

The game statistics of a Vestige of Divergence don't change when it resizes unless the item is a weapon. When a Large or larger creature makes an attack with such a weapon, the weapon deals one additional damage die for each size category its wielder is larger than Medium. For example, if Fenthras is used by a Large fey, attacks made using the longbow deal 2d8 piercing damage. If *Pyremaul* is used by a Huge giant, attacks made using the maul deal 4d6 bludgeoning damage.

When the god-war spread across Exandria, no creature was safe, no matter how small and insignificant, no matter how mighty and powerful. For the battles between gods, would-be gods, and their divine monstrosities took place on such a scale that mountains were sundered and whole cities perished. How could any mortal hope to sway the fate of their own world?

The answer—perhaps ironically, given how the arcane arts and a hunger for godhood brought about the Calamity—lay in magic of both arcane and divine provenance. Not paltry charms or trinkets, but the kind of magic that suffuses the ley lines of this world and plucks at the very fabric of reality. True, a mortal army may be naught but a cloud of gnats to the gods, but a singular hero—or villain—wielding an artifact imbued with magic beyond reckoning...such a champion could bring their strength and cunning to bear amidst the devastation of the god-war.

Thus, the gods and even the greatest mortal mages wrought relics of a might never seen before, nor, I think, since. Moreover, the full potential of these items could only used by those with souls worthy of wielding such legendary power....

—Monograph on the Vestiges of Divergence from the Cobalt Reserve archives circa 547 P.D., attrib. High Curator Jorum Irrelios

Agony

Weapon (flail), legendary (requires attunement by a creature of non-good alignment)

Utilized in countless tortures and slow executions, the hooked chains of this brutal weapon constantly show dried blood and rot. Legend says that *Agony* was wielded in the Calamity by the gnoll scion of a flesh-eating Demon Lord.

Dormant

While *Agony* is in a dormant state, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Whenever you damage a creature with *Agony*, that creature is marked for 10 minutes or until you damage a different creature. When you hit a creature marked in this way with this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d6 piercing damage.

Awakened

When *Agony* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The extra damage when you hit a marked creature increases to 1d8.
- A marked creature has disadvantage on Constitution checks and Constitution saving throws.
- When you reduce 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 *Agony* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3.
- The extra damage when you hit a marked creature increases to 2d8.
- When you score a critical hit with this weapon, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. On a success, the target is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Armor of the Valiant Soul

Armor (scale), legendary (requires attunement)

This antique armor forged from jade and black-dragon scales was once worn by J'mon Sa Ord of Ank'Harel.

Dormant

While the *Armor of the Valiant Soul* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing it.

You can also cast the *command* spell (save DC 14) while attuned to this armor. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Awakened

When the *Armor of the Valiant Soul* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The AC bonus of the armor increases to +2.
- You have resistance to acid damage while wearing this armor.
- You are immune to the frightened condition while wearing this armor.
- The spell save DC for the armor's *command* spell increases to 16, and the spell can target up to three creatures.

Exalted

When the *Armor of the Valiant Soul* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The AC bonus of the armor increases to +3.





- You are immune to acid damage while wearing this armor.
- All friendly creatures within 15 feet of you are immune to the frightened condition as long as you are conscious.
- The spell save DC of the armor's *command* spell increases to 18, and the spell can target up to five creatures.

Cabal's Ruin

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This cloak is made of heavy dark cloth trimmed with golden patterns, and occasionally shimmers with sparks of arcane energy. It was once worn by the famed gunslinger Percival Fredrickstein von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III of Whitestone.

Dormant

While *Cabal's Ruin* is in a dormant state, the cloak has 4 charges and it regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn. When you hit with an attack, you can expend any number of charges from the cloak, with the attack dealing an extra 1d6 lightning damage per charge expended. If your attack strikes multiple targets, you choose one target that takes this extra damage.

When you are targeted by an enemy's spell, you can use your reaction to absorb a portion of the spell's energy into the cloak. The spell affects you normally, but the cloak regains a number of charges equal to the level of the spell. This property can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.



Cabal's Ruin

Awakened

When *Cabal's Ruin* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects while wearing this cloak.
- The cloak has 6 charges and it regains 1d4 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn.
- When you use the cloak to absorb a spell, you gain resistance to one type of damage dealt by the spell (your choice). This resistance then lasts until the end of your next turn.

Exalted

When *Cabal's Ruin* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefit:

- The cloak has 10 charges and it regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn.

Circlet of Barbed Vision

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature of non-good alignment)

When you don this circlet of gnarled onyx, black barbs dig into your head, imparting power to you as the circlet twists your appearance to amuse the Spider Queen. The current resting place of the *Circlet of Barbed Vision* is unknown, but rumor has it that a spectral assassin known as the Inevitable End seeks this relic.

Dormant

While the *Circlet of Barbed Vision* is in a dormant state, you have advantage on initiative rolls while you wear it, but your Charisma score decreases by 2. Your Charisma score returns to normal if you remove the circlet, but you take 4d6 psychic damage when you do so.

Circlet of Barbed Vision



Additionally, 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 GM says whether the attack hits or misses. You can't use this property again until you finish a short or long rest.

Awakened

When the *Circlet of Barbed Vision* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- You have resistance to poison damage, and you are immune to the poisoned condition.
- Your ability to gain a bonus to an attack roll can be used twice between rests.

Exalted

When the *Circlet of Barbed Vision* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to poison damage.
- You have truesight out to a range of 60 feet.
- 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. Though few know this, *Condemner* is now in the possession of an equally infamous assassin named Ixrattu Khar (see her statistics in chapter 6).

Dormant

When *Condemner* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d4 poison damage.



Condemner

Additionally, if you hit with an attack using this weapon, you can activate one of the following effects instead of dealing damage:

- You cast *fog cloud* centered on the target's space.
- You cast *silence* centered on the target's space.

When an effect is used, it can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.

Awakened

When *Condemner* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2.
- The extra poison damage dealt by the weapon increases to 1d6.
- You gain an additional effect that can be triggered in place of dealing damage when you hit with an attack: You cast *hold person* on the target (save DC 15). This effect can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.

Exalted

When *Condemner* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3.
- The extra poison damage dealt by the weapon increases to 1d8.
- The save DC for the weapon's *hold person* spell increases to 17.
- You gain an additional effect that can be triggered in place of damage when you hit with an attack: You cast the *blight* spell on the target (save DC 17). This effect can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.

Deathwalker's Ward

Armor (studded leather), legendary (requires attunement)

This beautiful black leather armor is covered in intricate scrollwork, and has a mantle bearing the black feathers of the Matron of Ravens. Legends say that it has been worn by a number of that deity's champions over the centuries—most recently, Vax'ildan of Vox Machina.

Dormant

When the *Deathwalker's Ward* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to AC and you have advantage on death saving throws while wearing the armor.

Awakened

When the *Deathwalker's Ward* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The AC bonus of the armor increases to +2.
- While wearing the armor, you have resistance to one of the following damage types of your choice: acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, or poison. You can change the damage type when you finish a short rest.

Exalted

When the *Deathwalker's Ward* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The AC bonus of the armor increases to +3.
- As a bonus action, you grow large black raven wings that grant you a flying speed of 60 feet and last for 1 hour. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Fenthras

Weapon (longbow), legendary (requires attunement)

This gorgeous longbow made of everbark from the Fey Realm flexes and shifts like a living entity. It is said to have been wielded by the legendary ranger Vex'ahlia against great evils.

Dormant

While *Fenthras* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When you make an attack with *Fenthras*, you can declare it an oracle shot, allowing you to experience the area around the arrow using your normal senses for 10 minutes. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.

Additionally, when a creature is killed by an attack using this weapon, a six-foot-tall tree rapidly grows out of the corpse over the next minute. The tree is rooted in the ground to make the body difficult to move, but does not permanently damage the corpse or its organs.

Awakened

When *Fenthras* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2. Additionally, when you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d4 lightning damage.
- When you hit with an attack using this weapon, you can declare it a bramble shot. The attack deals an extra 3d8 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or become restrained by steely brambles that burst from the arrow. A restrained target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest.

Exalted

When *Fenthras* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3.
- The extra lightning damage dealt by attacks using the bow increases to 1d6.
- You can declare a bramble shot twice between rests, and the saving throw DC increases to 17.



Deathwalker's Ward



Fenthras

Honor's Last Stand

Armor (shield), legendary (requires attunement by a creature of non-evil alignment)

This massive silvered shield bears the crest of the Platinum Dragon and never tarnishes. Its metal is always warm to the touch.

Dormant

While *Honor's Last Stand* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to AC while holding the shield. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC. You also can't be knocked prone while bearing this shield.

Awakened

When *Honor's Last Stand* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The shield's bonus to AC increases to +2.
- If you successfully shove a creature while holding this shield, that creature takes 2d6 force damage.
- When a creature within 5 feet of you misses you with an attack, you can attempt to shove that creature as a reaction.

Exalted

When *Honor's Last Stand* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The shield's bonus to AC increases to +3.
- When you successfully shove a creature while holding this shield, you can move it up to 15 feet away from you.
- As a bonus action, you can protect an ally within 5 feet of you, granting that ally a +3 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn or until they are no longer within 5 feet of you.



Rules Tip: Pushing and Shoving

Certain character options, such as the Path of the Juggernaut barbarian in chapter 4, grant the ability to push other creatures around the battlefield with your attacks. But this is just one way to push a creature. If you want to move a creature without hurting it, there's a special shove attack available to all characters. The Vestige of Divergence *Honor's Last Stand* encourages you to shove your foes away while you valiantly stand your ground.

Shoving a Creature. Using the Attack action, you can make a special melee attack to shove a creature, either to knock it prone or push it away from you. If you're able to make multiple attacks with the Attack action, this attack replaces one of them. The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Instead of making an attack roll, you make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from you.

Kiss of the Changebringer

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

A beautiful, glittering emerald is set within this silver chain, humming with power and possibility. It is said that this amulet was stolen from the neck of the Changebringer herself by the Lord of the Hells, and locked within the vaults of Bazzoxan in Wildemount. It was later claimed there by a group of Aurora Watch soldiers during an expedition into that grim fortress's abandoned temples.

Dormant

While the *Kiss of the Changebringer* is in a dormant state, you have a +1 bonus to saving throws and are immune to the grappled condition while wearing it.

Awakened

When the *Kiss of the Changebringer* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The bonus to saving throws increases to +2.
- You are immune to the restrained condition.
- You can use an action to cast the *blink* spell on yourself. This property of the amulet can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Exalted

When the *Kiss of the Changebringer* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The bonus to saving throws increases to +3.
- You are immune to the paralyzed and petrified conditions.

- When you make an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can roll an additional d20. You can choose to do so after you make the attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, but before the outcome is determined. You choose which of the d20s to use for your roll. This property of the amulet can't be used 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 legendary White Duke, a founding member of the Golden Grin, and many other master bards before him. It resonates with nearby musical tones. In the modern era, it is best known as the personal weapon of famed bard Scanlan Shorthalt.

Dormant

While *Mythcarver* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. This longsword's enchantments and light construction also grant it the Finesse property, which allows you to use either your Strength or Dexterity modifier for the attack and damage rolls when making an attack with this weapon.

Additionally, when you target an ally with your Bardic Inspiration feature, you gain advantage on attacks with this weapon until the end of your turn.

Awakened

When *Mythcarver* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2. Additionally, when you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d6 force damage.
- When you use your Bardic Inspiration to affect an enemy while wielding this sword, that enemy has disadvantage on their next saving throw.

Exalted

When *Mythcarver* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3.
- As an action, you let the spirit of the sword overtake your body and guide your strikes. You make 4 melee attacks with the sword, then gain 1 level of exhaustion. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Though the name of the champion who wielded Mythcarver has been lost, legend says that the songs she sung in her beautiful contralto made her friends rejoice and her enemies weep with fear. Mythcarver was forged in the flying city of Zemniaz by a master arcanist and blacksmith along with the wielder herself, who wove song and spell into the blade with each fold of the metal.

—**High Curator Jorum Irrelios, circa 547 P.D.**



Kiss of the Changebringer



Mythcarver

Plate of the Dawnmartyr

Armor (plate), legendary (requires attunement)

Beautiful silver scrollwork and priceless cut rubies adorn this set of brass-and-gold armor. Legend holds that it was worn by Duana, High Priest of the Dawnfather, when she was martyred in the Battle of Ghor Dranas in the final days of the Calamity. In more recent times, it was worn by Pike Trickfoot, a legendary cleric of the Everlight, while fighting against the Chroma Conclave and the Whispered One.

Dormant

While the *Plate of the Dawnmartyr* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing it. When a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to rebuke that creature, dealing it 1d6 fire damage.

Awakened

When the *Plate of the Dawnmartyr* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The armor's bonus to AC increases to +2.
- You are immune to the frightened condition.
- You have resistance to fire damage.
- The fire damage you deal when you rebuke an attacker increases to 2d6.

Exalted

When the *Plate of the Dawnmartyr* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The armor's bonus to AC increases to +3.
- When you rebuke an attacker, you can choose to deal either fire damage or radiant damage.
- When you are reduced to 0 hit points, you can choose to have a blast of healing flame surround you. You regain 1 hit point and are lifted to your feet. Each enemy within 10 feet of you takes 2d6 fire damage or radiant damage (your choice). This property of the armor can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Pyremaul

Weapon (maul), legendary (requires attunement)

Forged from deep red iron, this massive hammer is set with a brilliant fire opal that shimmers with eternal flame. It is rumored to be currently wielded by Grand Legate Phaestor, the fire giant ruler of Vulkanon, somewhere beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains.

Dormant

While *Pyremaul* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d6 fire damage.

Additionally, you can choose to have this weapon shed bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet (no action required).

Awakened

When *Pyremaul* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

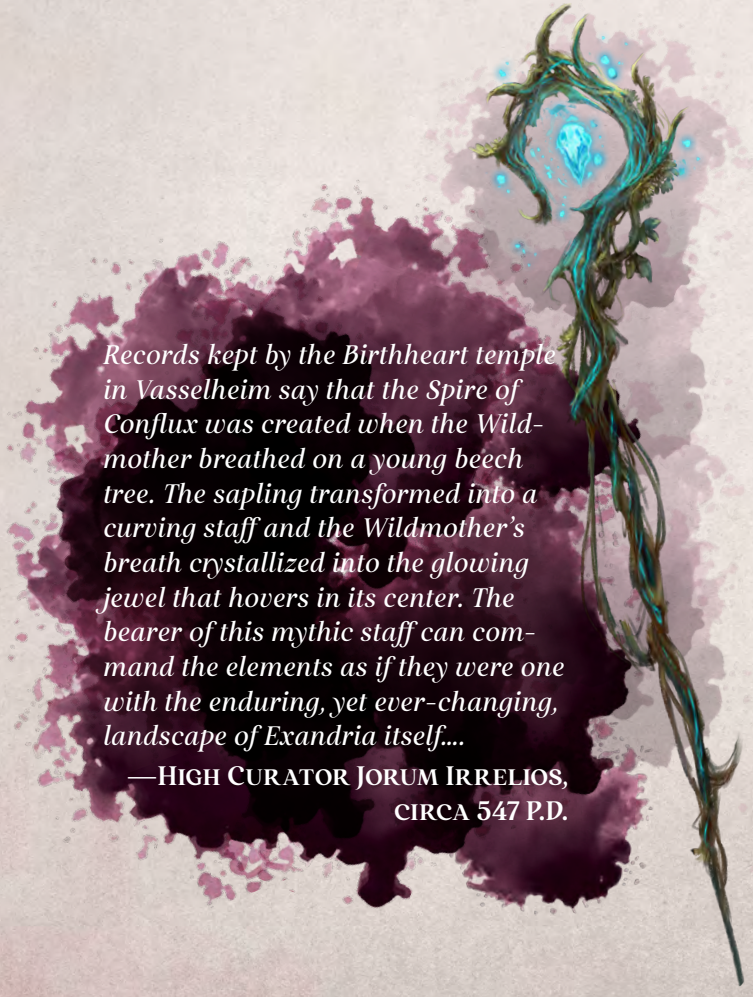
- The weapon's bonus to attack rolls increases to +2.
- The extra fire damage dealt by the weapon increases to 2d6.
- As an action, you can slam *Pyremaul* into the ground to cast the *burning hands* spell at 2nd level (save DC 15). You can't use this property again until you finish a short or long rest.
- Whenever 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 *Pyremaul* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack rolls increases to +3.
- The extra fire damage dealt by the weapon increases to 3d6.
- When you cast *burning hands* with the weapon, you do so at 3rd level and the save DC increases to 17.
- When you score a critical hit with this weapon, the saving throw to avoid being knocked prone increases to 17. You also roll an extra 3d6 fire damage when determining the extra damage for the critical hit.
- When you kill a creature with an attack using this weapon, you can take 10d10 fire damage and immolate the creature's corpse. This damage can't be reduced in any way, and you die if this damage reduces you to 0 hit points. The immolated creature and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, are reduced to a pile of ash. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a *true resurrection* or a *wish* spell. You can't use this property of the maul again until 7 days have passed.



Records kept by the Birthheart temple in Vasselheim say that the Spire of Conflux was created when the Wildmother breathed on a young beech tree. The sapling transformed into a curving staff and the Wildmother's breath crystallized into the glowing jewel that hovers in its center. The bearer of this mythic staff can command the elements as if they were one with the enduring, yet ever-changing, landscape of Exandria itself....

—High Curator Jorum Irrelios, circa 547 P.D.

Spire of Conflux

Staff, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

A powerful relic passed down from generation to generation of Ashari leaders, the *Spire of Conflux* was lost over three centuries ago when Joran the Sea-Speaker, a respected leader of the Water Ashari, was devoured by a demon of the Abyss. It was rediscovered by the legendary druid Keyleth of Zephrah, Voice of the Tempest. However, rumors swirl that she is seeking another hero to wield it—one who can travel the land and do good in small ways as she once did

Dormant

While the *Spire of Conflux* is in a dormant state, the staff has 8 charges and regains 1d4 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding the staff, you can expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *burning hands* (1 charge) or *fireball* (3 charges).

Additionally, while holding this staff, you have a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC increases by 1.

Awakened

When the *Spire of Conflux* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The staff has 12 charges, and it regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn.
- You can also spend charges to cast the following spells from the staff: *conjure elemental* (5 charges) or *ice storm* (4 charges).
- When you cast a spell that deals bludgeoning, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage and you roll a 1 on a damage die, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Exalted

When the *Spire of Conflux* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The staff has 20 charges, and it regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn.
- You can also spend charges to cast the following spells from the staff: *chain lightning* (6 charges) or *fire storm* (7 charges)
- The bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC increases to +2.

Spire of Conflux

Star Razor

Weapon (longsword), legendary (requires attunement)

The thick, grooved blade of this shining silver longsword is lined with etched runes that sparkle blue in the light. *Star Razor*—known also as Dwueth'var—was thought to have been destroyed or lost after the Calamity, but new rumors suggest that it might be wielded by a half-orc somewhere in Wildemount.

Dormant

While *Star Razor* is in a dormant state, you can hold this magic longsword and use a bonus action to speak the command word *Galas-var,* causing the sword to emit a pale blue glow that sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. This glow lasts until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again, or until you drop or sheathe the sword.

- While this longsword is glowing, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with the weapon, and you have resistance to radiant damage.
- You can cast the *faerie fire* spell from the weapon as an action, requiring no components (save DC 13). Once a spell has been cast using *Star Razor,* that spell can't be cast from the sword until the next dawn.

Awakened

When *Star Razor* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2.
- When a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to create a burst of radiance from the sword, dealing 1d8 radiant damage to the attacker.
- You can cast the *see invisibility* spell from the sword as an action, and the save DC for spells cast using the sword increases to 15.

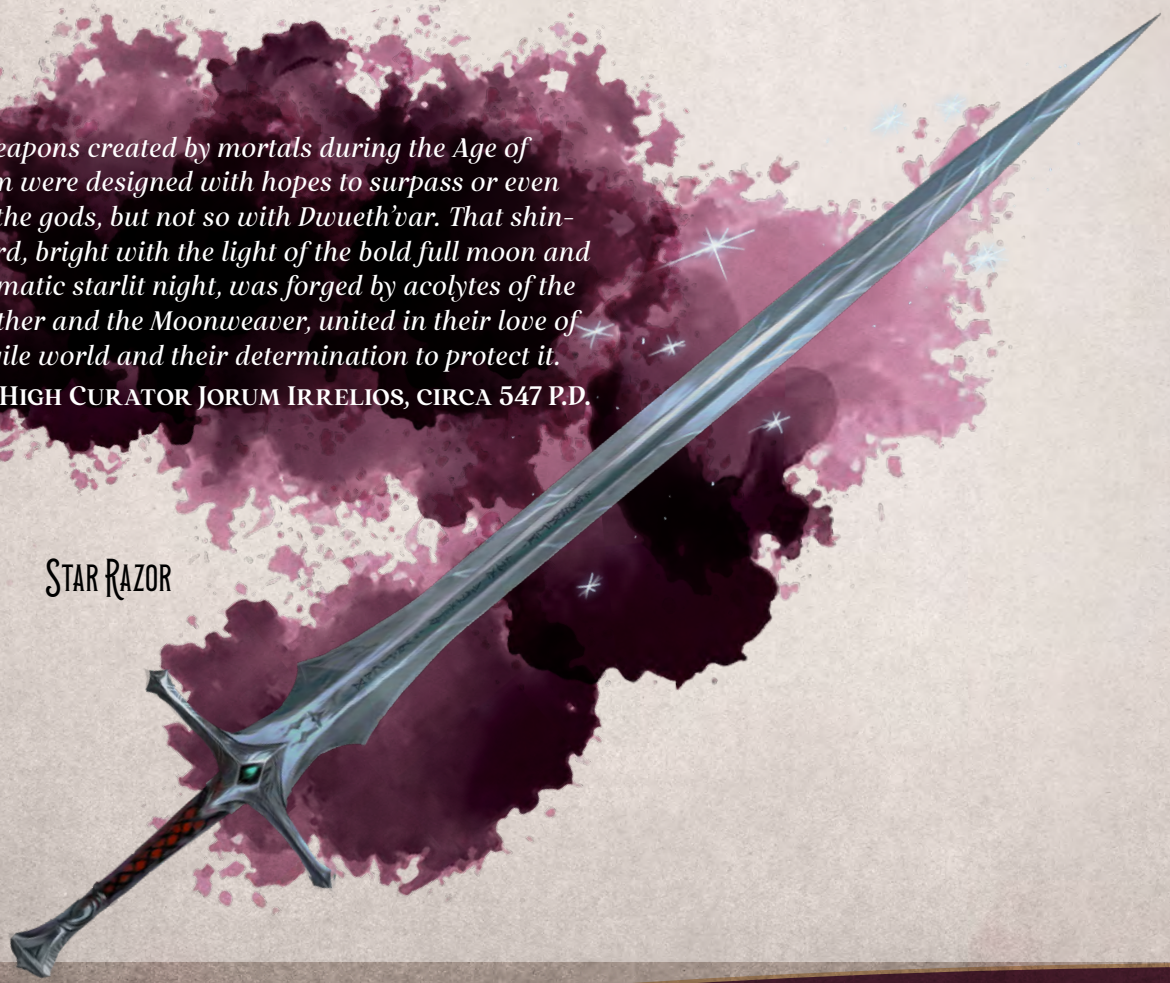
Exalted

When *Star Razor* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3.
- The burst of radiance you can create as a reaction when hit with a melee attack deals 1d12 radiant damage, and you can immediately teleport to an unoccupied space you can see within 15 feet of you as part of the same reaction.
- You can cast the *fly* spell from the sword as an action, and the save DC for spells cast using the sword increases to 17.

Many weapons created by mortals during the Age of Arcanum were designed with hopes to surpass or even destroy the gods, but not so with Dwueth'var. That shining sword, bright with the light of the bold full moon and the enigmatic starlit night, was forged by acolytes of the Wildmother and the Moonweaver, united in their love of this fragile world and their determination to protect it.

—High Curator Jorum Irrelios, circa 547 P.D.



Star Razor

Titanstone Knuckles

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Carved from the heartstone of a slain earth primordial, these gauntlets bestow immeasurable might to their wearer. In recent times, they were wielded by the legendary barbarian Grog Strongjaw, who continues to use them as he seeks worthy challengers across Tal'Dorei and Exandria.

Dormant

While the *Titanstone Knuckles* are in a dormant state, your Strength score becomes 22 while you wear these gauntlets. Additionally, your weapon attacks deal double damage to objects and structures.

Awakened

When the *Titanstone Knuckles* reach an awakened state, they gain the following properties:

- Your Strength score becomes 24.
- You can use an action to cast the *enlarge/reduce* spell from the gauntlets on yourself (enlarge only), with a duration of 10 minutes. This property of the gauntlets can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Exalted

When the *Titanstone Knuckles* reach an exalted state, they gain the following properties:

- Your Strength score becomes 26.
- While you are under the effect of the *enlarge/reduce* spell cast by the gauntlets, you have resistance to cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage.



Titanstone Knuckles

Whisper

Weapon (dagger), legendary (requires attunement)

Forged with a mercurial metal accidentally drawn from the Realms Beyond, this dagger shimmers with an unsettling sourceless light. It was once wielded by Vax'ildan, a legendary champion of the Matron of Ravens. Two raven feathers are linked to its pommel as a memento of its former bearer.

Dormant

While *Whisper* is in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Additionally, when you score a critical hit with this dagger, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. On a success, the target is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Awakened

When *Whisper* reaches an awakened state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2. Additionally, when you hit with an attack using this dagger, the target takes an extra 1d6 psychic damage.
- The DC to resist being frightened from a critical hit increases to 15.



Whisper

Exalted

When *Whisper* reaches an exalted state, you gain the following benefits:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3, and the extra psychic damage it deals increases to 1d8.
- The DC to resist being frightened from a critical hit increases to 17.
- When this dagger is used to make a ranged attack, you can choose to transform into shadow and merge with the blade as part of the action used to attack, teleporting to another location. If the attack hits, you appear in an unoccupied space of your choice within 5 feet of the target. If the attack misses, you appear where the GM determines the dagger lands (typically within 1d6 × 5 feet of the target). In either case, you appear with the dagger in your hand.

Wraps of Dyamak

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a monk)

Created and wielded by the ancient warrior-monk Dyamak, these thick strips of enchanted cloth are stained to appear dark crimson with blood of unknown origin. The current resting place of the wraps is unknown.

Dormant

When the *Wraps of Dyamak* are in a dormant state, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with your unarmed strike while wearing them.



In addition, when you finish a short or long rest, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your total number of ki points.

Awakened

When the *Wraps of Dyamak* reach an awakened state, they gain the following properties:

- The bonus to attack and damage rolls with your unarmed strike increases to +2.
- You can cast the *misty step* spell from the wraps as a bonus action, vanishing in a cloud of crimson mist. This property of the wraps can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest, or until you score a critical hit with an unarmed strike against a hostile creature.

Exalted

When the *Wraps of Dyamak* reach an exalted state, they gain the following properties:

- The bonus to attack and damage rolls with your unarmed strike increases to +3.
- When you hit with an unarmed strike, you can choose to make the attack a ravenous strike. The target takes an extra 6d6 necrotic damage, and you regain hit points equal to the amount of necrotic damage dealt. This property of the wraps can't be used again until you finish a long rest, or until you score a critical hit with an unarmed strike against a hostile creature.

Optional Campaign Rules

Every campaign embarks on its heroic tale in its own way. Simple beginnings for a ragtag lot of sellswords. Students of the world falling in with the wrong crowd. Unwitting pawns of destiny thrust into plots much larger than themselves. However you wish to formulate your story and world—whether as player or GM—the rules of the game can help set a clear vision of how to run a campaign with consistency and intended design.

That being said, sometimes the experienced group wishes to add some new flavor to the existing structure of the gaming world. You can bring in new options for old rules, or adjust to a more advanced level of difficulty in a mystical world where danger—and even death—can be easily circumvented. This section outlines a number of homebrew rules and guidelines that any campaign can adopt to further customize the gaming experience, and which can fit in especially well with a Tal'Dorei campaign.

As with any homebrew or nonstandard rules and options, any of the options presented here that appeal to the players should be approved and implemented by the Game Master. Likewise, Game Masters should discuss the possible inclusion of

any of these options with players beforehand, to ensure that everyone will have fun with the intended changes. Talk these options over and make sure everyone is aware of and fully understands the new rules.

Accelerated Rests

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 versus reward. However, sometimes a rest is necessary for the party to continue, even if the current rush of the story's clock won't allow for the hour that a short rest requires.

One way to make short rests less intrusive is to let characters take one in a reduced amount of time. If the characters have only 10 minutes to spare, let them take a 10-minute short rest. If they have half an hour to spare, let them take a short rest in 30 minutes. This fits the game mechanics to the story's narrative, rather than the other way around.

In a campaign that implements this option, a character must finish a long rest before they can take an accelerated short rest again.

Arduous Rally

If fudging game mechanics to support the campaign's narrative doesn't feel right for your group, the characters can potentially make use of the option to take an arduous rally instead of a short rest. This involves one or more characters spending 5 minutes to rally their resolve in the face of coming peril, letting their adrenaline fuel the need to push on. A character who undertakes an arduous rally gains the benefit of a short rest, but any hit points restored by spending Hit Dice are halved. Moreover, the character gains one level of exhaustion.

Alternative Resurrection Rules

Character death often becomes no more than a minor inconvenience in some campaigns. Once an adventuring party reaches a certain level, the spells available to return fallen comrades from the afterlife—including *revivify*, *raise dead*, and *resurrection*—make death no more than a temporary setback, potentially undermining one of the most significant elements of danger and threat in the campaign story. For players and GMs who wish to elevate the gravity of character death, the optional rules in this section offer three different approaches.

Harrowing Return

In games that use this house rule, the process of a character dying and being pulled back into their body becomes a traumatic experience. The magic that pulls the spirit from beyond the dark veil of death takes a toll on that spirit each time, changing a person in unexpected and profound ways.

This rule is best for campaigns with dark and horrific themes. It adds a dose of grim bleakness that might not feel at home in epic and heroic stories. Players and GMs who want to make use of this rule should talk about it beforehand, and if any player says no or doesn't offer enthusiastic support, it's best to not use it. It's also important for GMs to check in with the players whenever this rule comes into play, just to make sure everyone is still having fun with the darker themes.

When a character is brought back to life by any spell other than *true resurrection*, that character must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to 22 − the level of the spell used to return the character to life. On a failure, the character's experience of death and the afterlife exacts a heavy toll, determined by rolling on the Harrowing Return table. The consequence lasts until the GM rules that the character has resolved it. Consequences with no clear resolution last for 1d10 × 10 days, after which the player decides how their character overcame it. Or, to make a campaign even darker, the players and the GM can agree that these consequences last indefinitely.

Alternatively, rather than rolling on the table, a player and a GM can work together to choose a consequence that creates an interesting story for the character. Such a consequence might tie to the character's backstory, the themes of the campaign, or the circumstances under which the character died.

A *remove curse* spell temporarily suppresses a consequence of being brought back from the dead, but the consequence returns each time the character drops to 0 hit points or finishes a long rest, until the consequence is resolved.

O lady of cold winters and the long night of all souls. O harbinger of all ends and eternal sentinel of the final threshold. I entreat you—nay, I beseech you! You bear within your grasp the soul of one whose fate has not yet reached its end. Bear witness, O queen of night-black feathers; turn your divine gaze to the golden bonds that tie the living to the departed.

The tears of a brother, who weeps without shame. The blade of a lover, who grieves she did not die while holding it in battle alongside you. A portrait painted by a mother, of an infant, untouched by the sorrows of the world. O Matron of Death, I plead to you—hear their cries! Let not this warrior's fate end here.

—Valiq, cleric of the Matron of Ravens

Harrowing Return

d10	Consequence
1	**Call of the Grave.** An angel of death is obsessed with your fleeting spirit, and wants you back. When you roll initiative at the start of combat, make a death saving throw. On a failed save, the GM chooses an undead creature with a CR equal to your level or lower. It appears at a point 120 feet away from you and joins the combat against you. The creature knows where you are at all times and pursues you unerringly. It vanishes when reduced to 0 hit points, when you die, or after 10 minutes.
2	**Memories from the Beyond.** The memory of death lingers. At the end of each long rest, describe how your character has tried to forget what dying felt like, then make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC set by the GM based on your answer. On a failed save, you gain one level of exhaustion that lasts until you are subject to greater restoration or similar magic, or until you spend 30 days in focused downtime to make peace with your memories.
3	**Obscure Purpose.** A greater power allowed you to come back for a reason. This might be a god such as the Matron of Ravens that you can now commune with, or an obscure supernatural being. This consequence might be an opportunity to become a cleric or paladin of this god, or to take levels in the warlock class. Alternatively, if you choose not to swear a covenant with this entity, or if you disobey their requests, roll again on this table. You suffer the new consequences until you adhere to the purpose of this entity or find a way to rid yourself of their attention.
4	**Persistent Wounds.** Whenever you fail a death saving throw, your hit point maximum is reduced by 2d10 until you finish a long rest. If your hit point maximum is reduced to 0 in this way, you die.
5	**Secret Face.** You are no longer you, but a chaotic evil shapechanger who has taken your place. You play this duplicate and use your original game statistics until the duplicate is killed or until this consequence is otherwise overcome. The GM determines where your soul is actually being held captive—possibly in the afterlife for which you were intended, or in your double's malign realm.
6	**Hunger for Death.** Once per day, you or the GM must decide that you use the following reaction: When you see a creature you perceive as hostile or potentially hostile and your distance to that creature is equal to or less than your speed, you immediately and aggressively move your speed toward that creature, then make one melee attack against it. You have advantage on the attack roll if your attack is unexpected.
7	**Opaque Thoughts.** You obsessively recall the sensation of life tearing you from the jaws of death. These ever-present memories fill your mind, making you immune to any effect that would sense your emotions or read your thoughts. Likewise, other creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain your intentions.
8	**Unearthly Awareness.** Your ordeal left a mark upon your soul, which now shudders in the presence of the undead. You know whenever an undead creature is within 30 feet of you, and you don't have disadvantage on attacks against invisible undead within this range. This constant awareness is distracting, however, and you have disadvantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks while any undead creature is within 30 feet of you.
9	**Bond of Vengeance.** You have returned as a revenant, bearing an unquenchable spark of hatred for the creature that killed you. As an action, you can focus on this spark to immediately learn the distance and direction to any creature that has killed you. If that creature is on a different plane, you learn only that information. If a creature that killed you dies, you immediately know. If you are within 120 feet of a creature that killed you, you have disadvantage on attack rolls against any other creature.
10	**Never Again.** You don't fall unconscious when reduced to 0 hit points. Instead, you remain conscious until you end your turn without having attacked a creature or cast a spell of 1st level or higher. While you have 0 hit points, you have advantage on attack rolls, your attacks deal an extra 1d10 damage on a hit, and attack rolls made against you have disadvantage. You make death saving throws as normal, including suffering a failure when you take damage. Additionally, whenever you take damage while at 0 hit points, your hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage until you finish a long rest.

Like all of the great rites of passage in life, death changes us. 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 "Unfinished Rites," by Claret Director Ged Narrel

Fading Spirits

This house rule is used in the *Critical Role* livestream to increase the emotional stakes of bringing a beloved friend back from the dead. It also adds the ever-increasing threat of losing a friend permanently to the game, even with the aid of miraculous magic.

If magic is used to bring a character back from the dead (except for the *revivify* spell; see below), everyone present becomes part of a resurrection ritual. Up to three characters present for the ritual—typically members of the deceased's adventuring party—can contribute to the ritual by attempting to call their ally's spirit back. This could involve delivering a stirring speech, playing a song from their shared childhood, goading a rival back with a display of sword skills, confessing undying love for them, or anything else that the players or the GM consider emotionally stirring.

Participating in the Ritual. Each of the participating characters makes an ability check. A player can tell the GM what kind of check they want to make, but ultimately the GM decides what check is appropriate based on the character's contribution to the ritual. The baseline DC of this check is 15, but the GM can raise or lower the DC (typically anywhere between 10 and 20) if the contribution seems particularly appropriate or particularly insincere.

For example, praying to a fallen paladin's god for mercy might require a participant to make a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check, whereas shouting at a dead friend's corpse to get back up and stop lazing around might require a DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation) check. If the contribution is roleplayed in a particularly touching way, the GM can grant advantage on the check—even if the check's DC remains high.

Resurrection Check. After all the characters' contributions are completed, the GM rolls a single, final resurrection check with no modifier. The base DC of this check is 10, but it is modified in three ways:

- The DC is increased by 1 for every time the character has returned to life before, as the soul's connection to this world is slowly eroded by repeatedly dying and returning.
- The DC is reduced by 3 for each successful contribution from the other participants in this ritual.
- The DC is increased by 1 for each failed contribution to the ritual.

If the resurrection check is successful, the character's soul is returned to their body (if the soul is willing, as usual). If the check fails, the soul does not return—and the character is permanently unable to be raised from the dead.

True Miracles. If a character is brought back from the dead by the *true resurrection* or the *wish* spell, or by a god, they instantly return to life without the need for a resurrection ritual. Additionally, if a character has been permanently lost due to a failed resurrection ritual, the GM can allow a casting of *true resurrection* or *wish* to begin a last-chance resurrection ritual—one that can't be repeated if failed.

Revivify. If a spell with a casting time of 1 action is used to restore life to a creature (including the *revivify* spell), no one but the caster can participate in the resurrection ritual. The caster makes a quick resurrection check by rolling a d20 and adding their spellcasting ability modifier, against a DC equal to 10 + 1 for every time the character has returned to life before. On a failure, the character's soul is not lost, but the resurrection fails and increases the DC of any future resurrection checks by 1. Further attempts to bring the character back to life must involve a spell with a casting time longer than 1 action (including *raise dead* or *resurrection*).

Taxing Return

In a campaign that uses this house rule, whenever 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 by a spell other than *true resurrection*, that character's Constitution score is permanently reduced by 1. This loss can't be restored except by use of a *wish* spell. A character whose Constitution score is reduced to 0 in this way dies permanently and can't be returned to life by any means.

Rapid Quaffing

This house rule lets characters grab and drink a potion as a bonus action, enabling them to heal or buff up in combat without sacrificing their primary attacks or spellcasting to do so. (This applies to enemies and NPCs as well as player characters!)

Using this house rule, you can use a bonus action to drink a potion yourself. It still requires an action to administer a potion to another creature. You can also choose to only apply this house rule to *potions of healing* and their variants (*potion of greater healing*, etc.). In this less powerful version of the house rule, you can consume a potion that restores hit points as a bonus action, but all other potions still require you to use your action.



CHAPTER 6

Allies and Adversaries of Tal'Dorei

The lands of Tal'Dorei are filled with people and monsters prepared to ambush adventurers, barter with entrepreneurial explorers, and forge alliances with charismatic characters—or at least with those willing to pay.

The first part of this chapter is a discussion of just some of the many types of creatures a GM might use as NPCs in a Tal'Dorei campaign (including creatures of the races presented in chapter 4). The second part of the chapter is a bestiary with game statistics for new NPCs and monsters unique to Tal'Dorei and other parts of Exandria.

Nonplayer Creatures

Tal'Dorei is filled with non-humanoid beings that leave their mark on the world even if they typically don't go on adventures in dungeons or journey across the world on epic quests. The types of creatures in this section are those who the player characters can encounter on their adventures as either friends or foes. Many of these creatures are fully described in the fifth edition rules. The lore here simply covers how they function in the world of Exandria.

The creatures in this section include many not meant to be used as player characters in a typical campaign, including those with non-humanoid physiology (such as centaurs), large size (including giants), or alien minds (aboleths and the like). But many other creatures of Exandria are suitable for player character use even if they don't have statistics in the fifth edition core rules. Creatures such as minotaurs, gnolls, and the many humanoids with animal-like traits ranging from eagles to elephants can be used as player characters if players and Game Masters are willing to put in the effort to make them work in a campaign. The same is technically true for creatures like dragons, fey, and giants, but their size and innate powers can make it difficult for them to be members of a balanced adventuring party.

Aboleths

Vile, intelligent, and imbued with corrupting psychic abilities, aboleths are three-eyed piscine beings that lurk in watery grottos deep beneath the surface of Exandria. These aberrations are irredeemably evil, and all who attempt diplomacy with an aboleth end up as their food—or worse, their mindless thralls. Most aboleths grandiloquently claim that they have no notion of morality, but only an inexorable sense of purpose that is utterly inscrutable to the lesser minds of humanoid creatures. But even such "lesser minds" can understand that an aboleth's purpose is the psychic domination of all life, for the lives of other creatures have no value to it.

Aboleths can be found throughout the underground waterways of Tal'Dorei, typically living in isolation with only their thralls for company. These aberrations are loath to work together, for their perfect memories never permit them to forget a grudge. It is fortunate that these arrogant creatures are all but incapable of cooperation, for if their genius-level intellects were united, they might well be unstoppable.

During the Age of Arcanum, an aboleth empire covered the length and breadth of Tal'Dorei's subterranean world. This dominion's heart was Salar, the Unseeable City (see page 142). Though Salar is naught but a ruin in the Crystalfen Caverns beneath Emon now, aboleths still journey there in hopes of finding some remnant of their lost glory. Salar is little more than legend to the world above—but even though few have seen it and survived, the Unseeable City is no myth. Some arcanists even speculate that the lingering psychic footprint of the ruined city is what drew the first Issylran settlers to the area, and what inspired them to build Emon above it.

Catfolk

The catfolk of Tal'Dorei are as widespread and as variable in shape and color as the cats they resemble. They usually live solitary lives, claiming small territories to call their own, though some catfolk live as small family units with little conflict. Moreover, their feline instinct for solitude doesn't get in the way of catfolk interacting with other people around them. Indeed, many catfolk are highly social around others, safe in the knowledge that they can retreat to a solitude promising safety and calm whenever they need to.

No consistent creation myth exists for these people, who can be found living as cave dwellers in the Cliffkeep Mountains, as city folk with their own private flats in Emon, as cunning trackers and community builders in the Rifenmist Jungle, and more. Generally, catfolk believe that their kind were all once normal animals, transformed by incredible magic in the ancient past. This transformation might have been a gift from the gods when magic washed over the world during the Age of Arcanum, or when Exandria trembled beneath the divine powers unleashed in the Calamity.

Centaurs

During the Calamity, many elves fled into the Fey Realm to escape that terrible war. One elven tribe that remained on Exandria to fight alongside their gods were known as the Horselords of Laphithas. The elves of Laphithas rode alongside the Arch Heart against the mortal servants of the Ruiner, but the entire tribe was slain in a burst of chaotic magic when the Arch Heart stabbed the Ruiner through one eye. The overflowing power of the wounded god merged these elves' mortal bodies with the bodies of their steeds even as they died.

The Arch Heart rewarded the elves of Laphithas by reviving them as centaurs, who would ride across the Dividing Plains forever free of war. Centaurs have long since diverged from their elven ancestry, viewing themselves as a people all their own. Still, some centaurs throw their arms wide to the elves of Syngorn as long-lost cousins, even as others nurture an ancient grudge against them for fleeing when their people's need was greatest. Many of the centaur herds of the plains are incredibly faithful, worshiping the Arch Heart with a fervor unknown even among the elves.

Centaurs share an origin with orcs (see page 162), who were also originally elves before being changed by the conflict between the Arch Heart and the Ruiner. Many centaurs and orcs of the Dividing Plains see one another as kindred, but just as with real family, this bond can engender feelings of intense affection or equally intense hatred—or simply indifference. The circumstances of their lives determine the way orcs and centaurs feel about one another, though their kinship brings them into frequent contact either way.

Dragons

Dragons have existed in Tal'Dorei since the Founding, when these mighty beings were created by the Platinum Dragon and the Scaled Tyrant to protect their interests on the Material Plane. All folk of Tal'Dorei know the power of dragons, and many people have witnessed it firsthand. Even the youngest humanoid victims of the Chroma Conclave's attack on Emon are old enough now to be parents, and to have passed down tales of the terror that filled the city's streets as doom rained down from above.

Metallic Dragons

Though countless popular stories tell of heroic warriors slaying evil, greedy, and monstrous dragons, the oldest legends of dragonkind speak of their roles as benevolent protectors of the weak. In the time of the world's beginning, the Platinum Dragon created beings in his image, with scales of shining metal and kindly hearts. Those metallic dragons helped the mortal people of Exandria survive the turbulence of the Founding. But since those days, most metallic dragons have vanished from the world, leaving their kindness and virtue to linger on in myth and legend rather than the chronicles of history.

On clear days, a lucky traveler might look up to the blue skies of the Dividing Plains and feel their heart thump faster at the sight of sun glinting off silvery wings high above the world. For the most part, though, those metallic dragons who remain in the world use their shapechanging magic to live among humanoids, watching quietly from the background and gently nudging people in the direction of prosperity. After all, the Platinum Dragon's creations still look upon mortals as their charges—but times have changed. Mortals are now too numerous for the scant remaining metallic dragons to guide them as they once did. But a watchful observer can see the ills of society and whisper a word of caution into the ear of a mortal who might do something about it.

Lest any forget, the metallic dragons are not all friends to mortalkind. For some of these protectors of the small, time has caused them to grow selfish and disillusioned with their creator's commandment. These venal metallic dragons use their silver tongues and sterling reputations to manipulate mortals.

Chromatic Dragons

Fire, acid, poison, ice, and lightning rained devastation upon the world when the Betrayer God known as the Scaled Tyrant created the unparalleled warriors that would serve her whims. The greed and malice of chromatic dragons are the stuff of countless legends—as are the mountains of gold and other treasures amassed within their lairs.

Dozens of cruel chromatic dragons lurk in the darkest depths of the forests, the highest mountain peaks, and the most arid, barren wastelands of Tal'Dorei. Though the devastation of the Chroma Conclave is not yet three decades past, scores of adventurers have chosen to forget the horror of seeing flesh melt from bone beneath Umbrasyl's acid breath, or beholding scores choke in Raishan's poison fumes. Those adventurers now seek glory by hunting young and ambitious chromatic dragons, and claiming their nascent treasure hoards.

At the same time, not all chromatic dragons cling to the ways of their creator. A number of such dragons witnessed the horrors unleashed by the Cinder King and his minions, and recoiled in disgust. Tales are told of how Westruun was the beneficiary of a donation of over fifty thousand gold pieces from a mysterious young red dragon who supposedly admired the Cinder King's ambition, but was appalled by his flagrant disregard for life.

Driders

The Betrayer God known as the Spider Queen was one of the first casualties of the Calamity—impaled by the Stormlord's thunderspear before her dark elf soldiers ever saw battle. Her blood, thick and silvery, seeped into the earth and pooled in the sunless caverns beneath Exandria. In the centuries that followed her defeat, these pools of divine blood were discovered by the Spider Queen's most loyal dark elf servants, and they drank deeply.

The blood of the Spider Queen granted these drow the goddess's terrible power, and warped their bodies into forms that are half-spider, half-elf. Called driders, these beings grew in number as more and more drow accepted this gift. In time, the pools of divine blood began to run dry, and the driders found themselves tormented by its absence. They now roam the caverns and tunnels beneath Exandria, desperately searching for hidden pools of the silver nectar.

Fey

People don't discover the fey; rather, the fey discover people. Though enchanted forests are their favored domain, fey folk can be found wherever the power of nature is strong—even a flower garden in the middle of Emon. Of course, Emonian scholars endlessly debate whether the fey typically come to an enchanted forest because of its magic, or whether the magic of such sites blooms because of the fey. The answers to such mysteries are known to the Archfey, of course—but they don't like spilling secrets.

The Fey Realm is a place of intense emotion. There, happiness becomes elation, anger becomes fury, and passions become obsessions. The very shapes of the fey are defined by their innermost feelings, and even fey siblings can take different forms based on what they feel most strongly about. Two daughters of pixie parents are just as likely to be a sprite and a satyr if one sister is drawn to war and the other to revelry. And though uncommon, it is 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, a particularly unstable fey might take a dozen forms over the course of their life, wildly changing their physical form, voice, gender, likes and dislikes, and more.

Though the fey are beings of chaos and change, one immutable factor of fey life is that all are beholden to the Archfey. The immortal and imperious rulers of feykind, the Archfey rarely travel to Exandria, instead spending their time scheming against each other and plotting elaborate political intrigues. When mortals enter their realm, the Archfey take notice and often spy on them in person, using clever disguises and misdirection to keep



those mortals from disrupting the Archfey's own maneuvering. Vox Machina was once pursued by Lord Artagan of the Morncrown, a jovial Archfey who finds the incursions of mortals more amusing than distressing. And there are rumors that Artagan has made his presence known on the Material Plane as well, as a mysterious being known as the Traveler (see page 42).

The mages of the Arcana Pansophical have confirmed the identities of three other Archfey, though little else is known about them. They include Lord Saundor the Forsaken, the reportedly 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. Additionally, a spy of the Arcana Pansophical traveling in the Fey Realm is said to have uncovered rumors of the existence of an Archfey known as the Keeper of the Moontides, or simply the Keeper. Since delivering her first report, however, this spy has not been heard from again.

Giantkin

Some Issylran myths and legend speak of the giants as the precursors to humanity, calling them the gods' failed attempts to create what would become humankind. Other tales suggest that the giants are what became of humans who tried to ascend to godhood, making bargains with fiends and imbibing the elemental essences of primordial spirits.

Regardless of their connection to humanoids, giants have longed dwelled far from humanoid cities and settlements. The so-called highborn giantkin stay isolated because they believe humanoids to be warlike, foolish, and untrustworthy. The lowborn giants who hold a place below the highborn are reclusive because humanoid legends paint them as terrible monsters to be hunted and slain.

Giants have a natural life span of about 300 years, though lives of hardship and toil mean that lowborn giants rarely live past 200 years. Highborn giants in their isolated and idyllic cities usually live full lives and die of old age more than any other cause—though highborn politics can be cutthroat, and assassination has ended the long life of many a giant over the centuries.

Lowborn Giants

Ogres, cyclopes, and hill giants occupy the lowest rungs of giant society. The highborn keep them at arm's length, using them as a sort of barrier between humanoid and giant civilizations. The lowborn band together, forming tight-knit social groups that must fight and forage to survive. Cyclopes typically rule lowborn settlements, and some hill giant warriors ritualistically tear out one eye to emulate their rulers. Zealous hill giant worshipers of the Ruiner sometimes do the same, with that god granting them power to survive in exchange for ever-increasing sacrifices.

Cyclopes, ogres, and hill giants who turn to corrupting magic to help them survive lives of hunger and exile sometimes tumble into a cycle of cruelty and devotion to evil powers from which there is no escape. Their minds and bodies are warped beyond recognition, turning them into trolls or oni. These giants gain tremendous power but lose any sense of compassion. Such corrupted giants typically live selfishly, and try to transform lowborn enclaves into their own personal armies of conquest.

Highborn Giants

The humanoid peoples of Tal'Dorei divide the highborn giants into five types: cloud, fire, frost, stone, and storm. These giants are considered one people divided into different cultures, having adopted different magics, fighting styles, and codes of ethics and law. Highborn giants are proud of their ability to look their kin in the eye as equals, making it ironic how few of them acknowledge the caste divide between highborn and lowborn.

The hill giants were once considered highborn, but were stripped of their nobility and exiled by the Council of Seven Scepters, and their culture has long since fallen into ruin.

Cloud Giants. These lofty giants are denizens of Jovatthon, the Castle of Thunder. This mighty city-state flies invisibly above Tal'Dorei, enshrouded in thick storm clouds and tracing a clockwise circular route around the continent that avoids its cloudless, arid heartland. The cloud giants are ruled by two wedded monarchs, currently a City-King in charge of domestic affairs, and a War-King tasked with the defense of Jovatthon against 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 Giants. These subterranean giants dwell in the same tunnels as drow and duergar, typically beneath volcanically active mountain ranges whose natural magma fuels their forges. The heart of fire giant civilization is the city-state of Vulkanon, located within the deep magma tubes beneath the Cliffkeep Mountains. Though their citadels are spacious and vast, many fire giants have a perpetually stooped posture due to the low clearance of their underground homes. 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. Weapons of Vulkanon steel are prized by mercenaries across the continent, as

much for their value as status symbols as their worth in combat.

The ruler of Vulkanon, the Grand Legate Phaestor, has long dreamed of expanding his empire, and the fire giants' duergar allies have granted them a strategic foothold in Tal'Dorei's darkest depths. Fire giants might prove to be a dangerous enemy to the folk of the surface world—but they might also be a fierce ally in the fight against the aberrations lurking in the depths, including the aboleths of Salar.

Frost Giants. Few beings can survive the Neverfields, the frozen wasteland north of the Cliffkeep Mountains. But the frost giants, riding on the backs of chitinous remorhaz and woolly mammoths, have risen to be the undisputed rulers of this frigid land. 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 of Jotunborg are renowned for their ability to tame the fearsome beasts of the Neverfields—including the white dragons that haunt the skies of that land. This skill and their knack for surviving in an inhospitable realm has made the giants of Jotunborg a pious people, and most pray to the Wildmother for safety before crossing the ice fields. Some giants who have suffered near-death experiences, whether being trapped beneath an icy lake or smothered by an avalanche, clandestinely join one of the cults of the Chained Oblivion, seeking solace in the inevitability of eternal cold.

Stone Giants. Few things are more striking than the sight of a stone giant atop a mountain peak, silhouetted against the sun. Some mountain climbers fortunate enough to see such a sight become convinced that they have gazed upon the Dawnfather himself. Stone giants are happy to encourage such rumors, for it makes their existence seem more like myth than fact. These reclusive highborn giantkin live in fortresses carved from the peaks of mountains. Their greatest stronghold is Skyanchor Citadel, a city hidden within a peak of the Alabaster Sierras, its halls winding from the mountain's deepest roots to its highest summit.

Stone giant culture holds physical perfection as the greatest of all virtues, and stone giants are obsessed with physical appearance and feats of strength. But unlike the lowborn giantkin who have grown strong and resilient out of struggle, stone giants see physical power as an abstract virtue, best used in sporting events. A quadrennial tournament of prowess called the Sky Queen's Favor is held in coliseums atop Skyanchor, and highborn giants from across Tal'Dorei gather there to compete in tests of strength, agility, and endurance. Even the stone giants' humanoid kin, the half-giant goliaths, are occasionally present at the Sky Queen's Favor.

Storm Giants. The most mysterious of all the highborn, the storm giants are rarely seen even by other giantkin. Their flying city-state of Tempestar was destroyed by an unknown force centuries ago, and all the glories of their realm were cast into the Lucidian Ocean, hundreds of miles off the coast. Storm giants now live solitary lives, calling no other giants their neighbors, and caring only for themselves and their families.

Centuries have passed since Tempestar was last the seat of the Council of Seven Scepters, yet the otherwise-reclusive storm giant leader, Sea Dreamer Galadawna, has never missed a meeting of the council. Though she takes little interest in the day-to-day minutiae of highborn society, she ensures that the other giant leaders never forget about her people—or the thunderous might of their sorcerers.

Council of Seven Scepters. The highborn are united by a democratic council that convenes annually for one week in the tallest spire of Jovatthon, the cloud giant citadel. The ruler of each giant civilization—including the two rulers of the cloud giants—have a seat on the council, though that seat is sometimes taken by a highly placed ambassador or representative of the ruler. When the council meets, its members deliberate on how best to maintain peace and prosperity. For even as they do their best to maintain a safe distance from the humanoid peoples of Tal'Dorei, the last thing the highborn giants desire is infighting among themselves.

Two of the seven thrones of the council have remained empty for generations. Hillqueen Ovam'mura refused to relinquish her scepter when her hill giant people were banished from the ranks of the highborn, and the Scepter of Wodensdottr has gathered dust in Jovatthon's vaults since Woden, demigod of the storm, abandoned the storm giants after the fall of Tempestar. Though the Sea Dreamer of Tempestar has never missed a gathering of the council, she has thus far refused to reclaim her throne or scepter, and the responsibilities that come with both.

Gnolls

As their canine appearance suggests, gnolls are descended from hyenas that once roamed the Dividing Plains. A pack of these creatures was caught in the divine eminence of a Demon Prince that did battle in the Calamity. When the nimbus of that demon's unholy power faded, the beasts were transformed.

Today, most gnolls are nomadic groups led by a matriarch and her mate. Many people of the Dividing Plains see gnolls as demonic monsters, and are driven to acts of cruelty against them by their fear. Nevertheless, many gnoll clans live side by side with the other humanoid peoples of Tal'Dorei in small towns across the plains, including the Dustpaw gnolls and the people of Turst Fields (see page 88).

Lizardfolk

The lizardfolk of Tal'Dorei emerged from the K'Tawl Swamp in the Age of Arcanum. Mages from an unnamed flying city descended into the swamp and conducted intense magical experiments on the local fauna. Some mutated into giant lizards, others into slithering swamp serpents—and others into humanoid beings. The mages took a few of these lizardfolk as specimens, and left the other fruits of their experiments behind.

In time, these abandoned lizardfolk used their cunning minds and skilled hands to create tools. They called themselves the Kuul'tevir—noble masters of the earth and water. These folk advanced rapidly, and though they never matched the heights of the flying cities of the magi who created them, they built magnificent domains filled with towering spires and glimmering magical waterfalls.

When the decadence of the Age of Arcanum gave way to the chaos of the Calamity, the Kuul'tevir delved deep into corrupting magic to save their grandeur. For a time, their people prospered, bolstered by the magic of demons and evil gods. But in the end, the desire to survive at any cost turned the Kuul'tevir's rulers against one another. Cabals of petty warlocks tore the lizardfolk's magnificent societies apart, and the evil magic they wielded began to devour even the magic that the ancient mages had used to turn them from simple reptiles into a majestic people.

Today, the majesty of the Kuul'tevir is little more than distant myth. Most lizardfolk live in small communities in swamps, jungles, and fiery mountains across Tal'Dorei. Some live in cities, especially those with hot, humid climates, but no lizardfolk today possess the supernatural poise and power that they did in the Age of Arcanum. Today, the lizardfolk are a people like any other—just trying to survive in modest comfort. But many still cling to the mythic memory of their ancient civilization and have allied themselves with terrible tyrants such as Thordak the Cinder King in an attempt to resurrect their lost glory.

The serpentfolk of Vos'skyriss (see page 257) still dwell on Visa Isle, south of Daggerbay. They are more serpentine than lizard-like, but it is suspected that their origins are similar to that of the lizardfolk.

Sahuagin

Known by sailors as "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 usually have no more than six members. However, several pods might band together and collaborate on tasks they could not accomplish alone, forming schools. These schools follow the will of the majority, and disobedience is rare.

The few sea devils who dominate multiple schools through personal strength are known as barons, who are as feared as they are revered. Sahuagin schools that fall under the sway of a baron often become known for their piracy and hunger for slaughter, as the members of the school are directed to steal treasure to appease their tyrant's greed. Other schools might offer their services as mercenaries, aiding those humanoids willing to pay for their ferocity.

Sahuagin pods sometimes fall under the corrupting influence of aboleths or other aquatic aberrations, with these aberrations taking on roles as demigods and the sahuagin who obey them becoming cultists. Instead of plundering ships for treasure, these sahuagin engineer shipwrecks and drag the survivors before their cruel overlord, who adds those humanoids to the ranks of their brainwashed thralls. The most feared of all these unholy figures is one that truly is the progeny of one of the Betrayer Gods: Uk'otoa, a many-eyed leviathan spawn of the Cloaked Serpent that is supposedly imprisoned deep beneath the Lucidian Ocean.

New Creatures

Tal'Dorei is filled with wondrous creatures and characters. Whether they prove to be allies or enemies to the heroes, these beings' game statistics are provided here. These creatures are designed to supplement the monsters found in the fifth edition core rules, not replace them. Tal'Dorei is also filled with countless classic monsters, and adventures here will incorporate both familiar mythic creatures and the unique creatures of Exandria.

Magic Items in Stat Blocks

Some creatures and NPCs in this section wear or wield magic items that increase their power, or that give them unique traits usable in or out of combat. New magic items are identified as such, and can be found in chapter 5 of this book. All other magic items can be found in the fifth edition core rules.



Adranach

An adranach is a winged feline construct made of raw arcane energy, fuchsia in hue and flecked with stars. It is an iconic servitor of the League of Miracles (see page 56), and the exact method of their creation is a closely guarded secret known only to the Wonderworker who guides that organization and the spellwrights who serve them.

Perfect Obedience. As constructs, adranachs are unfailingly loyal servants to the spellwrights who created them. To the people of Tal'Dorei, they are best known as the creatures that allowed cities razed by the Chroma Conclave to be rebuilt in a matter of weeks, rather than years. But adranachs are also mighty combatants that serve their masters as hunters, bodyguards, and even assassins.

Astral Body. An adranach's body is formed from the energy of the Astral Plane. Their claws and face, as well as a number of rune-inscribed braces on their body, are made of mithral and are necessary to keep their form of pure energy from losing cohesion. The methods for creating these mithral foundations and for binding astral energy to them are known only to the Wonderworker (the leader of the League of Miracles) and the spellwrights who learn from them.

This secret knowledge is granted to worthy spellwrights in the form of an orb of mithral bands, about three feet in diameter, called a dormen. As the bands are removed and forged into the adranach's braces and mask, the dormen speaks aloud the instructions of how to craft an adranach in the magically recorded voice of the Wonderworker.

Mithral Mask. Each adranach has a unique mask crafted by its creator as their signature. This mask is crafted from pure mithral, and is the key to summoning and dismissing an adranach to a unique pocket dimension where it can rest and repair itself. When not in use, the mask magically shrinks from its true size to an easily concealable size fit for a humanoid face. Most spellwrights keep this mask in a chest stored on the Ethereal Plane with the *secret chest* spell, and only produce the mask when it is time to call their adranach forth.

Master Adranach. The secretive master spellwrights of the League of Miracles are taught how to build adranachs of monumental size, with strength to match. These legendary constructs are also inevitably outfitted with unique enhancements of their creators' own devising, from upgraded espionage tools to the ability to sublimate their starry form and travel through the Astral Plane.

Arcane Nature. An adranach doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Adranach

Huge construct

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 170 (20d12 + 40)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)	14 (+2)	11 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +11, Dex +8
Skills Athletics +11, Perception +7
Damage Resistances damage from spells
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages understands the languages spoken by its creator but can't speak
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Arcane Leak. When the adranach is reduced to half its hit point maximum (85 hit points), its mithral mask cracks and its arcane form begins to waver, creating a field of unstable magic around it. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the adranach or enters that area for the first time on a turn takes 10 (3d6) radiant damage. Additionally, if a creature casts a spell within this area, it must make a DC 14 ability check using its spellcasting ability. On a failure, the spell backfires, consuming the spell slot and dealing 3 (1d6) force damage to the caster for each level of the spell slot that was consumed.

Immutable Form. The adranach is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The adranach has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The adranach's weapon attacks are magical.

Powerful Build. The adranach counts as one size larger when determining its carrying capacity and the weight it can push, drag, or lift.

Actions

Multiattack. The adranach makes two attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, one target, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 32 (4d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Force Bolts (Recharge 5–6). The adranach targets up to four creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) force damage.

Adranach Customization

Adranachs are constructs personalized to their creators. One of the traits that make a spellwright candidate attractive to the League of Miracles is an interest in invention, and spellwrights are encouraged to customize any adranach they create. Below are some optional features with which spellwrights have outfitted their creations. Most adranachs have one extra feature, and most master adranachs have three.

Advanced Tracking (Recharges after a Long Rest). When a creature fails its saving throw against the adranach's Force Bolts, the adranach can mark that creature for the next 24 hours. The adranach knows the direction to a creature's location as long as they are on the same plane. If the creature is moving, the adranach knows the direction of this movement.

Arcane Bond. The adranach's creator can communicate with it telepathically while both are within 1 mile of each other. As an action, the creator can see through the adranach's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of the creator's next turn, gaining the benefits of any special senses the adranach has. During this time, the creator is deafened and blinded with regard to their own senses.

Astral Form (Master Adranach Only; Recharges after a Long Rest). The master adranach can cast *astral projection* on itself.

Slipstream. The adranach can cast *invisibility* on itself at will. While it is invisible, its speed is doubled.

Truesight (Master Adranach Only). The adranach has truesight out to a range of 30 feet. As an action, it can increase the range of its truesight to 120 feet until the end of its next turn.



Master Adranach

Gargantuan construct

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 290 (20d20 + 80)
Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+1))

Saving Throws Str +14, Dex +10, Wis +9
Skills Athletics +14, Perception +16
Damage Resistances damage from spells
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 360 ft., passive Perception 26
Languages the languages spoken by its creator
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Arcane Leak. When the adranach is reduced to half its hit point maximum (145 hit points), its mithral mask cracks and its arcane form begins to waver, creating a field of unstable magic around it. Any creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the adranach or enters that area for the first time on a turn takes 21 (6d6) radiant damage. Additionally, if a creature casts a spell within this area, it must make a DC 18 ability check using its spellcasting ability. On a failure, the spell backfires, consuming the spell slot and dealing 7 (2d6) force damage to the caster for each level of the spell slot that was consumed.

Immutable Form. The adranach is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The adranach has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The adranach's weapon attacks are magical.

Colossal Build. The adranach's carrying capacity is doubled, as is the weight it can push, drag, or lift.

Slipstream. The adranach can cast *invisibility* on itself at will. While it is invisible, its speed is doubled.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the adranach fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The adranach makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its tail.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, one target, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, one target, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 20 (2d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Force Bolts (Recharge 5–6). The adranach targets up to six creatures it can see within 120 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) force damage.

Legendary Actions

The adranach 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 adranach regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw Attack. The adranach makes one claw attack.

Vanish (Costs 2 Actions). The adranach casts *invisibility* and moves up to its walking or flying speed. (This movement doesn't benefit from its Slipstream trait.)

Starry Burst (Costs 3 Actions). A burst of astral energy flares from the adranach's body. Each creature within 60 feet of it must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (5d10) force damage and is blinded until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and is not blinded. The adranach then turns invisible until the start of its next turn or until it makes an attack.





Ashari

A reclusive society of elementalist druidic masters, the Ashari symbolize the connection between civilization and nature in balance as they govern, heal, and tame Exandria's primordial threats.

Mysterious Beginnings. No one knows the Ashari's true origins, though one popular legend ties directly to the ancient war between the gods and the primordial titans. As the Prime Deities scattered the essence of their fallen foes across Exandria, the titans' remains birthed new Elemental Planes. In response, numerous humanoids—who would eventually become part of the Ashari—were gifted with a magical affinity to shape the world and a responsibility to defend against future primordial threats.

Triumph Divided. A multiracial people, the Ashari strategically organize into four distinct communities—the Fire Ashari of Pyrah, the Air Ashari of Zephrah, the Earth Ashari of Terrah, and the Water Ashari of Vesrah. Each community builds homes alongside sources of elemental power.

Ashari Firetamer

Medium humanoid (any)

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 +4, Nature +7
Damage Resistances fire
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Druidic, Ignan
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Spellcasting. The firetamer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *mending*, *produce flame* (2d8)
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *faerie fire*, *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): *freedom of movement*, *wall of fire*
5th level (1 slot): *conjure elemental*

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 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 the *dominate monster* spell (save DC 15) on a fire elemental or other elemental fire creature. If the creature has 150 or more hit points, it has advantage on the saving throw.

Bonus Actions

Flameform (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The firetamer can transform into a fire elemental. Its game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the elemental, but the firetamer retains its alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, and all of its skill and saving throw proficiencies. While in this form, the firetamer can't cast spells. 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 or until it reverts to its humanoid form as a bonus action.

Druidic Recovery. If the firetamer is in fire elemental form using Flameform, it can expend a spell slot to regain 1d8 hit points per level of the spell slot expended.

Primordial Guardians. The walls between the Material Plane and the Elemental Planes are thin, and if those boundaries are tested, they tear asunder and form rifts. These planar fractures hemorrhage vast fields of wildfire, avalanches of crushing stone, boundless expanses of screeching hurricanes, and unending oceans of pounding tsunamis, all seemingly yearning for destruction.

When an elemental rift grows volatile, the Ashari become a living dam—subduing, soothing, and sealing its escaping power. Then, once a rift calms, the Ashari's work to heal the surrounding land begins.

Selfless Respect. Ashari is a word found in many languages with a multitude of meanings, including: sunrise, innate will, torchbearer, and gardener. Some Ashari greetings include, "The Wildmother sees you" and "Your actions bring forth light."



Ashari Skydancer

Medium humanoid (any)

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 Auran, Common, Druidic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

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 an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Skysail. The skydancer flies with a special Ashari magic item called a *skysail* (see page 199). While the skysail's wings are extended, the skydancer can glide through the air at a speed of 60 feet, but must descend by at least 10 feet at the end of its turn and can't gain altitude.

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): *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *jump*
2nd level (2 slots): *gust of wind*, *pass without trace*

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 failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Fly (1/Day). The skydancer uses its skysail to cast *fly* on itself for up to 1 minute (no concentration required).

Reactions

Slow Fall. When the skydancer takes falling damage, it can reduce the damage by half.

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.

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. For while the latter recklessly wields fire as a weapon, firetamers use their talent to protect others from fire's destructive power—or wield 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 volcanic forest known as the Cindergrove. And on the outskirts of Emon, a group of firetamers led by a half-orc Ashari named Lorkathar keeps watch over the volatile Scar of the Cinder King.

Ashari Skydancer

Zephrah's location in the Summit Peaks has shielded the Ashari who dwell there from countless hardships. Few infringe upon their isolated home, and this safety has bred a certain recklessness among the Air Ashari. Though they guard their elemental rift as closely as do the rest of their kin, their lack of stoicism and restraint often earns them the scorn of the Earth Ashari of Terrah, the only other Ashari tribe in Tal'Dorei.

Air Ashari children learn to fly before they learn to walk, accompanying their parents through snow-fattened clouds on Ashari *skysails* (see page 199). But 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 the beloved heroes of their people, both defending them in times of danger and bringing them happiness in times of peace.

Ashari Stoneguard

The Earth Ashari of Terrah are a stoic people, slow to change and more likely to fight defensive battles and outlast enemies than wage offensive wars. The Terrah stoneguard are the perfect embodiment of this ideal, with their druidic training augmented by ancient combat techniques that allow them to hold fast against a tide of enemies. The stoneguard craft arms and armor from the granite around them, and their magical stonecraft rivals even that of the dwarves. It is said that when elemental armies poured into Exandria in mythic times, two legendary stoneguard protected all of Terrah against that onslaught for ten days and ten nights, each standing guard while the other rested.

Today, the stoneguards stand vigilant along key defensive points within the Cliffkeep Mountains, warding the Terrah tribe against the dwarves of Kraghammer. If the stoneguard were ever to falter in their vigil, they believe the dwarves would doubtlessly enter their ancestral lands and strip its natural beauty in search of wealth and fuel.

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. They are not warriors, however, but rather accomplished healers and aquatic empaths, using their powers to seek out and rescue survivors of marine disasters. They sometimes bring critically wounded survivors to Vesrah, a practice that the isolationist Water Ashari condemn for fear that such outsiders 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, preferring to fight in their shapechanged fishform rather than with harpoon in hand. They use hit-and-run tactics as a hunter shark or employ their giant 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 (see page 199).



Ashari Stoneguard

Medium humanoid (any)

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 +7, Con +8, Wis +5
Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +2
Condition Immunities petrified
Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Druidic, Terran
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Spellcasting. The stoneguard is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 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:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the attack hits, the stoneguard can also immediately cast *thunderwave* as a bonus action. This casting uses a spell slot but requires no components.

Reactions

Sentinel. When a creature within 5 feet of the stoneguard attacks a target other than the stoneguard, the stoneguard can make one attack against that creature.

Skin to Stone. When the stoneguard is attacked, it gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks until the end of the attacker's turn.



Ashari Waverider

Medium humanoid (any)

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 Aquan, Common, Druidic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

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* (2d12), *resistance*
1st level (4 slots): *create or destroy water*, *cure wounds*, *healing word*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *lesser restoration*, *moonbeam*
3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals (aquatic beasts only)*, *water breathing*, *water walk*
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:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a Strength contest against the waverider or be pulled up to 20 feet toward the waverider. Attacks with this weapon made while underwater do not have disadvantage.

Reactions

Fishform (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The waverider can transform into a hunter shark or a giant octopus. Its game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the chosen creature, but the waverider retains its alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. It also retains its skill proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature it transforms into. 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 or until it reverts to its humanoid form as a bonus action.

Cinderslag Elemental

Large elemental

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)	17 (+3)	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 8 (3,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Searing Presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the elemental takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Molten Form. The elemental can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. 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 succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be restrained. A creature that starts its turn restrained in this way takes 5 (1d10) fire damage. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, freeing itself on a success.

Water Susceptibility. For every 5 feet the 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:* 12 (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 succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or have one nonmagical item of the elemental's choice that the target is carrying instantly melt or burn to cinders.



Cinderslag Elemental

Cinderslag elementals are pure manifestations of the hatred and furor of the deceased Cinder King, Thordak. Even after his death, the fires of that great red dragon continue to ravage Emon, as places scorched by his corrupting flames are transformed into vitriolic pits of slag and ash that spawn mindless creatures of elemental destruction. Though Thordak's Crater in Emon has mostly been healed by the Fire Ashari of Pyrah, the terrible fires still churning beneath the city give rise to cinderslag elementals, as do other areas where the Cinder King's elemental devastation has left an indelible mark, including the ruins of Serpent's Head in the Cliffkeep Mountains and the Ashen Gorge in the Stormcrest Mountains.

Gaze of Annihilation. A cinderslag elemental's Molten Gaze unleashes incredible power that can melt steel and stone with a glance. If one of these creatures is allowed to focus its gaze for long periods, or if several elementals work in unison, entire cities can easily 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—as long as no one is able to bend these creatures to their will.

When night is come and darkness falls,
Locks help not, nor do stone walls.
Slinking and hiding, like poison asp;
Close tight thy eyes, see not the Clasp.

—Children's rhyme

Clasp Operatives

Members of the Clasp—a stealthy organization of spies, thieves, assassins, and smugglers—are at once beloved folk heroes worthy of bardsong and bedtime stories, and sinister scoundrels whose deeds are the stuff of infamous legend. While definitely in the business of discreetly performing illegal deeds for the wealthy, Clasp operatives are also known as the roguish heroes who saved countless common folk of Tal'Dorei during the Cinder King's tyranny. They style their brand now as the "clasp" that holds society together—understanding that, after all, an organized criminal syndicate requires a functioning, civilized economy.

Clasp Cutthroat

When the thieves and assassins of the Clasp need to acquire additional funds or relieve certain people of their possessions, the organization's cutthroats are the first to be called. However, the Clasp didn't earn an extraordinary customer satisfaction rating by letting just any scoundrel claim the rank of cutthroat. An effective cutthroat is patient and precise. Sneak in, take cover, wait, strike only with advantage, and fight without honor. If spotted, misdirect by fleeing—then regain a strategic position, and attack when they least expect it.

Clasp Enforcer

The Clasp prefers to operate in the shadows, but sometimes blackmail targets need convincing. Whenever a scare or a show of force is needed, the Clasp's enforcers make quite an impression. An enforcer values promises and debt repayment nearly as much as profit, so any who break agreements with the Clasp are sure to earn a visit from one. "Want to know exactly what enforcers enforce?" is a popular Clasp one-liner—before the operative delivering the joke switches from telling to showing.

Hard to hit and harder to kill, enforcers enjoy running up to targets with hammers swinging, inspiring a healthy dose of intimidation in anyone lacking the wisdom to pay up or run.

Clasp Cutthroat

Medium humanoid (any)

Armor Class 15 (leather)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)	14 (+2)	9 (−1)

Saving Throws Dex +6
Skills Deception +3, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, thieves' cant
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Cunning Action. The cutthroat can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. The cutthroat halves the damage that it takes from an attack that hits it. The cutthroat must be able to see the attacker.

Just because we of the Clasp are heroes these days doesn't mean we won't slit your throat in a heartbeat if you cross us. Heroism is good up on the streets of Emon, but it don't mean much when you're down here in the Grotto.

—Gethrude Lael, Clasp cutthroat



Clasp Enforcer

Medium humanoid (any)

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) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Intimidating Presence. Whenever the enforcer hits a creature with a melee attack, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the enforcer until the end of the target's next turn. The enforcer and its allies have advantage on attack rolls against any creature frightened in this way. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the enforcer's Intimidating Presence for the next 24 hours.

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.

Bonus Actions

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The enforcer regains 12 hit points.

Cold Snap Spirit

A number of elves and archmagi still live who remember the Icelost Years—a dark time in Tal'Dorei's history, when legions of ice-rimed warriors spilled forth from the Elemental Planes, intent on turning the world into a gelid wasteland. Cold snap spirits are a surviving echo of the vast armies of the cruel elemental Errevon the Rimelord, who nearly claimed Tal'Dorei for his own. They linger in the ever-frozen forests of the Frostweald, atop the snow-capped peaks of the Cliffkeep Mountains, and amid the arctic plains of the Neverfields.

Reclusive Spirits. When separated from the malign command of an elemental warlord, cold snap spirits are little more than animalistic creatures of instinct. They drift harmlessly about cold regions of the Material Plane that mirror the interminable frost of their plane of origin.

Heated Hatred. Normally docile cold snap spirits are driven into a terrible frenzy by the presence of heat. They have an instinctive fear of flame, and even the warmth of a living creature can be enough to drive them into a murderous rage. Once the source of heat is annihilated, a cold snap spirit rapidly returns to a state of calm ambivalence.

Inchoate Berserkers. Cold snap spirits make excellent soldiers for elemental beings with ambition and the will to dominate. Their aversion to warm climes is quickly overridden by loyalty to their commander, and the ambient heat of even a temperate region is enough to drive them to a state of constant frenzy.



Cold Snap Spirit

Medium elemental

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	2 (−4)	7 (−2)	3 (−4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +1
Skills Perception +1, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances slashing and piercing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, poison
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, paralyzed, stunned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Sense Heat. The cold snap spirit can sense heat within 60 feet of it.

Frozen Aura. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of a cold snap spirit takes 5 (1d10) cold damage.

Jealous Spirit. If the spirit attacks a creature that is within 5 feet of another cold snap spirit, the attack deals an extra 10 (3d6) cold damage on a hit.

Actions

Consume Warmth. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) cold damage, and the target's speed is halved until the end of the spirit's next turn.

Subzero Wave (1/Day). Each creature within 30 feet of the cold snap spirit must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Cyclops Stormcaller

When cyclopes are born beneath a raging storm, they sometimes grow up different—smaller than the rest, sickly and weak. Most of these stormborn cyclopes are relentlessly bullied and beaten for their tiny stature, and many die before adulthood. Those who survive do so because of the magic the Stormlord has bestowed upon them—intentionally or otherwise. As cyclopes are generally unfamiliar with magic, the power of a stormcaller awes and terrifies them, and many see stormcallers as nothing short of the manifestation of a god.

Storm Worship. Their fellow cyclopes may assume that the might of a stormcaller is akin to godliness, but many stormcallers hunger for greater power. A cabal of stormcallers regularly gathers in the Daggerbay Mountains at an ancient elven temple called the Skyneedle (in Elvish, *ira'fallai*; in Giant, "Tall Zappo-Zappo"). There, they conduct strange rituals to commune with an entity they call the Eye of the Storm—and with every ritual, their power grows.

However, the Eye of the Storm is no avatar of the Stormlord, but a vengeful storm giant named Eyvindr, who's posing as a demigod and intent on raising an army to exact retribution on the Council of Seven Scepters. He'll have to risk revealing himself to the stormcallers eventually—but not until he believes that his control over his cyclops devotees is absolute.



Cyclops Stormcaller

Large giant

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, *cloak of protection, ring of protection*)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (stormy conditions only)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	8 (−1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +2, Con +6, Int +4, Wis +5, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +6
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Elvish, Giant
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

One-Eyed. The cyclops has disadvantage on any attack roll against a target more than 30 feet away.

Storm Wings. While outdoors in stormy conditions, the cyclops has a flying speed of 60 feet.

Supernatural Focus. The cyclops has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on spells, and cannot lose concentration because of turbulent weather.

Innate Spellcasting. The cyclops's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). 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 claw attacks.

Ice Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Demonfeed Spider

These monstrous spiders, the spawn of the divine Spider Queen, lurk in the darkest recesses of the world. They have gorged themselves on the ichor of demons since the earliest days of the Calamity, when demons were slain in such quantity that the subterranean depths were awash with their foul blood.

Monstrosities Transformed. Demonfeed spiders are terrible fiends as a result of having supped upon the remains of demons, but all are descended from the overlarge spiders that haunt caverns and forests across Tal'Dorei. As such, most are native to the Material Plane, so that once killed, they are slain forever—unlike fiends that are simply banished to their home plane.

Endless Hunger. No sustenance is more delectable to a demonfeed spider than the ichor remaining behind after a demon has been slain on the Material Plane. However, in the absence of such remains, they will sate themselves on the fluids of any living creature.

Toxic Blood. The terrible poison of spiders, when mixed with the vile ichor of demons, becomes the demonfeed spider's most potent weapon. When its chitinous hide is pierced and its blood begins to flow, the spider can expel arcing sprays of caustic blood that seep into the exposed flesh of its attackers.

Alignment. Chaotic evil.



"It was poor guidance that left us wandering through that sulfurous nest of web and ash, but it was cruel fate that woke the matron beast and her brood of burning blood. The only reason I stand before you today is because I had the wisdom to run."

—Orac Wioda, renowned relic hunter

Demonfeed Spider

Large fiend

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+4)	15 (+2)	6 (−2)	10 (+0)	6 (−2)

Saving Throws Dex +7
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The spider makes two melee attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger; or the spider can make one attack with its web spinner followed by a melee attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 27 (6d8) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. If this poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Web Spinner. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 40 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is pulled 40 feet toward the spider and is grappled (escape DC 14). The spider can grapple only one creature at a time in this way. As an action, the spider can cocoon a creature it has grappled in webbing, causing it to be restrained and ending the grappled condition.

Reactions

Arterial Spray. When the spider takes damage while below half its hit point maximum, it can spray poisonous blood in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 13 (3d8) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. If this poison damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the creature is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Demonfeed Spiderling

Medium fiend

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	7 (−2)	3 (−4)

Saving Throws Dex +3
Skills Perception +0, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Spider Climb. The spiderling can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spiderling ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Ember Roc

Centuries old, birthed by primordial chaos, and equaling the oldest dragons in size, the ember roc is an engine of ruthless consumption. With wingspans vast enough to blot out the sky and auras bright enough to rival the sun, these fiery birds of prey hunt only the deadliest game.

Evolutionary Fire. The Fire Ashari of Pyrah believe that the mythic rocs that gave rise to the ember rocs maintain balance in Tal'Dorei. Rocs avoid humanoid settlements and hunt the monstrous creatures that would otherwise threaten those settlements. So the Ashari lure rocs to sites of elemental rifts, enticing them to devour creatures attempting to escape into the Material Plane. After years of feeding on fire elementals, salamanders, fire giants, and more, a roc is imbued with primordial power, flames erupting from every feather to transform it into the ember roc.

Hopeless Ends. An ember roc patiently observes prey for hours before it strikes, snatching up elephants, whales, and even young dragons. It unleashes iron talons to grapple targets, paying no heed to counterattacks, then soars back to its nest—often inside an active volcano. If prey proves too much trouble while in flight, an ember roc readily drops it from some great height. But those unable to escape slowly roast in the creature's fiery grip.

Ember Roc

Gargantuan monstrosity

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 232 (16d20 + 64)
Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	4 (–3)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +9, Wis +5, Cha +4
Skills Perception +5
Damage Immunities fire
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages understands Ignan but can't speak
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Keen Sight. The roc has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Searing Presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the roc takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Illumination. The roc sheds bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet.

Actions

Multiattack. The roc makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) piercing damage and 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Inferno (Recharge 5–6). The roc beats its wings, creating a swirling conflagration. Each creature within 30 feet of the roc must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) fire damage.

Golems

Ageless and unstoppable guardians, golems are expertly crafted to execute their owners' every command without question. Vaguely humanoid in appearance and unfailingly loyal, these powerful constructs feel no agony or sympathy, require no sustenance or sleep, ignore bribes and bargains, and do as they are told without remorse or hesitation.

Covetous Origins. During the Age of Arcanum, magic inspired a deep arrogance in many of the gods' children, who assumed arcane gifts were proof of inevitable divinity. In response, many mortal folk experimented with manufacturing "life" of their own. The dwarves succeeded first, marrying divine gifts with technical skill to animate autonomous wardens as protectors of their ancestral halls. The dwarves' knowledge was quickly stolen and expanded upon by other folk, and creating golems eventually became less about proving that mortals can shape life as the gods do, and more about protecting life, wealth, and secrets from others.

Cobalt Golem

A unique form of a classic arcane construct, cobalt golems are mighty armored servitors made by arcanists who find iron too mundane a metal. The first seeds of these automata fall from the sky, with raw cobalt carefully extracted from meteorites and smelted by way of ferromagnetic alchemy into a hard, lustrous, silver-gray metal. This finished cobalt is then molded and twisted into armored skin shielding clockwork designs that animate rune-encrusted muscle-like chains. A central lodestone powers a cobalt golem, fueled by magic rituals that spark ionized life within its inorganic shell.

Archivists' Automata. The Library of the Cobalt Soul has commissioned a large number of cobalt golems to guard their most restricted archives, taking pleasure in the serendipitous nature of the construct's name and trusting the threat of these powerful warriors to deter anyone thinking of fleeing with sacred knowledge.

Forge Guardian

Just as dwarves created the earliest golems, the All-Hammer fashioned forge guardians to guard the divine furnaces and hearths that designed the first dwarves. Shaped from extravagant marble and fused with adamantine, crafted with impeccable detail and care, these rare and massive constructs exemplify the highest form of artistry that every Exandrian blacksmith, forgemaster, and artisan spends a lifetime hoping to achieve.

Divine Spark. A faceless, tireless being of immense strength, a forge golem is gifted life by a single shard from the All-Hammer's own divine spark, lovingly kept safe inside a ring of arcane flame and ancient sigils. The All-Hammer's divinity is akin to a volcano inside the golem, turning the construct's blood into lava. Fire no longer harms the construct, but instead heals it.

Sacred Purpose. Where it looms over a divine forge, a forge guardian's appendages end in a stretched set of hooked forceps and a rune-adorned blade. The golem can assist a blacksmith in creating new golems, or it can trample, bludgeon, push, and knock down any who threaten this sacred process of creation.

Forge golems also serve as opponents for any wishing to engage in the All-Hammer's trial of worthiness. A golem's attacks blind prospective heroes, who must then earn back their vision by risking a deadly counterattack.

Mage Hunter Golem

The gods cursed mortals with free will, but also blessed them with the means to survive the Primordials' wrath—the arts of magic. With magic, the people of Exandria fend off droughts, famines, volcanic flame, slashing ice, and angry earth. But knowing that the power of magic might inevitably tear Exandria apart, the gods also created the ultimate magical failsafe—antimagic.

Hunter of Magic. For many heroes who employ magic, the most terrifying nightmare is facing a hulking creature whose mere presence can strip away the power of spells and magic relics alike. Mage hunter golems are brutally efficient in their tactics, sweeping the battlefield with their disruptive antimagic, devouring spells used against them, and fitting collars to spellcasters that can leave them at the golem's mercy.

Platinum Golem

This animated construct plated in precious platinum is the primary choice of prestigious mages and paranoid dragons to guard their most precious treasures. Its clanking footsteps make its approach audible to all intruders, who should recognize that fleeing is the best option: for the golem's form is nigh-invulnerable, and its mighty fists can obliterate life with a single blow.

Devoted Guardians. Their creators fashion platinum golems from the spirits of indomitable warriors who died failing to protect what they loved most. This final regret fuels the golem's need to execute its master's orders to perfection. Temples of the Platinum Dragon also craft these golems using divine rituals and imbue them with the unflinching devotion to justice epitomized by their god.



Cobalt Golem

Huge construct

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 300 (24d12 + 144)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	9 (−1)	22 (+6)	3 (−4)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)

Damage Immunities fire, lightning, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 18 (18,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Conductive Body. Whenever the golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage. Instead, its weapon attacks deal an extra 11 (2d10) lightning damage until the end of its next turn. Also until the end of the golem's next turn, any creature that touches it or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 11 (2d10) lightning damage.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two attacks: one with its slam and one with its sword, or it uses its Magnetic Pulse and then its Spinning Cleave.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (3d12 + 9) slashing damage.

Spinning Cleave. The golem makes a sword attack against each creature within 10 feet of it.

Magnetic Pulse (Recharge 6). The golem raises its arms and unleashes a magnetic pulse. All unattended metal objects within 30 feet of it are pulled to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the golem. Each creature wearing metal armor or made of metal within 30 feet of the golem must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pulled to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the golem, then fall prone.

Forge Guardian

Gargantuan construct



Armor Class 24 (natural armor)
Hit Points 420 (24d20 + 168)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	10 (+1)	24 (+7)	3 (−4)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +18, Con +15
Damage Immunities fire, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 27 (105,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

Fire Absorption. Whenever the guardian is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

Immutable Form. The guardian is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The guardian has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The guardian's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The guardian makes two melee attacks.

Runeblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until it deals damage to the guardian.

Kick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (2d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage, and the target is pushed up to 15 feet away from the guardian and knocked prone.

Bladestorm (Recharge 5–6). The guardian makes a Runeblade attack against every creature within 15 feet of it. On a hit, a target is also pushed up to 15 feet away from the guardian and knocked prone.

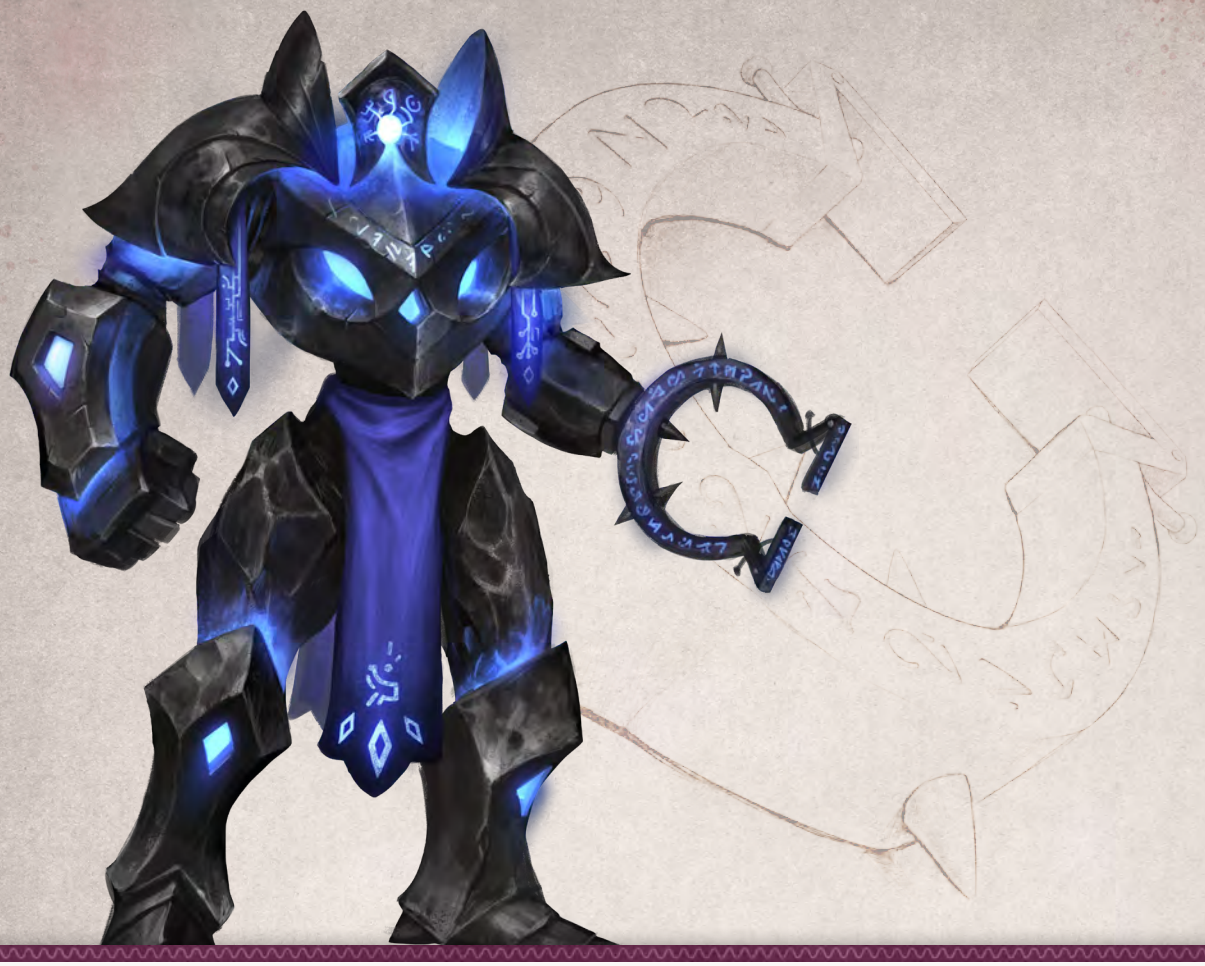
Legendary Actions

The guardian 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 guardian regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Runeblade. The guardian makes one Runeblade attack.

Kick. The guardian makes one Kick attack.

Trample (Costs 2 Actions). The guardian moves up to 50 feet without triggering opportunity attacks, and can pass through other creature's spaces. Each creature whose space the guardian passes through must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 23 (2d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone. Any creature that shares the guardian's space when it stops this movement is pushed out of its space into the nearest unoccupied space.



Mage Hunter Golem

Large construct

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 243 (18d10 + 144)
Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (−1)	26 (+8)	3 (−4)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +0
Skills Perception +5
Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Antimagic Cone. The golem creates an area of antimagic, as in the *antimagic field* spell, in a 60-foot cone originating from it. At the start of each of its turns, the golem decides which way the cone faces and whether the cone is active.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to a damage-dealing spell of 4th level or lower, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the damage dealt.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem uses its Antimagic Jolt and makes two melee attacks, or it makes three melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Claw (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or have a magic collar placed upon its neck. While the target wears the collar, it is magically prevented from speaking and cannot cast any spell. A successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools removes the collar.

Antimagic Jolt. Each creature within the golem's Antimagic Cone that has the ability to cast a spell of 1st level or higher must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Platinum Golem

Large construct

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	1 (−5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Divine Custodian. When the golem hits a creature with an opportunity attack, that creature's speed becomes 0 for the rest of the turn.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Radiant Blast (Recharge 6). The golem emits a burst of radiant light in a 20-foot radius. Each creature in the area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) radiant damage and is blinded until the end of its next turn. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and is not blinded.

Reactions

Divine Judgment. When a creature within 10 feet of the golem makes an attack against a target other than the golem, the golem can make a mace attack against that creature.



Jourrael, the Caedogeist

Jourrael is a nightmarish specter and ancient assassin of many names. The Spider Queen bestowed upon her the title of Caedogeist, the specter of silent death, while scholars describe Jourrael as "the Inevitable End," more certain than death. Those who catch a glimpse of her whisper of a nightmarish wraith wielding daggers dripping poison, hair like fire, skin shielded in shadow, and able to walk through walls and mountains as if they were water.

Death Forbidden. Jourrael cannot die. A contract between the Lord of the Hells and the Spider Queen forbids death from claiming the assassin, though many have tried—often in increasingly creative ways. At the Calamity's end, armies joined together to separate Jourrael's body into disparate parts. The Savalirwood elves took their head to Veluthil, while their heart was hidden in the Lotusden Greenwood under a dread wraithroot tree.

The mysterious fiend Obann falsely believed that after recovering and reviving Jourrael, he could control her indefinitely. Inevitably, Jourrael dealt a killing blow to Obann, sending him to the death she will never meet.

Unbound Future. Alive and well, Jourrael still serves the Spider Queen. Their ghostly form and unmatchable stealth fuel the attacks of their spectral blade and void dagger, with few surviving that onslaught. They shrug off nature's elements and mortals' weapons, won't be held against their will, and know no fear. After having spent so long dismembered and sealed away, Jourrael is eager to see the world of Exandria—and to kill any creature they deem worthy of dying on their blades.

Alignment. Chaotic evil.

Journrael, the Caedogeist

Medium fiend (drow)

Armor Class 19 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points 152 (16d8 + 80)
Speed 80 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Con +10, Wis +8
Skills Acrobatics +12, Perception +13, Stealth +17
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, cold, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Undercommon
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Incorporeal Movement. Journrael can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. They take 5 (1d10) force damage if they end their turn inside an object.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Journrael deals an extra 35 (10d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Journrael that isn't incapacitated and Journrael doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Innate Spellcasting. Journrael's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*
1/day each: *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Inevitable. If Journrael is reduced to 0 hit points, they do not fall unconscious but become an incorporeal spirit for 24 hours. During this time, Journrael can't return to their original form until they return to full hit points. In this form, they are invisible, can't attack or interact with corporeal creatures or objects, and can't be targeted by spells. After 24 hours have passed, Journrael regains 1 hit point and returns to their original form with four levels of exhaustion.

Actions

Multiattack. Journrael makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Spectral Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Void Dagger. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 7) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Cunning Action. Journrael can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Mirrored Form (Recharges after a Short Rest). Journrael manifests three illusory duplicates that hover in her space. Each time a creature targets Journrael with an attack, roll a d20 to see if it hits one of the duplicates. If there are three duplicates, a duplicate is targeted on a roll of 6 or higher. With two duplicates, a duplicate is targeted on a roll of 8 or higher. A single duplicate is targeted on a roll of 11 or higher. A duplicate's AC is 17, and it is destroyed if hit. Journrael can hide the duplicates as a bonus action.

Reactions

Parry. Journrael adds 5 to their AC against one melee attack that would hit them. To do so, they must see the attacker.

"Of the great, terrible legends born in the blood and fire of the Calamity, few managed to defy mortality and endure the ages as deftly as the assassin queen Journrael. Blessed by shadow and death, they walk between realms, relishing the hunt and stalking their target tirelessly, unburdened by wall, gate, or door. Whatever poor soul finds the ire of the Caedogeist can only accept their 'Inevitable End.'"

—Unnamed scholar of the Cobalt Soul

Kraghammer Goat-Knight

The sheer cliff faces and winding mountainside roads of the Cliffkeep Mountains are nearly impossible to traverse by normal means with any speed. The Peakclimber Knights of Kraghammer—commonly known as the goat-knights—are the enforcers of peace and justice across the mountain range. They trust their giant goat steeds to master the harsh mountain slopes, and many travelers lost within the Cliffkeep Mountains have been saved by a goat-knight who led them to safety along the more traversable mountain paths.

These knights serve the All-Hammer and sometimes find themselves at odds while enforcing the laws of Kraghammer and upholding the edicts of their god.

Goat-Knight Steeds

A goat-knight's steed uses the **giant goat** stat block with the following modifications:

- Its Intelligence score is 6 (−2), and it can understand Dwarvish.
- Its creature type is celestial.
- Any spell the goat-knight casts with a range of self also targets the goat.

When a goat-knight steed drops to 0 hit points, it disappears, leaving behind no physical form. The goat-knight can also dismiss the steed at any time as an action, causing it to disappear. In either case, the same steed is summoned when the goat-knight casts *find steed*.



Kraghammer Goat-Knight

Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	8 (−1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +1, Con +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +5
Skills Nature +2, Religion +4
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Aura of Protection. Whenever the goat-knight or a creature friendly to it within 10 feet of it makes a saving throw, that creature gains a +2 bonus (included in the goat-knight's saving throws above). The goat-knight must be conscious to grant and gain this bonus.

Divine Health. The goat-knight is immune to disease.

Dwarven Resilience. The goat-knight has resistance to poison damage and advantage on saving throws against poison.

Spellcasting. The goat-knight is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It 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*, *find steed*, *lesser restoration*, *zone of truth*

Actions

Multiattack. The goat-knight makes two warhammer attacks.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Magma Landshark

Lurking inside volcanoes, subterranean magma pits, and the endless seas of flame within the Elemental Plane of Fire, magma landsharks live only to eat. These creatures are physically similar to bulettes, the common landshark of the Dividing Plains, but are filled with churning elemental power.

This fiery, armored predator burrows and burns through solid rock and can sense the slightest movement in the ground around it. When hungry—and these creatures are always hungry—a magma landshark erupts from under the earth, oblivious to any obstruction or danger, uprooting trees, destroying roads, unleashing avalanches, and leaving sinkholes behind in its wake. Its jaws widen as it swallows prey whole, and even creatures that initially survive the attack must contend with an aura of intense heat if they can't escape.



Magma Landshark

Huge elemental

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 150 (12d12 + 72)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 50 ft., swim 50 ft. (lava only)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	2 (−4)	14 (+2)	5 (−3)

Damage Immunities fire
Skills Perception +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages —
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Searing Presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the landshark takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Standing Leap. The landshark's long jump is up to 40 feet and its high jump is up to 20 feet, with or without a running start.

Illumination. The landshark sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 45 (6d12 + 6) piercing damage, and 14 (4d6) fire damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the landshark. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the landshark, and it takes 42 (12d6) fire damage at the start of each of the landshark's turns.

If the landshark takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the landshark must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the landshark. If the landshark dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Deadly Leap. If the landshark jumps at least 15 feet as part of its movement, it can then use this action to land on its feet in a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 18 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 27 (6d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) fire damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet out of the landshark's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the landshark's space.

Lava Pool (Recharge 6). If the landshark is on solid ground, it melts the area around it, creating a pool of lava in a 10-foot radius. Any creature that starts its turn in the area or enters it for the first time on a turn takes 44 (8d10) fire damage.

Young Magma Landshark

Large elemental

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 50)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft., swim 40 ft. (lava only)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Damage Immunities fire
Skills Perception +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)
Proficiency Bonus +4

Searing Presence. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the landshark takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Standing Leap. The landshark's long jump is up to 40 feet and its high jump is up to 20 feet, with or without a running start.

Illumination. The landshark sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) piercing damage, and 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Deadly Leap. If the landshark jumps at least 15 feet as part of its movement, it can then use this action to land on its feet in a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 19 (4d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) fire damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet out of the landshark's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the landshark's space.

Plainscow

The hulking plainscow is an exceptionally sturdy beast of burden native to the Dividing Plains and used by the people of central Tal'Dorei for centuries. Though many wild herds still roam the plains, domesticated plainscows are more common, used as mounts, pack animals, and livestock. Plainscows are unusually empathetic for beasts, and often bond with a rider for life. They stand 6 feet tall, weigh about two tons, and live for 70 years.

Market Value. Plainscows can be bought in Westruun for 200 gp. A plainscow has a carrying capacity of 1,500 pounds.

Plainscow

Large beast

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 (−2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Skills Insight +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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.

Ravagers

The Ravagers are a death cult that stampedes across the Dividing Plains, spilling blood in the name of the Betrayer God known as the Ruiner. Led by bloodthirsty warlords called Slaughter Lords, the cult's long-term goals are unknown, but its members are content in the short term to sow the seeds of chaos across the plains.

Such wanton, chaotic slaughter would certainly please the Ruiner, and the smaller settlements of the plains have learned to fear the sight of Ravagers on the horizon. Inside the walls of Westruun, however, Lord Mayor Lysandra Kallos and her councilors worry that the Ravagers show better organization than their bloodthirsty warlords should be capable of instilling in the cult. Who—or what—is commanding the Slaughter Lords from the shadows? And toward what end are these depraved warriors being directed?

Ravager Slaughter Lord

Some warlords of the Dividing Plains, hungry for recognition in the single burning eye of their god, turn to the Ravagers in the name of blood and glory. Those few whose deeds live up to their ambitions soon find themselves leading factions of the cult—and honored by the title of Slaughter Lord. A Slaughter Lord craves combat and leads Ravager raids as often as possible. However, they are frequently forced to remain at their strongholds because of the strict regimen of alchemical treatments that grant them increased power.

A small army of shamans and alchemists attend to the Slaughter Lords to artificially enhance their strength and fury, creating concoctions to grow their muscular forms to massive size, sharpen their tactical reasoning, and bestow upon them the divine protection of the Ruiner. A Slaughter Lord's unnatural size is their most obvious martial advantage, enabling them to dual-wield even the largest weapons. But the Ruiner's blessings also grant them access to divine magic that can blind or slay enemies with a word.

It is speculated that four major arms of the Ravagers are each commanded by one of these terrors, but the exact number of Slaughter Lords remains unknown.

Alignment. Chaotic evil.

Ravager Stabby-Stabber

Adventurers and mercenaries most often take up arms against the Ravagers after hearing stories of the hordes terrorizing the free peoples of the Dividing Plains. They prepare themselves for brutal combat against even more brutal foes—and are thus unprepared 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, even as veteran mercenaries close their eyes and hastily bury their faces in their tankards.

Nimble Ravager warriors who show exceptional skill are brought before their Slaughter Lord and forced to drink a terrible brew the Ravagers call skullfire. This concoction burns away what little reasoning ability those warriors possessed, turning them into perfectly obedient, flesh-hungry monsters. In battle, stabby-stabbers swarm like rats, eviscerating enemies and bystanders alike.

Alignment. Chaotic evil.



Ravager Slaughter Lord

Large humanoid (any)

Armor Class 17 (Unarmored Defense)
Hit Points 157 (15d10 + 75)
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 Abyssal, Common, one other language
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Innate Spellcasting. The Slaughter Lord's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It 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 includes its Constitution modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The Slaughter Lord makes four attacks with its dual 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.

Bonus Actions

Aggressive. The Slaughter Lord can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature it can see.

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 dual greatswords attack.

Move. The Slaughter Lord moves up to half its speed.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). The Slaughter Lord casts an innate spell.

Ravager Stabby-Stabber

Small humanoid (any)

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, one other language
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Stabby Frenzy. When the stabby-stabber hits with a melee attack, it can attack again and continue making additional attacks until it misses. The stabby-stabber cannot move between the 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.

Bonus Actions

Nimble Escape. The stabby-stabber can use the Disengage or Hide action.

Remnants

The Remnants is a foul cult dedicated to seeing their lich leader, the Whispered One, ascend to godhood. Cultists believe that self-mutilation and transitory failings are requirements to pierce the veil and see the world for the lie it is—including accepting that the true hidden world already belongs to the Whispered One.

Bitter Victory. The Remnants have both won and failed in their dire goal, as the Whispered One ascended but was banished beyond the Divine Gate. Yet they name him the Ascendant One, the Banished One, or—because all others gods are pretenders—simply the One, and prepare patiently for his final ascension.

Remnant Chosen

All devotees of the Whispered One are zealous followers, spending hours in silent meditation hoping to hear their long-dead master whisper a commandment from beyond. However, only a rare few hear the spectral voice of the Whispered One as it worms its way into their minds, emptying out other thought and filling their heads with clarity and direction. Much of this direction involves the Remnants' plans to leverage secrets stolen from the Plane of Shadow to increase the cult's power in Tal'Dorei.

Remnant Chosen

Medium humanoid (any)

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 +7
Skills Arcana +10, Deception +9
Damage Resistances damage from spells
Damage Immunities necrotic
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

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). It has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch* (4d8), *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *message*, *shocking grasp* (4d8)
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *mage armor*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *detect thoughts*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *hypnotic pattern*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*
5th level (3 slots): *dominate person*, *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*

Withering Spells. When the chosen casts a spell of 1st level or higher, the next Withered Hand attack it makes before the end of its next turn deals extra damage equal to 1d6 per level of the spell cast.

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) force damage plus extra damage from the Withering Touch trait. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the creature and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, are reduced to a pile of fine gray dust. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a *true resurrection* or a *wish* spell.

Bonus Actions

Inescapable Sight. The Chosen selects a creature or object under the effect of an illusion spell of 4th level or lower. One illusion of the Chosen's choice affecting the target is dispelled.

Remnant Cultist

All cultists of the Whispered One endure horrific rites of initiation that force them to remove one of their own eyes and forever shackle themselves to the will of the cult's 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 all else is silent.

The cultists of the Whispered One still venerate their wrathful master with offerings of secrets and unwilling souls to gain his favor, learning what they can and keeping hidden that which they know. Cultists believe in cultivating evil in themselves and recognizing it in others, encouraging them to express it. They hope to seed the ruin of all who worship other deities until only those who kneel before the Whispered One remain.



Remnant Cultist

Medium humanoid (any)

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 +2
Skills Deception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, psychic
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Spellcasting. The remnant cultist is an 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The cultist has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch* (3d8), *message*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (3d8)
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 cultist, cast *scry* on the cultist, or cast *speak with dead* on the cultist automatically fails, and the creature that initiated the attempt takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

One-Eyed. The cultist has disadvantage on any attack roll made against a target more than 30 feet away.

Spellsteal. If the cultist successfully uses *counterspell* to negate another creature's spell, it can cast the countered spell once before the end of its next turn using one of its spell slots of the same level or higher, and requiring no material components.

Actions

Dagger of Wounding. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 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 when the cultist hits a creature with an attack using this weapon, it can wound its target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 2 (1d4) necrotic damage for each time it's been wounded by this weapon. 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.

Rivermaw Warriors

The Rivermaw Herd is a nomadic society mostly composed of half-giants, also known as goliaths, and a mighty force for good on the Dividing Plains. The herd was once conquered by a goliath tyrant named Kevdak, then formed anew after Kevdak was eventually defeated by Vox Machina. Free of Kevdak's martial cruelty, the Rivermaw see it as their duty to prevent any such tyrant from conquering the Dividing Plains ever again.

Though most members of the Rivermaw Herd are goliaths, their ranks include people of all races who wish to live beyond the stone walls of Westruun and the palisades of plains towns like Turst Fields. Orcs, humans, halflings, and gnolls make up most of the rest of the herd's warriors. Most of those warriors value strength and endurance over other qualities, but the brawlers and stormborn of the Rivermaw are better known for cunning, intelligence, strategy, and a unique attunement to the mighty thunder of the Stormlord.

Rivermaw Brawler

Many children in the Rivermaw Herd get into friendly brawls, but only the truly dedicated learn the art of fist fighting. Rivermaw brawlers usually lead the charge on the battlefield, using their exceptional strength, speed, and cunning to throw an enemy vanguard into chaos.

Beyond the Dividing Plains, brawlers trained by the Rivermaw can be found in noble adventuring parties, working for the Clasp as muscle, in underground fighting rings, and as personal bodyguards. In Emon, the most famous fist fighters make a name for themselves within the Brawler's League or the Godsbrawl, representing the Stormlord in that annual holy tournament.

Rivermaw Stormborn

Countless goliath legends tell of heroes born beneath a raging storm: Kaldon Thunderhead, who slew the ember roc of the south; Marydra Skysplitter, who defeated a champion of the Ruiner in single combat; and Yodrell Rumblechest, who halted a flash flood with only his voice, to name just a few.

Though the stormborn of legend were all half-giants, more and more Rivermaw have begun to feel the Stormlord's power reverberate within them. These peerless warriors are blessed with preternatural skill with a blade and the uncanny ability to command lightning. Often destined to become mythic heroes, stormborn fight with reckless abandon—but many can be distressingly prideful and might need reminding that the songs of defeated or tyrannical stormborn are rarely sung by the bards.

The tyrant Kevdak's fearsome Herd of Storms was so named because of the many stormborn in its ranks, but that herd was broken at Westruun some two decades ago. Now the Rivermaw Herd is bolstered by those who were freed from Kevdak's rule. The few stormborn remaining from that broken herd are part of the Rivermaw, and more storm-blessed warriors have been born into the Rivermaw since, ready to forge new legends.



Rivermaw Brawler

Medium humanoid (any)

Armor Class 15 (Unarmored Defense)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (−1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Wis +5
Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +5, Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Unarmored Defense. While the brawler is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes 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 Large or smaller 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 creature can use its action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check to heal an affected creature within 5 feet of it (including itself), restoring any lost speed on a success.
- **Disarm.** The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding. The brawler can choose which item is dropped, and can pick it up.
- **Suplex.** The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Clever Fighter. When the brawler hits with an attack or is targeted by an attack, it can add its Intelligence modifier (+2) to its damage rolls or AC until the end of its turn.

Endurance (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When the brawler takes damage, it can reduce the damage by 8 (1d12 + 2).

Rivermaw Stormborn

Medium humanoid (any)

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)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +7, Cha +4
Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +4
Damage Resistances lightning
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

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 12). 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. If it is concentrating on *call lightning*, it can also call down a lightning bolt.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

REACTIONS

Endurance (Recharges after a Short or Long rest). When the stormborn takes damage, it can reduce the damage by 10 (1d12 + 4).



Skeletons

Skeletons are often the first creatures to be reanimated by aspiring necromancers, imbued with a vulgar imitation of life and reassembled into an approximation of their living forms. No trace remains of the life that once animated a skeleton, whose only purpose is loyalty.

Skeletons follow the orders of their creators until those orders are completed. Their obedient, tireless nature makes them perfect as disposable battle fodder, guards, or distractions—and, in great enough numbers, turns them into an overwhelming tide of bone, tooth, and blade.

Undead Nature. A skeleton doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Alignment. Neutral evil.

"Odd mysteries surround these skeletal nightmares given renewed, violent purpose as a mockery of mortality. Rumors speak of a dark intelligence rooted within, seeking power and using their own bones, or even the wriggling worms that thrive within their corpses, as currency to trade with shadowy merchants."

—William Orom, Apothecary

Centaur Skeleton

The Alabaster Sierras are bordered by hazardously treacherous shore-side cliffs and bleak mountains swarming with starving monstrosities. But beneath those peaks is a dense, beautiful, and eerie forest called the Parchwood. During the six-year nightmare that was the Briarwood's reign, refugees made their home here—but so did Lady Delilah and Lord Sylas's experiments. The centaur skeletons of the Parchwood are not centaurs at all; rather, they are the remnants of the Briarwoods' fleeting attempts to entertain themselves by refashioning the remains of different species into unique forms.

Flaming Skeleton

The skeletal remains of many of those who opposed Thordak the Cinder King are said to be forever imbued with the primordial power of his fire breath. Areas scarred by the red dragon's power, including Thordak's Crater in Emon's Cloudtop District, the Ashen Gorge in the Stormcrest Mountains, and Serpent's Head in the Cliffkeep Mountains, are rife with flaming skeletons. These undead react to the raw power of the Elemental Planes, and are filled with an unquenchable desire to spread flames far and wide until nothing is left untouched by fire.

Centaur Skeleton

Large undead

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)	9 (–1)	5 (–3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Charge. If the centaur moves at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a pike attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) piercing damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The centaur skeleton makes two attacks: one with its pike and one with its hooves, or two with its longbow.

Pike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Centaur Skeleton Customization

Some centaur skeletons have the following additional feature at the GM's discretion.

Spirit Away. The centaur skeleton and up to three creatures within 5 feet of it magically enter the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. An unwilling creature that succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw can resist this effect.

Flaming Skeleton

Medium undead

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (–2)	8 (–1)	5 (–3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

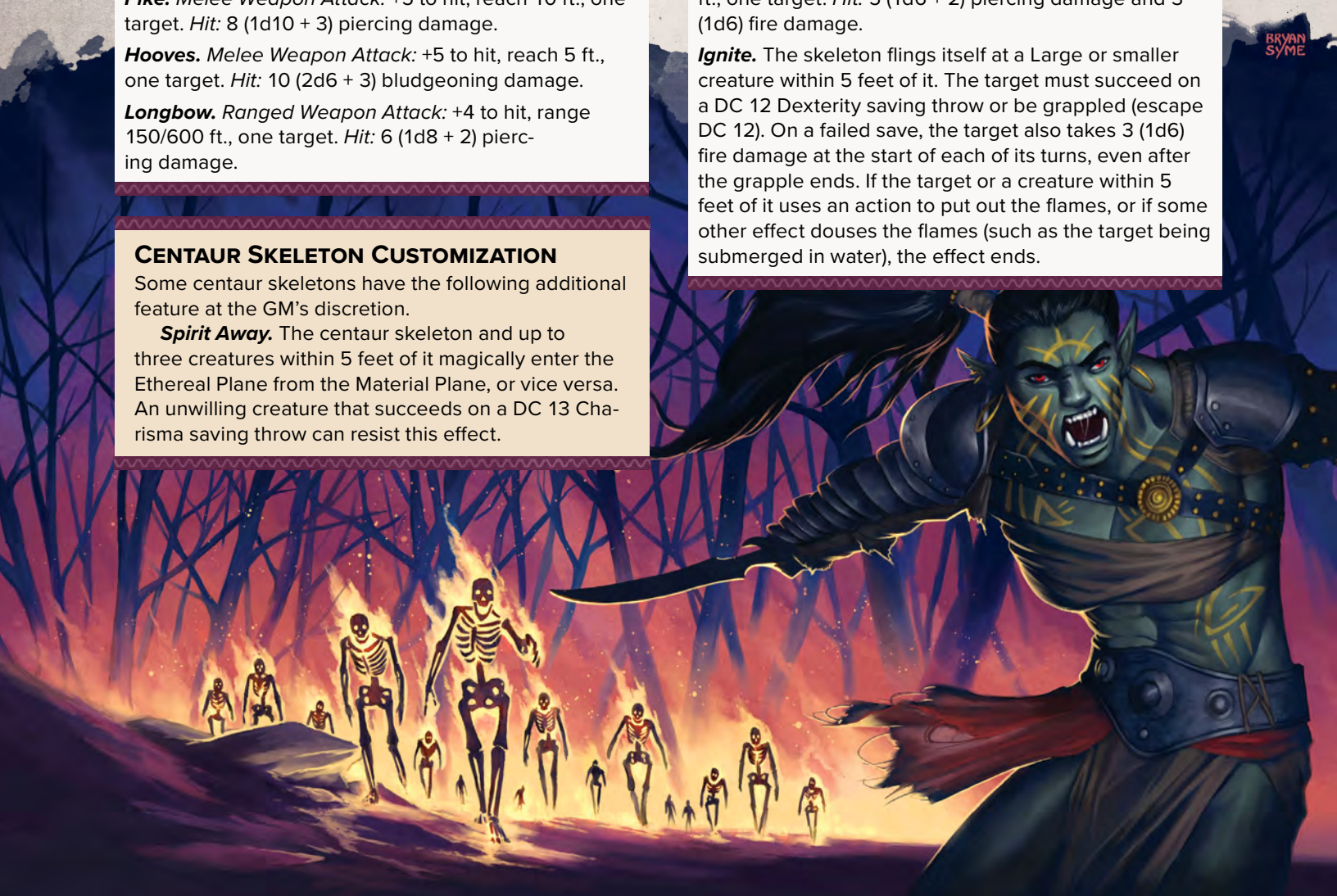
Heated Weapons. When the skeleton hits with a metal melee weapon, the weapon deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage (included in the attack).

Illumination. The skeleton sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Ignite. The skeleton flings itself at a Large or smaller creature within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 12). On a failed save, the target also takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns, even after the grapple ends. If the target or a creature within 5 feet of it uses an action to put out the flames, or if some other effect douses the flames (such as the target being submerged in water), the effect ends.



Vos'skyriss Serpentfolk

The Vos'skyriss serpentfolk are the people of an ancient elite empire of humanoid-snake hybrids, who seek the ultimate detachment that comes from destroying all of reality.

Constricted Origins. Once a realm of humanoids who worshiped serpents, the ancient Vos'skyriss Empire was among the richest in the world. Its people obsessively imitated snakes—their flexibility, their emotionless patience, their willingness to survive at any costs (even cannibalizing their own kind), and their cold detachment. With the help of profane magics, most of the Vos'skyriss shed the useless skin of their humanity to become like the Betrayer God known as the Cloaked Serpent. Those who couldn't evolve became food for those who did.

Seers of the Vos'skyriss foresaw the Calamity, and the empire created an arcane stasis field under their capital city of Vos'skyriss to survive. This site stands off the western coast of Tal'Dorei and is now known as Visa Isle. Only the strongest were allowed to seek refuge in the capital, and decades of carefully tracked tournaments determined who was fit for survival.

Ophidian Society. Serpentfolk occupy remote temples in jungles, swamps, and deserts. Their society enforces strict discipline and a hierarchy that rewards those closest to snakes in mind and body. Serpentfolk transfigured into massive snakes with humanoid arms are held in the highest esteem.

Despite their god's moniker, the Vos'skyriss serpentfolk outlaw hoods so that outsiders in their realm are easily recognizable.

Narcissistic Worship. Most serpentfolk have little love for the Cloaked Serpent, though they pay him homage as the deity of poisons, assassins, and darkness. For the Vos'skyriss serpentfolk, worship is a means to an end. Their legends say that the devout will be granted the ability to devour nightmares, enabling them to gorge themselves on dreams of fear and terror until they grow so large that they can turn on their god and swallow the Cloaked Serpent himself. Once begun, this feast is unending—they will devour the remaining gods one by one, and finally, the entirety of the multiverse.

Vos'skyriss Rising. Several decades ago, Jorlund Vohr, professor of archaeology at the Alabaster Lyceum, led an expedition to the ruins upon Visa Isle—and found them prowled by the restless spirits of the serpent empire. Their incursion unleashed these entombed spirits, and awakened hundreds of their living kin from magical stasis. Now, living and undead serpentfolk plot together to rekindle the embers of their long-lost empire.

Alignment. Neutral evil.



Vos'skyriss Serpentfolk

Large monstrosity

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 60 (8d10 + 16)
Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Hold Breath. The serpentfolk can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Innate Spellcasting. The serpentfolk's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *animal friendship*, *speak with animals (snakes only)*
2/day each: *sleep*, *suggestion*
1/day: *pass without trace*

Actions

Multiattack. The serpentfolk makes two scimitar attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the serpentfolk can't constrict another target.

Vos'skyriss Serpentfolk Ghost

Large undead

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 55 (10d10)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Actions

Multiattack. The ghost makes two spear attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. If the ghost makes a ranged attack, its spear rematerializes in its hands after the attack is resolved.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Terrifying Hiss. The ghost emits an uncanny, rasping hiss. Each non-undead creature within 30 feet of the ghost that can hear it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Terrifying Hiss for the next 24 hours.

Wraithroot Tree

Huge plant

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 270 (20d12 + 140)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (−1)	24 (+7)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +8
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Condition Immunities stunned, frightened, charmed, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

False Appearance. While the wraithroot tree remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Wraith Shift. On its turn, the wraithroot tree can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. The tree does not provoke opportunity attacks while moving, and must finish its movement in a space unoccupied by any Large or larger objects or creatures. Any Medium or smaller creature in the tree's space when it finishes moving is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space of the creature's choice. Medium or smaller objects in the tree's space are pushed to the nearest unoccupied spaces of the tree's choice.

Actions

Multiattack. The wraithroot tree makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Wraithstorm (Recharge 5–6). The wraithroot tree pulls life energy from the area around it, leaving creatures temporarily frail. Each creature that is not a construct or undead within 30 feet of the tree must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or have its speed halved and gain vulnerability to bludgeoning damage until the end of the tree's next turn.

Wraithroot Tree

When ancient or nefarious entities need to safeguard objects of grave consequence—particularly items intertwined with their immortality—they bury those secrets alongside wraithroot trees, around which the people of Exandria dare not tread.

Vengeful Restoration. Wraithroot trees are the product of foul necromancy and transmutation rituals that first see a tree awakened, gifting it with advanced intelligence and imbuing its roots with mobility. But the awakened tree's first moments of joyous awareness are tragically cut short as necromantic energy courses through it, channeling rage and evil to transform it into a wraithroot—filled with longing to obliterate the life it so fleetingly enjoyed.

Wraithroot Sites. In Tal'Dorei, wraithroots can be found in a number of locations, including the Parchwood Timberlands below Whitestone, the Torian Forest along the southwestern edge of the Cliffkeep Mountains, the Grey Valley north of Kraghammer, and the Moldered Grove southeast of the Ashkeeper Peaks.

Alignment. Neutral evil.



Vox Machina

Heroes. Scoundrels. Legends. Dumbasses. The legacy of the adventuring party Vox Machina is a complicated one. Over the course of their adventures, they've selflessly saved the lives of thousands of people in Tal'Dorei, Wildemount, Issylra, and beyond. Of course, there are also countless tales of individuals they've bullied, threatened, insulted, or otherwise needlessly antagonized throughout those same adventures. These legendary figures grew from a band of dime-a-dozen sellswords in the swamp burgh of Stilben to gods-blessed warriors whose actions might have saved all of Exandria from a future of undead tyranny.

The deeds of Vox Machina are sung by bards across Tal'Dorei, often exaggerating those already belief-defying tales of gods and monsters and magic. But though their legend has grown wild and unruly, the members of Vox Machina are still people. More than twenty years have passed since their last great campaign. Most of them are still alive, and the lives of these heroes have changed—in big ways and in smaller, more subtle ones.

Those among them who age have softer bodies and lines on their faces. Those among them who don't age still show the weight of the world upon their shoulders. By and large, the members of Vox Machina have set aside weapons, armor, and spells in favor of more subtle ways of helping others. Some lead the lands they were born to lead. Others have been elected to the Tal'Dorei Council, shaping the fate of the continent's people with quiet wisdom rather than blades and battle cries.

Still, each member of this legendary band of adventurers would take up arms again in an instant if it meant protecting those they care for the most. And the Vestiges of Divergence, whose power they unlocked in the battles against the Cinder King and the Whispered One, are still within their grasp.

The following stat blocks are here for GMs to use if their players encounter a member of Vox Machina—hopefully as an ally or a "quest giver," for woe betide anyone who encounters these legendary heroes as a foe. These statistics don't represent the full extent of the characters' abilities as 20th-level adventurers, but have been streamlined to make them easier for the Game Master to run.

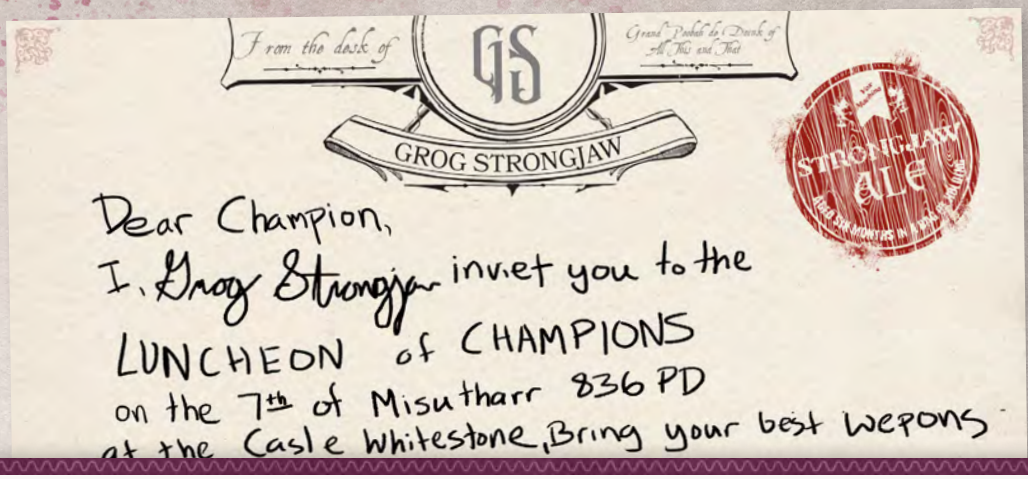


Grog Strongjaw

Towering, broad, and ready for battle, Grog Strongjaw is a paragon of raw strength and unwavering determination. The son of Stonejaw Strongjaw joined Vox Machina in their first meeting in Stilben, and went on to defeat his tyrannical uncle Kevdak, bear the mythic *Titanstone Knuckles*, and save Exandria twice over alongside his companions.

Kindhearted Berserker. Grog is a man of simple pleasures. When he traveled the world with Vox Machina, his great loves in life were famously battle, women, and ale. And though he was renowned for his crass manners, vicious weapons, and relentless battle rage, he was just as well known for his love for his friends. It was never just about saving the world for Grog. Rather, it was about overcoming ever-greater challenges, and doing so side by side with his chosen family.

After the Epilogue. After the Whispered One's defeat, Grog Strongjaw retired to Westruun to live with his best friend Pike Trickfoot. Since then, he has dedicated himself to learning to read and strengthening his mind. In the course of his study of letters, shapes, colors, and numbers, Grog has organized a quadrennial event in Whitestone that he calls the Luncheon of Champions. He personally sends a handwritten invitation to the greatest warriors of Exandria to battle in an all-out brawl—and then join him for lunch and ale.



Grog Strongjaw

Medium humanoid (half-giant)

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 290 (20d12 + 120 + 40)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	8 (−1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +12
Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +14, Intimidation +7, Survival +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages speaks Common, Dwarvish, and Giant with limited reading and writing
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Brutal Critical. When Grog scores a critical hit, he rolls double weapon damage dice as usual, then rolls 3 additional weapon damage dice.

Feral Instinct. Grog has advantage on initiative rolls.

Melee Master. Grog can take a −5 penalty to any melee attack roll to gain a +10 bonus to the damage roll.

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Grog can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Relentless Rage. If Grog is reduced to 0 hit points while raging, he drops to 1 hit point instead if he succeeds on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw.

Special Equipment. Grog wears a *belt of dwarvenkind*. He wields the *Bloodaxe* (a +2 magic weapon), a *dwarven thrower*, and the *Titanstone Knuckles* (see page 211).

Spellbreaker. When Grog damages a creature that is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw to maintain its concentration. In addition, Grog has advantage on saving throws against spells cast by creatures within 5 feet of him.

Toughness. Grog has an additional 40 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. Grog makes two attacks (three when raging) with his *Bloodaxe*, *dwarven thrower*, or *Titanstone Knuckles*.

Bloodaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (1d12 + 14) slashing damage and 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. If the target is reduced to 0 hit points, Grog gains 10 temporary hit points.

Dwarven Thrower. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one target. *Hit:* 24 (2d8 + 15) bludgeoning damage.

Titanstone Knuckles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d4 + 12) bludgeoning damage.

Enlarge (Recharges after a Long Rest). Grog casts *enlarge/reduce* on himself to grow in size for 10 minutes. While enlarged in this way, he has resistance to cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage.

Bonus Actions

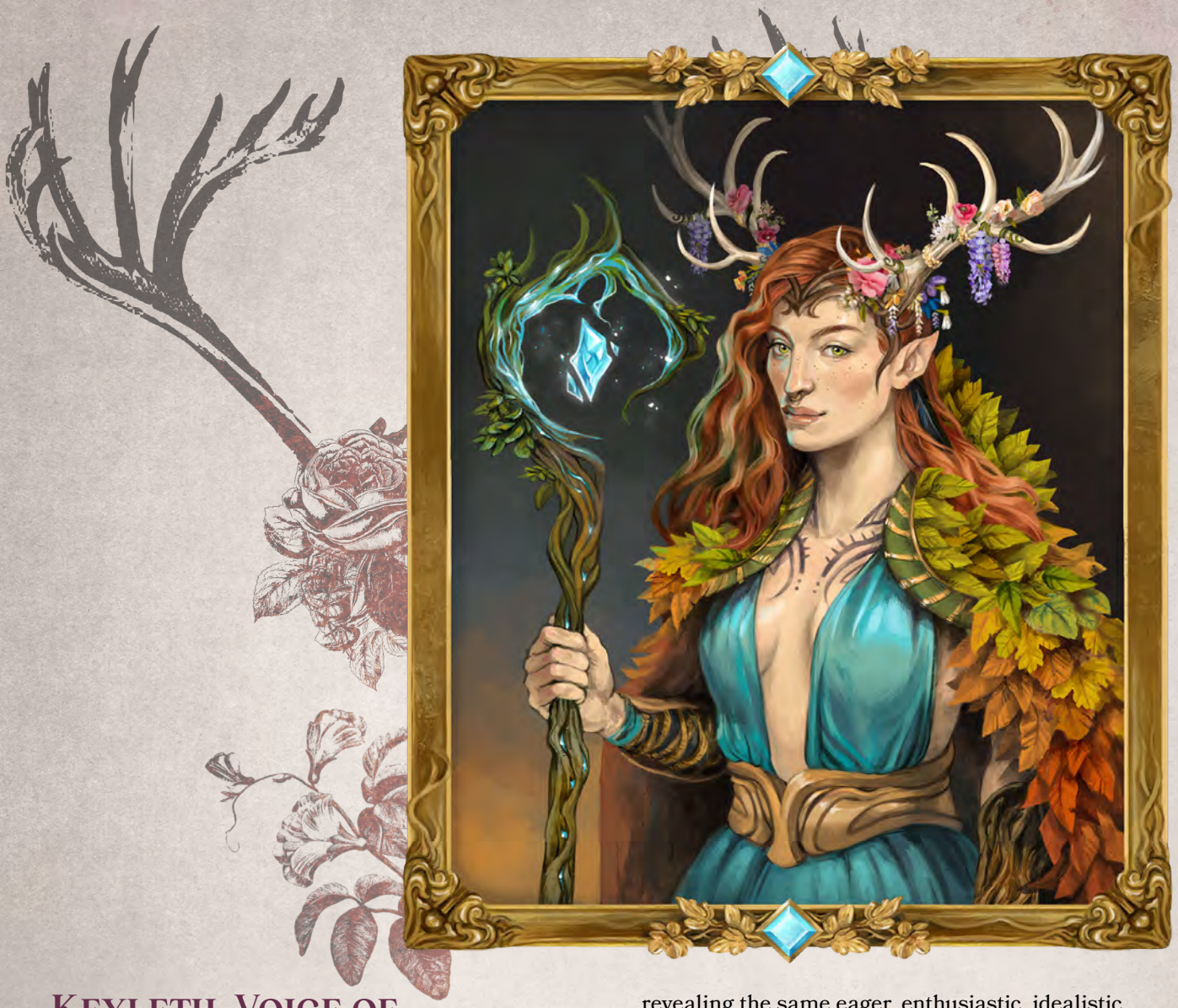
Rage (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Grog enters a rage that lasts until he falls unconscious or chooses to end it (no action required). While raging, Grog gains the following benefits:
He has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.

- He deals an extra 4 damage when he hits a target with a melee weapon attack (included in attacks)
- He has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage
- He can't be charmed or frightened
- He can make an additional melee weapon attack (included in the Multiattack action)

When Grog's rage ends, he gains one level of exhaustion.

Reactions

Opportunist. When a creature within 5 feet of Grog casts a spell or deals damage to him, Grog can make a melee weapon attack against that creature.



Keyleth, Voice of the Tempest

Many painters across Tal'Dorei have depicted the stoic, melancholy visage of Keyleth, Voice of the Tempest, as she stands at the edge of a lofty cliff of Zephrah, gazing into the rosy sunset beside a pink-blossomed tree. In this image, people see a leader who has lost much—and sacrificed even more—for her people, for her world, and for the family she found on her journeys.

Hidden Heart. Though Keyleth often looks back on the life she left behind, she does not dwell on the past. She remembers the joy and pain in equal measure, keeping her eyes on the horizon to seek the next sunrise, not the sunset. In public, she is a consummate leader, speaking tactfully, with calculated words and poise. Yet when she's with her friends from the old days, particularly Pike, Percival, and Vex'ahlia, her practiced public face falls away, revealing the same eager, enthusiastic, idealistic Keyleth that she's always been—just with a few more sorrows weighing upon her heart. She keeps a humble home in Whitestone near Grey Hunt Manor, close to a hidden forest trail she can walk down in peace, conjuring snowdrops as she goes.

After the Epilogue. Keyleth buried herself in her duties as Voice of the Tempest after the loss of Vax'ildan and the Whispered One's defeat. She did everything she could to ally the Air Ashari with the rest of Tal'Dorei, and to create a world better prepared to unite against threats like the Whispered One and the Chroma Conclave. Her heroic reputation, her political will, and her mighty elemental magic gained her many allies, but the entrenched elite of Tal'Dorei still see her as a potential threat to their stability. She rarely adventures anymore, preferring to hire others to tackle problems she sees arising across Tal'Dorei. But if the world is ever in need of an archdruid, she will answer the call.

Keyleth, Voice of the Tempest

Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Armor Class 17 *(+2 leather armor, +2 ring of protection*)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +4, Con +5, Int +10, Wis +14, Cha +4
Skills Athletics +8, Insight +12, Intimidation +8, Nature +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +8, Stealth +8, Survival +12
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Auran, Common, Druidic, Elvish
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Fey Ancestry. Keyleth has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Focused. Keyleth has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on spells.

Special Equipment. Keyleth wears a *circlet of wisdom* (which increases her Wisdom score by 2), *+2 leather armor*, and a *ring of protection* with a +2 bonus. She wields the *Spire of Conflux* (see page 209).

Spellcasting. Keyleth is a 20th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *guidance*, *mending*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *faerie fire*, *fog cloud*, *healing word*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self* (at will), *flaming sphere*, *gust of wind*, *pass without trace*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning*, *wind wall*
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *control water*, *grasping vine*, *polymorph*, *stone shape*
5th level (3 slots): *conjure elemental*, *greater restoration*, *scrying*, *wall of stone*
6th level (2 slots): *heroes' feast*, *move earth*, *transport via plants*
7th level (2 slots): *fire storm*, *plane shift*
8th level (1 slot): *control weather*
9th level (1 slot): *foresight*, *shapechange*

Actions

Shapechange. Keyleth casts *shapechange* to transform into a planetar, an adult bronze dragon, or another creature of CR 20 or lower that is not a construct or undead.

Meteor (Earth Elemental Form Only). When Keyleth falls at least 20 feet, she lands with meteoric force. Each creature within 20 feet of her must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet Keyleth fell. Keyleth still takes falling damage while in earth elemental form.

Chain Lightning. Keyleth casts *chain lightning* (spell save DC 22) from the *Spire of Conflux* at a creature she can see within 150 feet of her.

Bonus Actions

Wild Shape. Keyleth magically polymorphs into a beast or elemental of CR 6 or lower. Her game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the new form, but she retains her alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. She also retains all of her skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the new form. She assumes the new form's hit points and Hit Dice and returns to the number of hit points she had when she reverts to her normal form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by her new form (her choice). She reverts to her humanoid form as a bonus action, or when she falls unconscious. Her attacks in Wild Shape form are magical, and she can cast spells while transformed.

Healing Word (4th Level). Keyleth casts *healing word*, restoring 16 (4d4 + 6) hit points to herself or another creature she can see within 60 feet of her.

Percival de Rolo

Percival Fredrickstein von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III has endured much in his life. He was a young man plagued by personal demons when Vox Machina rescued him from a dismal cell in the Umbra Hills. In those days, Percival de Rolo was a man driven by vengeance, with only his guns as allies, but he took no joy in that life. He has since expressed that the thing he's most grateful for is that he didn't die as the person he was, but lived long enough to grow into someone better, together with his beloved Vex'ahlia and their five children.

Father and Inventor. Percival is deeply dedicated to his wife, to his children, and to the enduring health of Whitestone. The sorrows of his old life still haunt him, though, particularly the creation of firearms. But he has done his best to make peace with his past, resolving to spend the rest of his days creating things that bring joy to the lives of others rather than curtailing those lives. His crowning achievement is the Heart of Whitestone, a majestic clock tower that looms over his city.

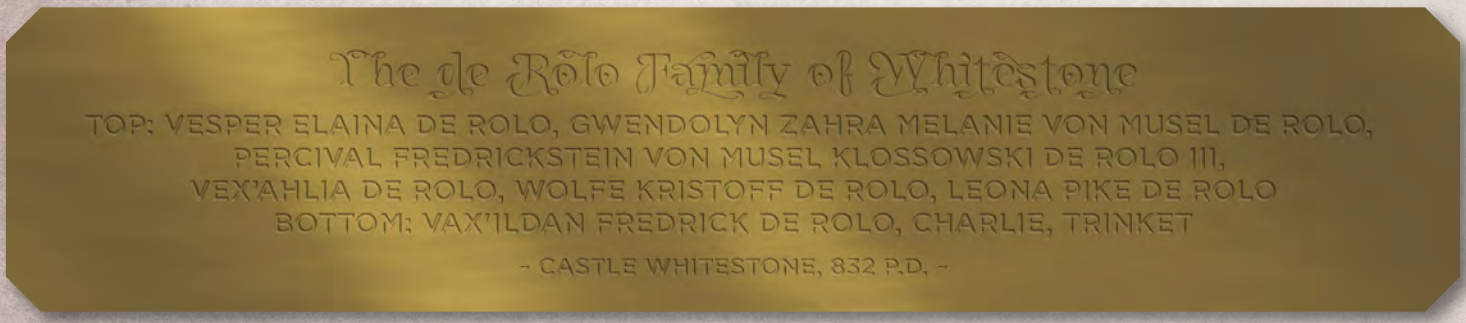
After the Epilogue. Percival largely retired from public life not long after the fall of the Whispered One. He now dedicates himself to his duties as a leader in Whitestone as much as he can, though he is more interested in creating than governing. Most of his tinkering happens in private, creating novelties such as intricate watches and streetlamps powered by volatile reactions with the acid pools beneath his city. He has also lent his knowledge to a number of feats of civic engineering, including Whitestone's skyport and Zephrah's network of windmills.

Vex'ahlia de Rolo

Vex'ahlia was one of the first members of Vox Machina when those adventurers initially met in Stilben, along with her twin brother, Vax'ildan. Today, she is one of the most influential people in Tal'Dorei. She sits on the Tal'Dorei Council as Master of Commerce and is Whitestone's Grand Mistress of the Grey Hunt, a champion of the Dawnfather, and a hero beloved by all who know the legend of Vox Machina. Her charm and skill with a bow are legendary, and she is equally dedicated to changing the world as she is to raising her five children in Whitestone.

Charming and Incorrigible. As an adventurer, Vex'ahlia was known for being resolute and confident even in the face of unspeakable despair. The stories told of Vex revolve around her cunning, her flirtatious charm, and her propensity for haggling—an expression of her impoverished childhood in the wildlands of Tal'Dorei. The hardships she has endured and overcome have not changed her for the worse, though. She is the same Vex'ahlia that is remembered in the legends, just with a few more gray hairs and somehow even more responsibilities. Even her beloved animal companion, the brown bear Trinket, is still by her side—though age has slowed him somewhat. His young cub is now a well-behaved playmate for the youngest de Rolo children.

After the Epilogue. Though she's better known for her archery skill, Vex'ahlia's capability with coin made her an easy choice for election to the Tal'Dorei Council as Master of Commerce. She makes frequent use of a teleportation circle to travel between Castle Whitestone and Traverse Junction in Emon, making it possible to fulfill her duties to both the Chamber of Whitestone and the Tal'Dorei Council. Though she has generally left her adventuring life behind her, she does occasionally sortie with the Grey Hunters to eliminate threats to the continued peace and prosperity of Tal'Dorei.





Percival de Rolo

Medium humanoid (human)

Armor Class 18 (studded leather)
Hit Points 190 (20d10 + 40 + 40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +8
Skills Acrobatics +12, History +11, Perception +9, Persuasion +8
Damage Resistances lightning
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Action Surge (2/Short Rest). Once on his turn, Percy can take one additional action.

Cabal's Ruin. *Cabal's Ruin* grants Percy advantage on saving throws against spells or magical effects. Additionally, *Cabal's Ruin* has 10 charges. When Percy hits with a weapon attack, he can expend up to 10 charges to have the attack deal 1d6 extra lightning damage per charge spent.

Indomitable (3/Long Rest). Percy can reroll a failed saving throw.

Misfire. When Percy rolls a 2 or lower on the d20 when making an attack with *Animus* or *Bad News*, the attack misses and he can't use the weapon again until he spends an action to repair it. On a misfire with Animus, he takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

No Mercy. Percy's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20.

Ranged Master. Percy's ranged weapon attacks have a +2 bonus to hit (included in attacks), ignore half cover and three-quarters cover, and have no range penalty. Additionally, Percy can take a −5 penalty to any ranged attack roll to gain a +10 bonus to the damage roll.

Special Equipment. Percy wears a *ring of lightning resistance* and *Cabal's Ruin* (see page 203). He wields *Animus* and *Bad News*, which are both +1 weapons.

Quick Draw. Percy adds his proficiency bonus to initiative rolls, giving him a +12 to initiative rolls.

Toughness. Percy has an additional 40 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. Percy makes four ranged attacks with *Animus*, or two ranged attacks with *Bad News.* When Percy hits with an attack with either weapon, he can choose one of the following additional effects:

Deadeye. Percy gains advantage on his next attack roll this turn made against the same target.

Disarm. The target must make a DC 20 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target drops one item it is holding of Percy's choice.

Animus. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, range 320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) psychic damage.

Bad News. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, range 800 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) piercing damage.

Reactions

Absorb Magic (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When Percy is targeted by an enemy's spell, he can absorb a portion of the spell's energy into *Cabal's Ruin*. The spell affects him normally, but the cloak gains a number of charges equal to the level of the spell. When he does so, he also gains resistance to one type of damage dealt by the spell until the end of his next turn.

Trinket

Large beast (brown bear)

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 61 (6d10 + 18 + 10)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (−3)	13 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +10
Senses passive Perception 20
Languages understands Common but can't speak it
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Chosen Companion. Trinket has an additional 10 hit points, and has a +6 bonus to attack and damage rolls and to Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Empowered Attacks. Trinket's attacks are treated as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to damage from nonmagical attacks.

Keen Smell. Trinket has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Raven's Slumber. If Trinket is reduced to 0 hit points and is within 100 feet of Vex, he is immediately drawn into the demiplane within Vex's *raven's slumber* and stabilized.

Actions

Multiattack. Trinket makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d8 + 10) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Vex'ahlia

Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Armor Class 21 (+2 *studded leather,* +2 *ring of protection*)
Hit Points 130 (20d10 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (with *broom of flying*)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (−2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +13, Con +3, Int +4, Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +4, Deception +9, Insight +9, Investigation +8, Perception +15, Persuasion +9, Stealth +17, Survival +9
Damage Resistances cold
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, thieves' cant, Undercommon
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Assassinate. During her first turn, Vex has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Vex scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If Vex is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Fey Ancestry. Vex has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Ranged Master. Vex's ranged weapon attacks have a +2 bonus to hit (included in attacks), and ignore half cover and three-quarters cover, and have no range penalty. Additionally, Vex can take a −5 penalty to any ranged attack roll to gain a +10 bonus to the damage roll.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Vex deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she 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 Vex that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Special Equipment. Vex wears +2 *studded white dragon leather armor of cold resistance* and a *ring of protection* with a +2 bonus. She carries a *broom of flying* and a *raven's slumber* (see page 197), and wields *Fenthras* (see page 205).

Spellcasting. Vex is a 13th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *hunter's mark* (see bonus actions)
2nd level (3 slots): *pass without trace*, *protection from poison*
3rd level (3 slots): *lightning arrow*, *nondetection*
4th level (1 slot): *freedom of movement*, *grasping vine*

Trinket. Trinket moves and acts on Vex's turn, and Vex can use a bonus action to command him to take the Dash, Dodge, Disengage, or Attack action. She can also command him to Attack as part of her Multiattack action (see below). Trinket can take only one action on each of Vex's turns.

Actions

Multiattack. Vex makes two ranged attacks, and can command Trinket to move up to his speed and use his Multiattack action.

Fenthras. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, range 600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (1d8 + 18) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) lightning damage, and Vex can use the following ability:

Bramble Shot (2/Short Rest). The attack deals an extra 18 (4d8) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be restrained. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Bonus Actions

Cunning Action. Vex takes the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Hunter's Mark. Vex casts *hunter's mark* to mark a creature she can see within 90 feet of her. For 1 hour, Vex's weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage to the marked creature, and she has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Survival) checks made to find it.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Vex can see hits her with an attack, she takes half damage from the attack.



Pike Trickfoot

This little gnome from the Bramblewood has been called many things—dragonslayer, savior of Exandria, champion of the Everlight, Monstah, and, more recently, Mom. But Pike doesn't care much what people call her, as long as it's said with love. Her soul befits the mantle of the Everlight well, as she exudes warmth, calm, and comfort. But all that cozy kindness shelters a fiery, rebellious spark that can shock strangers and inspire raucous cheers and peals of laughter from her friends.

After the Epilogue. Pike ultimately returned Scanlan Shorthalt's romantic interest after the Whispered One was defeated and Exandria saved once more. There was no denying that she loved him, and they settled down in Westruun and had two children within a year of one another, Juniper and Wilhand'ildan (Juni and Wax for short). When the kids went off to school (one to seminary, the other to Westhall Academy), Pike and Scanlan decided to call it quits, with sad smiles and promises to always be the best of friends. And they've since kept that promise, even as the two of them each sought new paths in life.

Missing her found family, Pike moved to Whitestone and built a temple to the Everlight in the city's Temple Ward. It's beautiful, small, and cozy—a true work of art down to the smallest details. Folk can find her there most days, tending to the gardens but always ready to lend a helping hand or a prayer. Many mornings, Pike swings by the Slayer's Cake to make sure the baked goods remain as tasty as their reputation demands. She'll grab some fresh pastries and coffee to go, and maybe drop off a delivery at Kiki's—that is, Keyleth's—house.

Scanlan usually comes by Whitestone in the summer, his and Pike's favorite time of year. This is a time for simple pleasures—eating dinners with the kids and their Auntie Kiki, Auntie Vex, Uncle Grog, and Uncle Percy; playing music by the fire; hearing Wilhand'ildan and young Vax'ildan de Rolo joke in private about their names and their weird family; and reminiscing about times past. And sometimes, Pike and Scanlan even wind up in bed together, though also, sometimes not. Though Pike's path has diverged from Scanlan's in one way, their lives are never truly separated—a thing that could be said of everyone in Vox Machina.

Pike Trickfoot

Small humanoid (gnome)

Armor Class 23 (*Plate of the Dawnmartyr,* shield)
Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +11, Cha +8
Skills Athletics +10, Perception +11, Persuasion +8, Religion +8, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Gnomish, Undercommon
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Gnome Cunning. Pike has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Special Equipment. Pike wields a *mace of disruption* and wears *gauntlets of ogre power, boots of speed,* and the *Plate of the Dawnmartyr.*

Dawnmartyr's Grace (1/Long Rest). When Pike is reduced to 0 hit points while wearing the *Plate of the Dawnmartyr,* she can choose to have a blast of healing flame surround her. She regains 1 hit point and is lifted to her feet. Each enemy within 10 feet of her takes 7 (2d6) fire damage or radiant damage (her choice).

Spellcasting. Pike is a 20th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame* (4d8), *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command*, *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *healing word*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid*, *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *glyph of warding*, *mass healing word*, *protection from energy*, *revivify*, *speak with dead*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward*, *freedom of movement*, *guardian of faith*
5th level (3 slots): *flame strike*, *greater restoration*, *hallow*, *mass cure wounds*, *scrying*
6th level (2 slots): *heal*, *heroes' feast*, *planar ally*
7th level (2 slots): *resurrection*
8th level (1 slot): *holy aura*
9th level (1 slot): *mass heal*

Actions

Mace of Disruption. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, plus an extra 7 (2d6) radiant damage if the target is a fiend or an undead. If the target has 25 hit points or fewer after taking this damage, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be destroyed. On a successful save, the creature becomes frightened of Pike until the end of her next turn.

Guiding Bolt (5th Level). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (8d6) radiant damage, and the next attack roll made against the target before the end of Pike's next turn has advantage.

Bonus Actions

Battle Priest (5/Long Rest). If Pike uses the Attack action, she can make one weapon attack as a bonus action.

Healing Word (4th Level). Pike casts *healing word*, restoring 16 (4d4 + 6) hit points to herself or another creature she can see within 60 feet of her.

Reactions

Dawnmartyr's Rebuke. When a creature within 5 feet of Pike hits her with a melee attack, she can deal 7 (2d6) fire or radiant damage to it (her choice).

Everlight's Guidance (3/Short Rest). When Pike or a creature she can see within 30 feet of her makes an attack roll, she can grant a +10 bonus to the roll. She can grant this bonus after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.



Scanlan Shorthalt

Bard extraordinaire, champion of the Knowing Mentor, and braggadocious hero of all Exandria, Scanlan Shorthalt is the kind of adventurer who will never let you forget his name. He's personally ensured that the bards spreading his legend across the world will sing his praises for decades to come.

After the Epilogue. Scanlan has always been a self-centered, showboating braggart, but it doesn't mean he doesn't have a heart. These days, friendship and family mean more to him than anything, even if he's still not very good at showing it.

Following the defeat of the Whispered One, Scanlan eventually proposed to his long-pursued sweetheart, Pike Trickfoot, and they were married in a grand ceremony. The duo had a pair of children, one named Juniper (Juni) and the other named Wilhand'ildan (Wax). When the children were grown and in school, Pike and Scanlan amicably divorced and went their separate ways, remaining good friends—and occasional lovers—but content to follow their own paths.

Scanlan is approaching a century of life, but as a long-lived gnome, his looks are much as they were in his adventuring days except for his slowly receding hairline and the slight belly he's developed. Vanity dies slowly, though, and he hides even this modest amount of aging with a comb-over, frequent use of his trademark beret, and well-placed illusion magic when he needs to look portrait perfect.

Scanlan likes to sing songs of the Vox Machina days to crowded houses in cities across Tal'Dorei. He spends his winters in Ank'Harel, where he and his daughter Kaylie operate their high-end trading business, Meatman Imports & Sexports. It's a good job that keeps him constantly traveling around Exandria, suiting his interest in seeking out new people and places around the world—and for new performance venues and places to get into trouble.

Also, he has a mustache now. He thinks it makes him look distinguished.

Scanlan Shorthalt

Small humanoid (gnome)

Armor Class 16 (*+2 studded leather, +2 ring of protection*)
Hit Points 190 (20d8 + 60 + 40)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	7 (–2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +7, Con +5, Int +5, Wis +0, Cha +13
Skills Acrobatics +5, Arcana +8, Athletics +6, Deception +16, Intimidation +11, Investigation +13, Performance +16, Persuasion +16
Damage Resistances acid
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Common, Gnomish, Marquesian
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Gnome Cunning. Scanlan has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Focused. Scanlan has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on spells.

Special Equipment. Scanlan wields *Mythcarver* (see page 207), wears *+2 studded leather armor of acid resistance* and a *ring of protection* with a +2 bonus, and carries a *hat of disguise* and a *wand of magic missiles*.

Spellcasting. Scanlan is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *message*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *healing word*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *hold person*, *invisibility*, *suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *lightning bolt*, *stinking cloud*
4th level (3 slots): *dimension door*, *polymorph*, *resilient sphere*
5th level (3 slots): *arcane hand*, *dominate person*, *modify memory*, *seeming*
6th level (2 slots): *eyebite*
7th level (2 slots): *magnificent mansion*, *reverse gravity*
8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster*
9th level (1 slot): *true polymorph*

Toughness. Scanlan has an additional 40 hit points.

Actions

Mythcarver. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) force damage.

Bonus Actions

Arcane Fist (8th Level). *Melee Spell Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 45 (10d8) force damage. Scanlan can use this bonus action only while concentrating on the arcane hand spell.

Bardic Inspiration (6/Short Rest). Scanlan grants a Bardic Inspiration die to one creature other than himself within 60 feet of him who can hear him. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll a d12 and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes.

When Scanlan uses this ability, he gains advantage on attack rolls with Mythcarver until the end of his turn.

Healing Word (5th Level). Scanlan casts healing word, restoring 18 (5d4 + 6) hit points to himself or another creature he can see within 60 feet of him.

Reactions

Cutting Words. When a creature Scanlan can see within 60 feet of him makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a damage roll, he can expend a use of Bardic Inspiration to roll a d12 and subtract the number rolled from the creature's roll. The creature also has disadvantage on its next saving throw.



Taryon Darrington

Gleaming, resplendent, and overflowing with indefatigable confidence, Taryon Gary Darrington is every bit the man he was when he parted ways with Vox Machina over twenty years ago. These days, though, all the bravado and good cheer he had two decades ago is real—not just an act. Tary doesn't need to fake it anymore; he's made it. Even if responsibility doesn't come easily to him, he takes it whenever he has to.

After the Epilogue. After many years running the Darrington Brigade—his heroic adventuring band—and publishing several absolutely true accounts of their exploits, Taryon realized his adventuring checklist was essentially complete. He left his home in Deastok, in Wildemount's Dwendalian Empire, and began a new chapter of his life. Leaving the brigade in the capable hands of his sister, Maryanne, and his confidant Lionel Gayheart, Taryon traveled around launching several smaller "satellite" brigades in Wildemount's most dangerous lands.

Then, realizing he had spent his career as a writer of nonfiction adventure books, he decided to try his hand at fiction instead. With his trusty scribe and majordomo Doty X at his side ("Doty Ten," he patiently explains to anyone who mispronounces it), Taryon and his husband Lawrence moved to the Menagerie Coast, setting up in a small writing cottage in Port Damali. While Lawrence tutors local students, Taryon has been dashing off novel after

Doty X

Medium construct

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 78 (9d8 + 18 + 20)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	4 (–3)	10 (+0)	6 (–2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +5
Skills Athletics +7, Perception +8
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages understands the languages that Tary speaks
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Arcane Surge (4/Day). When Doty hits a target, Tary can channel magical energy to deal an extra 14 (4d6) force damage to the target as long as Tary is not incapacitated.

Dedicated Servant. Doty has an additional 20 hit points, and has a +2 modifier to saving throws, ability checks using skill proficiencies, and attack rolls.

Limited Vocabulary. Doty can say the following words in Common: "Tary," "Yes," "Correct," "Absolutely," "Soon," and "Handsome."

Vigilant. Doty can't be surprised.

Actions

Empowered Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) force damage.

Repair (3/Day). Doty regains 15 (2d8 + 6) hit points.

Reactions

Deflect. If a creature within 5 feet of Doty that he can see makes an attack against a creature other than Doty, he can impose disadvantage on the attack roll. The attacker then takes 6 (1d4 + 4) force damage.

novel. His most successful books are a series called "The Deastok Mysteries," which feature a young, handsome blonde boy who solves crimes around Wildemount with his brilliant intellect and trusty robot sidekick.

From time to time, Taryon charters a skyship to visit his old friends in Whitestone and enjoy the memories of their time together as full-fledged members of Vox Machina.

The Automatic Scribe, Doty. Doty X is much like past models of Tary's mechanical servant—vaguely humanoid but not too expressive. The new model is sleek and stylish, and not built for battle. Doty's vocabulary has grown to six words: "Tary," "Yes," "Correct," "Absolutely," "Soon," and "Handsome." The scribe also features a built-in shelf of Taryon's favorite books—that is, his favorite books that he's written himself—in case Taryon needs to make a sale while he's on holiday.

Taryon Darrington

Medium humanoid (human)

Armor Class 15 (*+1 breastplate*)
Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 30 + 30)
Speed 40 ft., fly 50 ft. (with *broom of flying*)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	8 (−1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +9
Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Perception +4, Survival +4
Damage Resistances acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Draconic, Gnomish, Sylvan, Undercommon
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Alchemical Defense. Tary's experimental concoctions have granted him resistance to acid and poison damage, and immunity to the poisoned condition.

Doty. Doty moves and acts on Tary's turn, and Tary can use a bonus action to command him to use the Dash, Dodge, Disengage, or Attack action. He can also command him to Attack as part of his Multitask action (see below). Doty can take only one action on each of Tary's turns.

Focused. Tary has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on spells.

Special Equipment. Tary wears a *helm of brilliance*, a *robe of useful items*, and a *ring of the ram*. He carries a *rod of mercurial form* (see page 197), as well as a *bag of holding*, 1d4 + 4 *beads of force*, a *broom of flying*, and a *chime of opening*.

Spellcasting. Tary is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (3d8)
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *heroism*, *identify*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*, *branding smite*, *see invisibility*, *warding bond*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *magic circle*, *revivify*
4th level (2 slots): *banishment*, *fabricate*, *fire shield*

Toughness. Tary has an additional 30 hit points.

Actions

Multitask. Tary makes two weapon attacks or casts a spell with a casting time of 1 action, and can also command Doty to use his Empowered Fist or Repair action.

Mercurial Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage.

Bead of Force. Tary throws a *bead of force* up to 60 feet. Each creature within a 10-foot radius of where the bead landed must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 12 (5d4) force damage. A sphere of transparent force then encloses the area for 1 minute. A creature that fails the save and is completely within the area is trapped inside the sphere.

Reactions

Brilliant Intellect. When Tary or another creature he can see within 30 feet of him makes an ability check or a saving throw, he can use his reaction to add +4 to the roll.



Champion of Ravens

Death comes for all things in their time. It is the will of the Matron of Ravens that no being, no matter how heroic or how powerful, shall escape their rightful place in the hereafter. Yet when his sister Vex'ahlia died in a sunken Issylran tomb, Vax'ildan demanded that the goddess of death release her claim on Vex'ahlia's soul—and claim his instead.

Inscrutably, the Matron of Ravens acquiesced to Vax'ildan's demand. He donned the Deathwalker's Ward, a Vestige of Divergence imbued with the Matron of Ravens' power, and the legendary armor of her previous mortal champion. In time, Vax'ildan too came to be called her champion, and returned to life from death more than once—even enduring utter annihilation by the Whispered One and strangulation by an Archfey. All these deaths were permissible for the Matron of Ravens' champion, since the threads of fate that bound Vax'ildan to her service had not yet run their full course. But they inevitably did.

Vax'ildan bade farewell to all the people he held most dear in the wake of the Whispered One's defeat, and vanished into the eternal embrace of his god. In the years since, his returns to the world he once knew have been rare and fleeting. The Champion of Ravens is not Vax'ildan, though Vax resides within him. He is a loyal arbiter of the ineffable providence of death itself. He appears at times as a wrathful angel, masked and surrounded by a storm of raven feathers, bringing an end to those who would pervert the sanctity of oblivion out of greed or fear of the unknown.

All fear the end, in their own way. Some fight it, delving into magic that delays the inevitable by making a mockery of both life and death. Others lash out, hurting people around them in smaller ways. But those whose fears are greatest are met by the Champion of Ravens, whose kind soul soothes and shepherds the fearful beyond the veil of the mortal world.

Champion of Ravens

Medium celestial

Armor Class 20 (*Deathwalker's Ward*)
Hit Points 150 (20d10 + 40)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +15, Con +5, Int +13, Wis +5, Cha +6
Skills Acrobatics +19, Intimidation +10, Investigation +10, Perception +16, Persuasion +10, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +19
Damage Resistances radiant, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 26
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Druidic, Elvish, thieves' cant
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Assassinate. During his first turn, the Champion has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the Champion scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Aura of Protection. While the Champion is conscious, he and friendly creatures within 10 feet of him have a +3 bonus to saving throws (included above).

Eternal Champion. When the Champion is reduced to 0 hit points or dies, his body is destroyed but his spirit returns to the Raven Queen's side, and he gains a new body after 1d4 days.

Evasion. If the Champion is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Fate-Touched (4/Day). When the Champion makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the d20 and use either roll. Alternatively, when a creature the Champion can see makes an attack roll against him, or a saving throw against one of his spells or features, he can force that creature to reroll the attack or save and use the new roll.

Innate Spellcasting. The Champion's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (+10 to hit with spell attacks, save DC 18). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bane*, *bless*, *druidcraft*
1/day: *greater invisibility*

Shadow Smite (1/Turn). The Champion deals an extra 49 (14d6) radiant or necrotic damage (his choice) when he hits a target with a weapon attack and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Unerring Sight. The Champion's ranged weapon attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover and have no range penalty.

Special Equipment. The Champion wears *boots of haste* (see page 194) and the *Deathwalker's Ward* (see page 204), and wields *Whisper* (see page 211).

Actions

Multiattack. The Champion makes three attacks with *Whisper*.

Whisper. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d4 + 8) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) psychic damage. On a critical hit, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the Champion for 1 minute. On a ranged attack, the Champion can teleport with *Whisper*, appearing within 5 feet of the target on a hit, or in a random space within 30 feet of the target on a miss.

Touch of Life and Death (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The Champion touches a creature within 5 feet of him, and chooses to either heal or harm that creature, restoring 55 (10d10) hit points or dealing 55 (10d10) necrotic damage. If the creature is an unwilling target, it can avoid either effect with a successful DC 20 Dexterity saving throw.

Bonus Actions

Cunning Action. The Champion takes the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Boots of Haste (1/Day). The Champion clicks his heels together, casting *haste* on himself. He doesn't suffer from lethargy when the spell ends.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. The Champion halves the damage that he takes from an attack that hits him. He must be able to see the attacker.

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Tyriok Gadsworth
Chief Cartographer to the
Guild of Beacons
811 P.D., revised 836 P.D.
0 20 40 60 80 100 200
Scale in miles
Fairwinds to sleeper WILDEMOUNT
South-west to the The Hesperi Archipelago and MARQUET
South-east to The Fool's Curtain and THE SHATTERED TEETH



The Adventure Begins

WELCOME TO TAL'DOREI, a fantasy-filled continent brimming with grand tales of heroes and adventure—and eagerly awaiting your own epic stories. Soar on a skyship from the metropolis of Emon to the distant haven of Whitestone, venture into wilderness rife with terrifying monsters and wayward mages, and uncover magic items that range from simple trinkets to the legendary Vestiges of Divergence.

The hit series *Critical Role* first explored this continent through the epic adventures of Vox Machina. Now the world moves on in their wake. This campaign setting is newly revised and expanded to cover the exciting conclusion of the Vox Machina campaign and the characters' lives in the years following. Let your footsteps, too, shape the fate of Tal'Dorei and perhaps the wider world of Exandria.

This definitive, art-filled tome is revised and expanded, containing everything you need to unlock the rich campaign setting of Tal'Dorei and make it your own:

- A guide to each major region, with story hooks to fuel your campaign
- Expanded character options, including 9 subclasses and 5 backgrounds
- Magic items such as the Vestiges of Divergence, legendary artifacts that grow in power with their wielders
- Dozens of creatures, including many featured in the *Critical Role* campaigns
- New lore and updated stat blocks for each member of Vox Machina

The adventure begins. Where will you take it?

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5th Edition