# WINTERWEIR

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Dedicated to Ed Greenwood and the late Gary Gygax. For all the many hours of joy your work provided me and my friends.

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# A World of Epic Dark Fantasy

Welcome to *Winterweir*, a game of dark fantasy and epic adventure. Player characters in *Winterweir* live in world where terrible evils lurk the shadows and only a few honorable souls attempt to hold it back. Players may take on the role of great heroes or self-interested megalomaniacs. It is a world where magicians, mad alchemists, noble knights, religious fanatics, and powerful decadent nobles all exist to carve a piece of the world for themselves.

The heroes of *Winterweir* are but a small group in a land gone horribly wrong but they are not restricted to being sideliners in reality's fate. In *Winterweir* takes place in a game line where a single trained warrior can take on a horde of evil himself. Mystics are capable of learning to move mountains and the crowns of the realm belong to whoever can take them. In a corrupt setting where only the strong survive, peace may well have to be imposed from above.

Whatever the method, those heroes of the setting are those who are dedicated to bringing order back to the World of Two Moons. Whether you fight to bring peace to the land for altruistic reasons or just to make yourself rich, the future is in your hands!

## Character Concepts

*Winterweir* takes place in an epic fantasy setting that exists between the Age of Chivalry and the Renaissance period for most of its technology. It is bordering on an industrial age in some areas. Also advanced technology is scattered across the world, left behind by the space-capable Terra'ssar civilization. As such, player character concepts may include unusual character types like Alchemists or Riflemen. Below is just a sampling of the concepts that players may find interesting.

After you have selected a concept or come up with one of your own, then turn to the next section *Making Characters*.

**Alchemist:** Magic in *Winterweir* includes many scientific principles that certain individuals have dedicated their lives to harnessing. Some of them use sorcery to make scientific devices that are centuries ahead of their time. Others attempt to repair or recreate ancient Terra'ssar devices that work wonders beyond magic or science. Either way; Alchemists tend to invoke a level of awe and fear in the populous equal to other magicians.

**Ambitious Noble:** There's only so much noble territory in the continent of Alacarn. Many noble families produce far more children than they need to guarantee an heir for their estate. For those unlucky few extra children, they are left with the option of living off their family's wealth or attempting to carve out their own lands.

This is hardly the deed of a villain in *Winterweir*. There's plenty monstrous nobles that need overthrowing. Liege lords rarely pay attention to when their vassals are overthrown anyway, so long as the new one pays his taxes.

**Assassin:** The trade of the Assassin is not exactly an honorable profession in *Winterweir.* It is, however, a feared one. Numerous secret cults and criminal organizations employ assassins, as do the governments of the Great Kingdoms. Many assassins even justify their work as doing a necessary act for the good of their nation (or simply argue that their targets are usually people that deserve what happens to them).

Whatever the case, no one sane disputes the effectiveness of assassins in deciding the course of 'troubled diplomacy.'

**Daemon Hunter:** Daemons from the Netherdeep are something that all too often find themselves on the world of Teth-Ammon. Their presence can result in the mutation of the populous and the transformation of local wildlife into hideous perversions.

It thus falls onto the Daemon Hunters to deal with these creatures in the most expedite manner possible. Daemon Hunters are usually honored by the locals when they are needed and quickly ushered away when not.

**Knight of Winterweir:** Knights of Winterweir are an organization that holds up the ideals of honor and justice for all beings. These ideals are so far removed from the rest of the world's values that they often come off as very peculiar. Knights of Winterweir mostly work to protect the nation of Winterweir but many become Knight Errants to serve the cause of justice abroad.

**Itinerant Holy Man:** The religions of Teth-Ammon wield a disproportionate amount of power. Some even rule nations. Itinerant Holy men are something of a different kettle of fish, as they do not owe allegiance to any particular temple but wander the world. Some of these do so because they wish to enforce justice in their gods name. Others wish to gain greater enlightenment. A few are nothing more than conmen who attempt to live off the charity of the Devote.

**Justicar:** *Winterweir* is a lawless land that is ruled by force of arms to keep the populous in check. The nobility cares almost nothing for genuine justice, merely stability. Thus, the common people depend on Justicars for anything resemble a fair trial.

Justicars, warriors in the service of Tyros or Heton, travel the world in order to meditate disputes and deliver rulings on crimes. They are a bright spot of civilization in a land that, oftentimes, has no real concept of human rights.

**Sell-Sword:** There is no profession more highly demanded in Alacarn than that of the mercenary. Endless brushfire wars are constantly flare up between the various petty kingdoms and their larger neighbors.

Sell-swords should not expect to live long but the temptations of the profession are considerable. The prospect of plunder and perhaps someday being elevated to Knighthood is something that keeps many veterans going. A few have even managed to murder their way up to Kingship.

**Tomb Explorer:** There are countless ruins spread throughout the countries of Alacarn. Many of them are filled with treasure from civilizations that have long since passed to dust. Others hold the secrets of the Terra'ssar or magic. Tomb Explorers may be motivated by naked greed or they could work for the Pretax Sages and hope to discover something of the forgotten past.

**Watchmen Agent:** Watchmen are an organization that believes they can do something about the constant warfare and strife across their homeland. Whether you approve of their attempts to manipulate the conflicts and sabotage certain warlords or not, they feel that it is the only way to make the world a better place. Watchmen also attempt to fight crime and monsters. They are a high casualty group, nevertheless, growing independent military organization.

**Wand Adept (Rifleman):** Gunpowder weapons are rapidly becoming the most powerful tool of war that humanity possesses. It'll be a century or more before they replace bows and arrows but Wand Adepts are in high demand.

Wand Adepts may be loyal to a specific country or they might simply be mercenaries with an exotic weapon. Thanks to the danger they pose on the battlefield, they can name their own fee.

**War Wizard:** Magic is a powerful and terrifying force in *Winterweir*. Magicians possess abilities above and beyond those of most mortals. They are capable of using that power to inflict terrible losses upon their enemies. Normal magicians are scholars but War Wizards are most at home on the battlefield. The intimidating power of magic is often more effective than the actual spells cast.

## Making Characters

Once you have managed to establish your character's background, it is time to flesh out the details. Characters for Winterweir follow the same standard Savage Worlds character creation process, with a few minor alterations along the way.

### 1) Race

Not all characters in *Winterweir* are human beings. There are a wide variety of new races to choose from. Player characters should consult pages 4 through 17 to determine if any of the *Winterweir* races fit their character concept better than a human.

Human player characters receive one free additional Edge. They also start with Attribute of their choice at 1d6.

## 2) Traits

To begin with, determine the traits that define what your hero can do.

### Attributes

Your hero starts with d4 in each of his five attributes: Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor. If the player character is human then he can choose one Attribute to be D6. Humans are hardier in *Winterweir* than they are in other lands. The character then has 5 points to distribute amongst them as you choose. Raising an attribute a die type costs you 1 point, you may not raise an attribute above D12.

### Skills

You have 15 points to buy your skills. Raising a skill by a die type costs 1 point as long as its no higher than the attribute that it's linked to. It costs 2 points per die type to raise a skill over its linked attribute.

All the skills in Savage Worlds rules are available in Winterweir.

Characters with the Arcane Background also have access to a special arcane skill. The available arcane skills in Winterweir are: Faith, Psionics, Spell-casting, Super Powers, and Weird Science (see Chapter 5: Magic for more on powers).

### Languages

Your hero knows a number of languages equal to half his Smarts die. A *Winterweir* character should have the language of his home nation as his primary tongue. Because of the illiterate nature of Winterweir, reading and writing in a tongue is taken separately from being able to speak it.

No roll is needed to communicate once skill in a language is taken. Any permanent increase in a character's Smarts score will increase the number of languages they can speak or read/write in.

### Secondary Statistics

**Charisma:** is +0 unless changed by Edges or Hindrances.

**Pace:** is 6" unless changed by Edges or Hindrances.

**Parry:** is equal to 2 plus half your Fighting die type. Edges, Hindrances, and some types of equipment can modify your Parry score.

**Toughness:** is equal to 2 plus half your Vigor die type. Edges, Hindrances, and Armor can modify your Toughness.

**Psyche:** *Winterweir* introduces a new derived statistic called Psyche. You can find more information about how it works on Page 46, but for now, mark it down as +0. Some Edges and Hindrances can effect your Psyche.

## 3) Special Abilities

Next, decide if you want any Hindrances. You may use the points from Hindrances to gain one of the benefits below. You may choose one Major Hindrance (worth two points), and up to two Minor Hindrances (worth 1 point each). The section on Edges and Hindrances on page 4 tells you what choices are available. The Game Master, at his discretion, may remove this obstacle and allow players to choose as many Hindrances as they want for their character.

For 1 Hindrance point, you can gain another skill point. For 2 Hindrance points, you can raise an attribute by one die type or choose an Edge.

Your hero gets one free Edge, plus any additional Edges you purchase with Hindrance points.

## 4) Honor

The world in which *Winterweir* takes place is built upon respectability and strength. While player characters can freely associate in motley groups, their behavior is still rigorously judged on the basis of how they act in accordance to their class.

Characters who behave in a dishonorable fashion will soon find that their reputations have suffered abroad and only rogues will deal with them. This doesn't present a problem for criminal heroes but might seriously impact other character types.

Consequently, all characters have an Honor/Integrity score. To start with, your character has a Honor/Integrity score of 5, which can be modified by Edges and Hindrances. For more on how Honor/Integrity works in a game, see Page 40.

### 5) Possessions

Each character starts with a change of clothing, suitable for their class, and 500 bronze pieces ($500 equivalent). They also start the game with a riding mount. You'll want to spend some of your starting money on weapons, armor, and other equipment. See the Chapter 2: Possessions for a full equipment list.

The Game Master may choose to give player characters extra equipment to suit their concept or to reward an especially detailed backstory.

### 6) Background

Spend some time thinking about your character's past. Where was he from? What was his family life like? At what point did they decide that they were going to go out and make the world a better place? Why? Coming up with a good background helps you figure out how to role-play the character and gives the Game Master a set of ideas to work into the campaign.

### 7) Name

Names in *Winterweir* follow a peculiar formula. Most names have the player character's first name and then a D (for boys) or an A (for girls) before their surname. Thus, a character's name might be Annie A'Tyla for a girl or Alex D'Tylia for a boy. Player characters are encouraged to come up with names that are reminiscent of Earth names but slightly different. This is to reflect the idea that many names come from our world but have been altered over time.

## Races of Winterweir

*Winterweir* has countless races that are the product of Draconic tinkering with the human base strain. If a Game Master wishes to offer player's a new race to play or allow them use one of the traditional fantasy staples like Elves or Gnomes, then he is welcome to do so. This section will present all original races that, nevertheless, fulfill most of the usual fantasy archetypes.

Player characters who choose to be Non-Human should take the time to familiarize themselves with the attitudes and circumstances surrounding most species. While it is certainly possible to play a non-traditional character of a race, a Bathas harem girl for example, most players will want to stick to type.

One thing to remember is that, despite their varying qualities and life-spans, most player character races are descendants of a human origin. Thus; they love and hate in much the same way as regular mortals. One should not make an attempt to play them as too alien.

### Bathas

Bathas are an unfriendly race that have a reputation for arrogance about their mental accomplishments. The most advanced race amongst Winterweir's lesser races, they spend much of their time trying to unravel the mysteries of the Dragon's lost technologies.

More sensible members of the Bathas race have realized that such probing will yield nothing in a world where there is no infrastructure to support their discoveries. Instead, they devote themselves to creating their own devices and attempting to live life amongst the younger species.

**Personality:** The Bathas are a race of intellectuals. They have cultivated an insular culture that does not suffer fools gladly. The Bathas are believed to be naturally mysterious and secretive but this more often manifests amongst friends as being a know it all.

The Bathas are gruff and opinionated with few having much use for either ceremony or idealism. They are an imminently practical people that often finds human notions of honor to be quite strange. They do value integrity but believe in flexibility due to circumstance.

**Physical Description:** Bathas are a short, stocky, and muscular race. Their height averages between four and five feet. Bathas have a skin tone that resembles no human one; ranging from light blue to gray and a forest green.

Bathas hair tends to be a bright platinum silver color that contrasts sharply with their skin. Even more striking is the fact that Bathas eyes are deep red that actually glow in darkness. Many Bathas sport a pair of strange leather bound goggles that contain blackened lenses.

It is a common statement on Alacarn to "Never look a Bathas in the mouth." This saying is rooted in truth. Bathas have sharpened canines that give them the look of a wild dog.

Bathas can expect to live upwards to four hundred years.

**Relations:** Bathas are largely accepted in almost all of Alacarn's nations. The days when the Bathas were the slave lords of the Dragons is long forgotten by other species and most are content to simply let them work on their bizarre machines. More social Bathas have assimilated into human society by becoming architects, craftsmen, and other skilled professionals. They are often frustrated with the general ignorance and superstition that exist in Alacarn's myriad societies.

One race which does not get along with Bathas to any real extent is the Half-Jotuns. Too many have recent memories of enslavement or have kin held in bondage. Bathas are the chief slavers in the Alacarn.

**Bathas Lands:** Bathas are most numerous in the land of Belkor, officially part of Keldor. It is here they operate from a vast underground civilization that stretches under much of the kingdom.

Smaller Bathas communities are spread throughout the kingdoms of Alacarn. Many independent nations of the Small Folk exist in the shadow of their larger neighbors. Bathas have no objection to living in human communities and often dwell in them for generations.

**Religion:** By and large, Bathas are an atheistic people (or at least agnostic). They consider the rise of humanity's religions to be the result of superstition and dismiss their evangelizing as the propagation of lunacy. Most consider the Celestials to be little more than exceptionally powerful humans.

A few small Bathas have taken up worship of Kaalon, Filanti, Paalok, or Veethor but these tend to attract the disdain of their kin.

**Language:** Bathas speak their own language called Dreggoth. It is a tongue that most Bathas are familiar with, even if they grew up far from Belkor where it is the official language. Otherwise, Bathas tend to speak the tongue of the nation that they currently inhabit. Bathas slavers are familiar with Jotunspeak.

**Names:** (Male) Destrad, Drask, Druum, Kulldor, Oron, Uxas, Veltor, Zolom

(Female) Anata, Desper, Kelas, Oranna, Usas, Thalas, Velacia, Zelen

**Adventurers:** Bathas are a people always interested in garnering more knowledge about the world and more wealth to finance either their experiments or lifestyles (and sometimes both). The Small Folk tend to be more focused on what can be gained from adventuring than the enjoyment of the lifestyle for its own sake. The prospect of finding artifacts from the Terra'ssar almost ways piques a Bathas' interest, however.

**Bathas Racial Traits**

- **Intelligent:** Bathas begin with a D6 starting Smarts.
- **Thermal Vision:** Bathas have the monstrous ability, Infravision.
- **Small Stature:** Bathas are inherently smaller than most other species on Winterweir. They also specialize in learning how to avoid blows from larger folk. Attackers subtract -2 from all attacks against the Bathas. This is only the case if the Bathas are active and aware of the attack.
- **Size -1:** Bathas must subtract -1 from their Toughness for their small statue.
- **Light Blindness:** Bathas suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls in bright sunlight or any illumination above torchlight. They can compensate for this by wearing Fogged Glasses (see Page 31).

## Half-Celestials

Half-Celestials are the offspring of the most powerful race in Teth-Ammon after the Dragons. Gifted with unnatural beauty by their parentage, they are treated as gods by the populous. This awe and reverence inspires most of them to try and perform great deeds. Many achieve such and become legendary heroes or villains cursed for generations.

The birth of a Half-Celestial is always a cause for considerable discomfort and joy when it occurs. Many Aristocrats fear for their positions with such powerful figures of destiny amongst them. Others desire to utilize their natural charisma for their own twisted ends. Whatever the case, few Half-Celestials are allowed to grow up to be normal.

**Personality:** Half-Celestials are known for their intense personalities. It seems the Celestial blood magnifies their passions and leaves them one of the most hot blooded people on Alacarn. Society's expectations combined with their own weak connection to the Silver Eternity is enough to make many into visionary leaders.

Many Half-Celestials find themselves drifting towards leadership positions even if they are not Aristocrats. While Half-Celestials are often no more talented than any other, many have a natural arrogance about their lineage.

Quite a few claim they have a divine right to rule by virtue of their heritage. Thankfully, many are actually as noble as they claim (or at least make an attempt to be better than those around them).

**Physical Description:** Half-Celestials are mind-numbingly beautiful to look upon. While not to everyone's sexual tastes, Half-Celestials have a ethereal and graceful attractiveness that causes many individuals to look at them like a living work of art.

Half-Celestials tend to be tall and lithe, ranging from the upper heights of five feet to the mid range of six feet. Their hair is often an elaborate rainbow of colors while their features are soft and angular. Half-Celestials' eyes are an equal range of bizarre variety with amber, azure, and other colors not normally found in nature. Despite their frames being slight, Half-Celestials tend to possess strength in excess of what one would normally expect. Disfiguring scars and other mild wounds tend to heal over, leaving them physically flawless.

Half-Celestials have been known to sport graceful wings and other signs traditionally associated with their parents. This is especially true if one of their parents was a Valken rather than a human. Half-Celestials either have the same lifespan as their mortal parent or are functionally immortal.

**Relations:** Half-Celestials invoke reactions of awe and desire from most other species in Alacarn. This reaction does not lend itself well to blending in or living a normal life. Wherever Half-Celestials go, they are expected to be in the thick of things as if they are divine messengers brought to life. Many revolutionary movements or uprisings have forced Half-Celestials into figurehead positions, simply because of the effect they have on people.

Only the Bathas seem to have no real interest in Half-Celestials, perhaps because they know that their 'divine' parents are nothing of the sort.

**Lands:** Half-Celestials are too few in number across the nations of Alacarn to form their own nations. While rumors persist of hidden lands where the Half-Celestials dwell in utopian communities, most likely these are just references to the Silver Eternity and Phoenix's Rest.

More often, Half-Celestials dwell as the leaders of small or large communities. It is not that difficult for one to carve out his own small kingdom in the continent of Alacarn. Quite a few micro-nations are ruled for generations by long lived Half-Celestials and their descendants.

**Religion:** Half-Celestials tend to be very mystical and often quite religious. Curiously, few Half-Celestials put much stock in the clergy of the Twelve Gods. Instead, Half-Celestials seek their own means of contacting the Twelve Great Gods.

Others worship their Celestial parents as deities and often seek to communicate with them through prayer. A few arrogant Half-Celestials proclaim themselves gods and demand that their followers worship them.

**Language:** Half-Celestials speak the language of their mortal kin. A few of them, raised by their Celestial parents, speak Orthos. Orthos is the tongue of the Silver Eternity and the Half-Celestials that dwell in that strange dimension.

**Names:** Half-Celestials take human and Valken names for the most part. A small number change their names to something more grandiose as they grow in power. Beautiful Fox, The Glorious Emperor, The Divine Fist, Sky wind, and other self-granted names are all very common amongst both sexes.

**Adventurers:** Half-Celestials are seemingly born to adventure. Whether because they wish to garner wealth so they can build their own kingdoms or because they believe that they can genuinely make a difference in the world, Half-Celestials are drawn to the adventuring lifestyle. Quite a few seek the glory that comes from being a champion against "evil."

**Half-Celestial Racial Traits**

- **Powerful Will:** Half-Celestials begin with a D6 starting Spirit.
- **Attractive:** Half-Celestials start with the Attractive Edge for free.
- **The Gods must be Crazy:** The player character must start with a Major Hindrance. Recommended include Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Code of Honor, Delusional, Heroic, Insane, Overconfident, Pacifist (Major), Phobia (Major), Vengeful (Major), Vow (Major), and Zealot. They receive no points for these and can choose additional Hindrances.
- **Natural Leaders:** Half-Celestials receive one free Leadership edge.
- **Sense of the Divine:** Half-Celestials may make a Notice check to detect the presence of Netherdeep or Far Chaos creatures.
- **The Burn of the Unholy:** Daemon steel and Unholy Weapons inflict 1 extra point of damage on Half-Celestials.

## Half-Jotuns

Half-Jotuns are the product of intermingling between Kinfolk and the Jotun people. While the majority of couplings occur on the edge of human civilization, many more Half-Jotuns are appearing in civilized areas as the gigantic peoples migrate south.

Half-Jotuns are feared in most places for their great strength. This reputation is not really deserved, but those who devote themselves to banditry or war craft are nearly unstoppable. In a continent ruled by war, those possessing tremendous physical power are able to forge their own destinies.

**Personality:** Half-Jotuns are reputed to possess a natural berserking rage that lies simmering under the surface of their large exteriors. While this is a gross exaggeration, the sight of a rampaging Half-Jotun is a truly terrifying thing to behold. Given most are raised in barbarian lands, it is not difficult to excite many to violence.

Curiously, most Half-Jotuns develop a surprisingly gentle nature to counteract their tempers. The relative fragility of humans often results in many of them learning to hold back their great strength. This friendliness often takes many individuals off guard as the reputation of the Half-Jotuns is almost universally fearsome. Because most Half-Jotuns grew up in clannish environments, friendship is highly valued by them.

**Physical Description:** Half-Jotuns are physically huge individuals with even slight members of the species being in the mid-range of six feet and the tallest members of the race being closer to nine feet in height. Their body types are naturally formidable and even those who spend their lives in scholarship tend to look like the kinds of people that could break a normal man in half.

Despite their impressive frames, Half-Jotuns maintain all the physical variety of humans and quite a few are soft-featured or elfin in looks. Others are just as terrifying as legends would attest and actively attempt to cultivate their fearsome reputation. In part because of their similarity to humans, many smaller ones actively attempt to pass themselves off as members of that race.

It is a common fashion for Half-Jotuns to take immense pride in their hair. Men cultivating long and elaborate

beards while women letting their hair grow exceptionally long. Braiding is an art that most take extreme offense at labeling childish. Half-Jotuns live to upwards of a hundred and twenty years.

**Relations:** Half-Jotuns get along well with Half-Celestials and Humans, though they often resent being regulated to muscle. Half-Jotuns are often known to co-operate with Lilin due to their natural shared heritage as outcasts.

Bathas, on the other hand, draw the ire of many Half-Jotuns. Too many of their kindred have been enslaved for them to ever fully trust them. Half-Jotuns and Slythin do not get along any better than humans and Slythin. Half-Jotuns and Valken suffer numerous problems as the former's temperamental nature contrasts with the latter's forward thinking nature.

**Lands:** Half-Jotuns tend to mostly dwell in either Northern Human lands, particularly Winterweir, or in the territory of the Jotuns in the Barrier Wastes. They are not really accepted in either community but have the opportunity to prove their value. In barbarian tribes, their strength often allows them to become war leaders.

Disturbingly, one of the largest concentrations of Half-Jotuns in the world is in the Bathas land of Belkor. There, tens of thousands of Half-Jotuns are kept as slaves.

**Religion:** Half-Jotuns tend to worship The Great Twelve. They are particularly reverent towards Paalok, Tyros, and Vulthoo. A small number of Half-Jotuns have embraced the worship of Malaxas, believing the Crimson King will give them the power to dominate those weaker than themselves.

**Language:** Half-Jotuns speak the language of their homeland. Many Half-Jotuns have adopted Weir-talk as their private language, even when they live far from the nation of Winterweir.

**Names:** (Male): Baldros, Balyn, Fray, Lothar, Othar, Sigryn, Thorus, Turan

(Female) Aeryth, Elsabeth, Grita, Brunhyn, Fraya, Lutheya, Olya, Simya

**Adventurers:** Half-Jotuns are often drawn into the adventuring trade due to the amount of wealth that can be made from warfare. Distrusted in so many communities and courted by those who wish to make use of their strength, Half-Jotuns are rarely able to resist the allure of easy coin through battle. The camaraderie of an adventuring company is something that many Half-Jotuns romanticize.

**Half-Jotuns Racial Traits**

- **Powerful:** Half-Jotuns start with a D6 Strength attribute.
- **Thick Bodied:** Half-Jotuns gain the Brawny Edge for free.
- **Giant Material:** Half-Jotuns may wear Jotun armor and wield Jotun weapons without penalty. Taking the Big Sword Wielder merit adds a +2 to their score with it.
- **Easy Targets:** All attacks made against Jotuns are at a +1 due to their size.
- **Size +1:** Half-Jotuns add a +1 to their Toughness score.

## Humans

Humans are the dominant species on Teth-Ammon. Having inherited control of the planet by default rather than through superior strength, their position is rather tenuous. They are also a fractious race with almost the entirety of the continent's human-lead governments in a constant state of low-level war.

Humans are unlikely to disappear from Teth-Ammon any time soon but their current existence is a divided people, apeople that fights over the scraps of greater realms. It will require a great leader to prevent them from sliding further into decline and irrelevance.

**Personality:** Humans tend to allow their culture to imprint them with values. The humans of Alacarn are especially infamous for their focus on glory, physical desire, and social position. The chaos that assails the people of the continent keeps many focused on simple survival but others throw themselves into adventure in order to gain material rewards. Humanity's relatively short lifespan

also contributes to their holding life in considerably less esteem than other, longed lived, races.

**Physical Description:** Humans in Teth-Ammon are the most varied species in physical appearance. Most members of the species take it for granted that they come in a tremendous variety of body frames, eye shapes, hair shades, and skin colors.

Humans in Teth-Ammon are almost universally healthy and tend to avoid many of the problems of senility or paralysis that characterize their race on other worlds. They can expect to live upwards to a hundred and twenty years if they take exceptionally good care of themselves.

Social class determines what sort of clothing that humans wear. Most human beings wear plain linens if they cannot afford more elaborate attire.

**Relations:** Humans do not have a particularly good reputation amongst the varying races of Alacarn. Jealousy over their predominance motivates many non-humans to disdain. Others simply note that humans a thuggish race that breeds like rabbits.

Half-Celestials tend to be revered by humans, envied for their great beauty and leadership skills. They get along well enough with Half-Jotuns, though an underlying fear mars their relationship. They also do not have much of a problem with Bathas or Valken. Lilin, on the other hand, are treated with a mixture of desire and disgust. Slythin are treated with a mixture of loathing and assumed inferiority.

**Lands:** Humans, officially, dominate the whole of the three continents. In truth, they actually make up only about half of Alacarn's population but the majority of its nonhuman population is divided and dwelling in smaller realms. The human lust for riches has served them well and there is little difficulty finding any place that will not accept human coinage.

**Religion:** For the most part, Humans in Alacarn worship the Twelve Great Gods while those in Saiya worship the Supreme Throne. Humans are amongst the most religious diverse people in Alacarn and have few objections to polytheism in practice. Oftentimes, Humans will worship gods outside of the Great Twelve if any catch their fancy.

**Language:** Humans speak a wide variety of languages, dependent on what culture they were raised in. The majority of Alacarn's urban residents are bilingual to some degree and can speak Alacarnish in addition to their own native land's tongue.

**Names:** (Male): Arander, Davios, Erasmus, Hiro, Jaymes, Johyn, Stephan, Terrak

(Female): Alacarn, Cerci, Kalinka, Haylyn, Isis, Margaery, Sakuya, Selyn

**Adventurers:** Humans are defined by their social status in Alacarn and many rail against their current position or seek to improve it. Adventuring is one of the surest ways of winning glory and wealth to move up the social ladder.

Many humans also have an unending thirst for adventure and violence that cannot be easily sated. These individuals find the way of the warrior to be one of the best ways to satisfying it. Others are motivated by a sense of idealism or romance.

**Human Racial Traits**

- **Attribute Bonus:** Humans in Winterweir start with a D6 in the Attribute of their choice.
- **Free Edge:** Humans get an Extra Edge to choose from.

## Lilin

Lilin are the distant descendents of the Obsidian Empress Tiamate. Once the rulers of all Alacarn, they have been demonized and vilified throughout the ensuing millennium. While time has managed to dull their diabolic reputations, they are still considered an untrustworthy people.

The Lilin respond to this prejudice by looking after themselves. Only a few Lilin call other members of other races friend and that loyalty is undying. Others have responded to the hatred shown them by living up to their ghastly reputations. Horrible crimes and unholy perversions of the natural order have been committed by Lilin in pursuit of greater power.

**Personality:** Lilin are known for their cunning, seductive personalities, and sly natures. This is self-fulfilling prejudice for it encourages Lilin to give into their darker natures when approached by the wealthy to do their evil bidding. Aware of the fear that most people regard them, the Lilin take a perverse pride in their ill reputations. They tend to travel in low company and have little objection to robbing from those outside of their race.

Lilin do have their own sense of integrity that they cling to very strongly. Attacking someone marked as a friend by a Lilin is enough to make one an enemy of that Lilin for life. They show a strong racial loyalty with an expected truce between all Lilin except those who meet on the fields of battle. Most Lilin will not let their kinship with one another get in the way of profit.

**Physical Description:** Lilin are mostly human in appearance but there is always something about them that is off. This is most often manifested in traditionally demonic aspects like claws, cloven hooves, horns, leathery wings, and red eyes. Few Lilin manifest more than one or two of these qualities but some are positively beastly in countenance.

Lilin are distrusted almost everywhere they go. This has resulted in many becoming shifty and paranoid, which does not help with their perceived attitude. Others actively embrace their reputation as creatures of wickedness and dress themselves up in dark or tempting attire to play up their role as 'Devil Spawn.'

Curiously, Lilin are an extremely attractive people and humans find themselves drawn to them in the same manner as they do to Half-Celestials. The descendents of Tiamate see no reason not to exploit this charisma.

Lilin live upwards of two hundred years with some being truly immortal.

**Relations:** The Lilin are feared and distrusted by all other races. The scars of Tiamate's rule have not faded despite the fact she's been bones and dust for millennium. More recently, many others remember the Lilin's favored place as the servants of Malaxas. The Lilin take this dislike with reasonable good cheer and use it as a justification to carry out whatever crimes are necessary to enrich themselves.

Few consider any Non-Lilin to be people. Only a few members of their race make the effort to befriend those outside the Lilin. Bizarrely, the most antipathy exists with Half-Celestials whom Lilin seem to resent as embodying the hypocrisy of the racism shown against them. Valken are the exception to this rule and tend to treat Lilin like they do any other race.

**Lands:** The Lilin are scattered throughout all of Alacarn with no particular high concentrations of them. The Lilin tend to gather in nomadic clans or isolated communities that exist within larger cities. Lilin are a clannish bunch that often are able to name their heritage back at least five generations. The greatest source of Lilin in Teth-Ammon, however, is Martok where they form the bulk of the population.

Few nations are controlled by Lilin and those that are, in fact, are dominated by from behind the scenes. The source of most power that Lilin wield is through the Immaculate Doom.

**Religion:** Lilin tend to have a love/hate relationship with the gods. Many genuinely believe that the gods have forsaken them and while they believe in them, consider them to be hostile. Others believe that the gods consider them no different than any other mortal. Popular members of the Twelve Great Gods include Kaalon, Veethor, and Wynessa. A disproportionate amount of Lilin find themselves in the service of the Immaculate Doom.

**Language:** The Lilin are almost all fluent in the tongue of Martok. It is considered to be a racial language as well as one that is the primary tongue of said nation. Most other Lilin learn the tongue of Alacarnish next and then the language of the kingdom they are currently staying in. Thus, the average Lilin knows at least three languages.

**Names:** (Male) Azkabel, Baal, Belial, Lucien, Malaxas, Morgol, Samael

(Female) Espa, Fernia, Inya, Lilitu, Louhi, Malyce, Mordra, Telas

**Adventurers:** Lilin tend to fall into the adventuring lifestyle rather than actively pursue it. Many Lilin are already involved in crime, intrigue, and subversive activity. It is only a small step to pursuing something slightly more grandiose. Other Lilin believe they can perhaps redeem their species name by doing good works. Whatever the case, other Lilin often look askance at those who choose to become adventurers for altruistic reasons.

**Lilin Racial Traits**

- **Nimble:** Lilin start with D6 in Agility.
- **Code of Hospitality:** All Lilin are expected to welcome each other and pay at least mild courtesy to those who have proven to be friends of the Lilin. This includes not informing on each other to the authorities and offering up to three days of respite if supplies allow it. The reverse is expected in return.
- **Devilish Beauty:** All Lilin gain the *Attractive* Edge for free.
- **Outsider:** All Lilin have the *Outsider* Hindrance.
- **Sense of the Infernal:** Lilin may make Notice checks to detect the presence of Celestials, Holy Items, or the handiwork of the divine.
- **The Burn of the Righteous:** Crysteel and Holy weapons inflict an extra point of damage on Lilin.

## Slythin

Slythin are the result of the Dragons' last ditch efforts to save their race by infusing humans with their own genetic material. The resulting race's need for meat and sun has kept it restricted from immigrating far above the Southlands. Their cannibalistic urges have also given them a ghastly reputation in some circles.

One of the most rapidly growing Far Folk races, the Slythin disdain the complicated lives that humans lead. They live for family, hunger, pleasure, and survival. Nothing else matters to the cold blooded race. The Slythin are a patient people and foresee a day when it is they, not man, that holds dominion over Teth-Ammon.

**Personality:** Slythin have a reputation for blood thirst and callousness unrivaled in *Winterweir*. While Slythin are no more violent than humans or Half-Jotuns, they make no attempts to romanticize it. Slythin operate on a system where the strongest individuals always receive the greatest portions of wealth. Even Slythin mating is colored by this as one dominant partner tends to take many weaker consorts.

Exposure to human culture has softened this attitude somewhat, or at least allowed them to appreciate other races do not operate by survival of the fittest. Still, Slythin have very few objections to operating in many professions that humans think of as criminal or mercenary.

In general, Slythin also have decidedly simpler (some might say cruder) tastes than other races. Slythin enjoy vast quantities of drink, food, mating, and other 'low' entertainments. Slythin are most comfortable in a tribal context and once they have established that their companions are strong enough to work with then they are surprising loyal.

**Physical Description:** Slythin are draconic looking humanoids with scales that range in appearance from green to brownish shades. Their faces are crocodile-like with long mouths that stretch out for six inches or more. They also have long three foot long tails stretching out from backsides.

The two sexes are virtually indistinguishable from one another to the outside observer. Being non-mammalian, female Slythin lack many of the distinguishing characteristics that people associates with women. Slythin are easily able to tell the difference but they are alone in this quality amongst Alacarn's races.

Slythin rarely wear clothes beyond a loin cloth and maybe a small shirt. Given their thick scales, they do not need the kind of attire that humans require. In colder climates or preparing for battle, they dress appropriately.

**Relations:** The Slythin tend to hire themselves out for hard labor and muscle for other races. There are very few jobs that Slythin are not willing to perform in the pursuit of gold and meat. Humans do not tend to like Slythin but they accept them as a necessary part of their kingdom's society. Half-Celestials and Slythin tend to get along as the former often easily establish themselves at the top of a pack.

Bathas, on the other hand, frequently come to blows with a race they view as the antithesis of civilization. Half-Jotuns tend to share a rivalry with the Slythin, often competing for mercenary positions. Lilin tend to dislike the Slythin for the fact they are immune to their charms and are uninterested in the subterfuge that they thrive on. Slythin and Valken also share a general antipathy.

**Lands:** While Slythin are hardy enough to dwell in the frozen wastelands of the Barrier Wastes if they absolutely have to, they much prefer the warmer climates of Teth-Ammon. They are especially fond of hot and humid wetlands. Because of this, the largest Slythin communities are located in Amania. They form the majority of Keldor's population.

The average Slythin hopes to forge a better life for itself and its descendants. Thus, they can be found in most non-frozen lands, doing whatever they can to survive in a hostile world.

**Religion:** The Slythin were long ago converted by the sword to the faith of the Twelve Great Gods. While the Free Republic of Amania officially disdains the gods, the Slythin have not abandoned their new deities. Most Slythin worship reptilian versions of Heton and Demae. Paalok also plays an important role in their mythology.

A small few worship Obaq the Forrester and Veethor. Those Slythin who join the Amanian military, pledge allegiance to the Church of Liberty. Their actual belief in it is subject to some skepticism.

**Language:** The Slythin racial tongue is Slytan and most of them speak a variant of it. Those Slythin who choose to dwell outside of their homeland often learn Alacarnish but few learn more than two languages. Humans have often been frustrated by their inability to communicate with the Slythin they encounter in rural areas.

**Names:** (Both Sexes): Bidoop, Hissar, Kresshar, Malash, Thool, Sylar, Salass, Yullthoo

**Adventurers:** Slythin are a renowned race of warriors and almost all of them are taught some form of combat or self-defense. These skills make them useful to those who wish to have a source of soldiers in a short amount of time. While most Slythin prefer to operate as part of a larger group of their race, certain members find that they receive a substantially better pay if they operate alone or in a mixed race group. This motivates some Slythin to market themselves as lone warriors or magicians than mercenaries.

Heroic Slythin are actually very common. While most of them fight for the Slythin race rather than all beings, it is not that difficult to motivate them to protect the group. Heroic Slythin know that their efforts will move them up the very fluid pecking order of their race and increase their chance for mating.

**Slythin Racial Traits**

- **Hardy:** Slythin start with a D6 in Vigor.
- **Carnivorous:** Slythin are unable to gain nourishment from vegetable matter.
- **Cold Blooded:** Slythin suffer a -1 penalty in extremely cold climates.
- **Keen Sense of Smell:** Slythin are naturally blessed with d6 *Notice* and *Tracking* skills at the start for free.
- **Thermal Vision:** Slythin have the monstrous ability, *Infravision*.

## Valken

Valken are the results of the Dragons attempting to cross the best traits of animals with human beings. Making minor cosmetic adjustments to fit their aesthetic sense, the Valken are a beautiful and majestic people that strike many people as the living incarnation of fairy stories. Unfortunately, fairy stories are quite dark in Alacarn and the Valken are figures of fright as much as awe.

A long-lived race, the Valken are divided amongst those who crave the intellectual stimulation of civilization and those who desire to become one with the natural world. Thus, Valken can be found in decaying libraries surrounded by past glories or in savage tribes where they slaughter any who might disturb their isolated primitive existence.

**Personality:** Valken are commonly known for their long-term world view. Their near-immortality has given them a understanding of the ways of creation. Thus, many people associate the Valken with wisdom. Rather than deal with problems in a way that puts them off for another day, Valken tend to pursue lasting solutions.

This routinely has put them at odds with the much more chaotic human race. It has also left many humans believing that Valken are emotionally cold and capable of gross overreaction. In fact, they follow their own logic for maximizing the greatest amount of good for themselves and their species.

Valken are also known for their deep connection to nature. With the exception of those Valken associated with urban animals (cats, dogs, rats, etc), most of the race far prefers the wildness than they do civilization. Almost all of them are trained in surviving in the outdoors and prefer to live in communion with their surroundings rather than against them. Necessity has forced many to adopt elements of human civilization, like modern weaponry, out of sheer survival.

The Valken Tribes tend to assume the traits of their totem animal. For example, the Rabbit Tribe might be gentle and loving but rather cowardly.

**Physical Description:** Valken appear to be hybrids of humans and beasts. Most of the time, this manifests as just a few qualities like a tail or unusual ears. Some Valken are almost totally inhuman with a bull's head and fur for example. The sheer variety of features amongst them is only limited by the fact they are divided into tribes that share the same animal totem.

While the most human looking Valken tend to dress in the clothing of civilized mankind, most of the race wears clothing more appropriate to savage tribes. Valken are fond of tattoos and ritual scarification with many also enjoying twisting their body hair into dreadlocks. Valken mystics tend to wear animal skins in order to commune with their spirits.

Valken tend to live about four to six hundred years. This longevity is one of the reasons why they have become so influencial, despite their small numbers.

**Relations:** The Valken's relationship with humans is a complex one. In some places they are discriminated against while others, like Turlon, have humans in a decidedly inferior position. Thus, the two races live in a somewhat uneasy co-existence. Bathas, Half-Celestials, and Half-Jotuns are somewhat the same way. Curiously, Lilin and Valken get along far better than most races.

Valken seem to genuinely dislike Slythin for reasons that neither race can adequately explain. A few scholars have, jokingly, explained that Slythin tend to look at Valken as food.

**Lands:** The Valken prefer to dwell in their own realms within the Great Kingdoms. Valken almost invariably appoint their own kings, queens, chiefs, and chieftains instead of ascending to human rule. The Turlon Empire is controlled by an ancient inbred Valken line that also welcomes their kind. Despite the fact that Turlon is controlled by the Valken, Winterweir is actually where most of them dwell.

**Religion:** The Valken almost uniformly are believers in a shamanist world view. All things have a spirit and the Valken revere them. The Twelve Great Gods are simply accepted as one of the many myriad spirits that exist in the world. Most Valken have a reverence for Obaq the Forrester, who might have originally been one of their gods. Others believe in Demae, Kaalon, Paalok, or Sybus. Each individual tribe has their own particular favored gods and they take their Totem reverence very seriously. This is due to a mystical connection that the Valken believe is to their gods.

**Language:** The majority of Valken hail from Winterweir and Weir talk is a mixture of their own native language with Alacarn's other tongues. Thus, most Valken have come to speak the resulting language as their own. Valken from other lands speak their native tongue.

**Names:** (Male): Kanatas, Ulik, Veenick, Xalen, Yuri, Yango, Zev, Zull

(Female): Kanya, Nomi, Veela, Xola, Yelena, Yithala, Zanya, Zule

**Adventurers:** The Valken tend not to produce as many adventurers as other races. The clannish race prefers to be isolated from the rest of the world and avoid troubles by not involving themselves. Those Valken who become adventurers are often its more curious members or those driven by needs outside those of a typical member of the race.

Turlon Valken are the exception to this rule as the ruthless politics of the Empire almost require individuals to prove themselves worthy of power.

**Valken Racial Traits**

- **Animal Attribute:** The Valken receives a D6 in a Attribute related to his Animal type (Agility for rabbits, Strength for Bulls, etc).
- **Beast Bond:** The Valken automatically receives Beast Bond with his animal type.
- **With age comes experience:** The Valken receive a free D6 skill to reflect their greater experience in life.
- **Totem Bond:** Valken are linked to their tribes' totem and must observe some rituals to placate their spirits. If they ever fail to live up to these minor obligations, then they will suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls until they make amends. A typical obligation would be to keep a well cared for an animal of their Totem's type. Another might be to give weekly offerings of food or liquor to idols of their spirit. Predatory totems may require a minor blood sacrifice like a mouse or a sheep every month. It all depends on the totem type.

## Powers in Winterweir

The following Arcane Backgrounds are allowable in *Winterweir.* Each description lists the powers available to characters with that background. Other powers are only available with the GM's permission. Some suggestions are also made for magical trappings to the Arcane Backgrounds. It should be noted that Power Points are renamed in Winterweir as *Ether Points*.

The rules for using magic are modified in the Winterweir setting. Both player characters and Game masters should familiarize themselves with the new rules in Chapter 5: Magic. Game Masters may also allow player characters to choose from other spells than the ones listed here at their discretion.

**Arcane Background (Magic):** "High Magic" is magic that uses abacus, books, charts, and a secret language called Sharoth. It is primarily practiced by magicians of the Grand Arcanum, Priests of Heton, and wizards of the Crimson Oath. The character begins with 10 Ether Points and can choose three of the following powers: *Barrier* (A conjured wall of flames, thorns, or similar material), *Bolt* (A stream of acid or magical energy), *Deflection* (A magical force field), *Detect/Conceal Arcana* (A brief glow surrounds the objects), *Dispel* (A clap of thunder is heard when the spell is dissolved, Seasoned+), *Light* (A glowing ball of light appears that floats before the player character), *Obscure* (Shadows cover the player character), *Stun* (A beam of blue-white energy surges forth from the player character's hands).

**Arcane Background (Miracles):** Characters with this Edge are usually priests in one of the various religious orders of Winterweir but not always. Their magic still hails from the same source as all magic, the Aether, but it is channeled a user's tremendous faith rather than spell-casting. The character begins play with 10 Ether Points and can choose two of the following powers: *Armor* (Divine Armor), *Boost/Lower Trait* (Blessing), *Bolt* (Blast of Holy Light), *Deflection* (Halo of Holy Light around the body), *Detect/Conceal Arcana* (Holy Writing), *Heal* (Lay on Hands), *Light* (Glowing Holy Symbol in the air), *Smite* (Conjured Sacred Weapon).

**Arcane Background (Psionics):** Psionics are referred to as "True Sorcery" in *Winterweir*. It's practitioners devote themselves to meditation and practice rather than any arcane charts. The appearance of True Sorcerers is always a cause for great concern or great joy, depending on the circumstances of their homelands. The character begins play with 10 Ether Points and can choose three of the following powers: *Boost/Lower trait* (User Only), *Deflection* (Telekinetic Shield), *Detect/Conceal Arcana* (deep concentration), *Puppet* (Hypnotic stare), *Quickness* (User only), *Speed* (Time Distortion), *Telekinesis* (Deep Concentration)

**Arcane Background (Super Powers):** Strange as it may seem, super powers exist in the *Winterweir* setting. Called "Mutations" by the populous, Mutants are the result of children being affected by leftover magic or being subject to unnatural rites. Mutants face a severe social stigma and any obvious ones suffer the Outsider Hindrance. All people with the Arcane Background (Super Powers) automatically receive the Mutation Hindrance (Minor) if they do not already have it (in which case it becomes Major). Mutants are rarely incredibly powerful but many turn their abilities against the rest of the world when faced with social rejection. Player characters start with 20 Ether Points and one power from the following list: *Armor* (Retractable spiny shell), *Boost/Lower Attribute* (Sudden gain in ability), *Bolt* (Acid Spit or Fire Breath), *Flight* (Retractable Wings, Veteran+), *Smite* (Electrical charged body markings), *Quickness* (Cloven Hooves or Winged Feet, Seasoned+)

**Arcane Background (Weird Science):** Weird Science is called "Alchemy" on Winterweir. Alchemists study the Ether in order to build devices that would not normally be possible for the present level of technology in the setting. The items are strange hybrids of non-sensical theories with genuine science. It is the belief of the Alchemists that allows them to compensate for their device's failings. The character begins play with 10 Ether Points and can build one device from the following list of powers (and suggested trappings): *Armor* (Enchanted Alloys), *Boost/Lower Trait* (Potions), *Blast* (Black Powder Bombs, Seasoned+), *Bolt* (Lightning Wand), *Detect/Conceal Arcana* (Ether Goggles), *Light* (Specialized Lantern), *Smite* (electrified melee weapons)

## Heroic Factions

*Winterweir* is a setting with relatively few heroes. However, that doesn't mean that it doesn't have organizations that are trying to make the world a better place. It is a viable campaign option for player characters to be part of one of the many heroic factions that inhabit Teth-Ammon.

Here is a short list of Secret Societies that the player characters may want to be a part of. More information about them will be found in Chapter 9: Antagonists on pages 104 to 108.

**Academy of Illumination (The "Pretax"):** The Academy of Illumination is a continent spanning organization of explorers, sages, scholars, and teachers. The Pretax attempt to preserve the truth of history and knowledge. They sponsor many expeditions to seek out lost ruins and discover what sort of beings inhabited the realms. They also desperately work to preserve the increasingly lost libraries of Alacarn. The Academy of Illumination includes many Priests of Heton and use oaths by him to initiate new members. Despite this, they are a secular organization.

**Children of the Divine Spark:** The Children of the Divine Spark are an off-shoot of the Grand Arcanum that has devoted itself to improving Teth-Ammon's lot through science. In addition to alchemists, it includes many engineers, scholars, and adventurers. They believe it is their solemn duty to oppose evil priests amongst others that would promote superstition.

The Children of the Divine Spark are treated somewhat warily by the populous. The experiments are often known to push the boundaries of what is safe. Children of the Divine Spark often wield Alchemical devices in the course of their duties, even if they are not inventors. Several Children of the Divine Spark have fallen to become creators of horrible abominations.

Their motto is "To shine the light of Reason on a world of ignorance!"

**Death Whisperers:** Death Whisperers are an organization of assassins that answer directly to the Celestials. Most of its regular members do not know this. They believe they are 'merely' a cult of Kaalon that specializes in giving "The Merciful Death" to deserving individuals. The Merciful Death is usually given to individuals who 'harm themselves' by committing nightmarish acts and thus have warranted destruction 'for their own good.' Sometimes they also engage in kidnapping, monster slaying, spying, and theft. These are viewed as semi-honorable by the organization.

Most people are unaware that the Death Whisperers are anything other than a boogeyman. The majority of those who know of their existence think that they are just an especially elite order of assassins. In truth, the Death Whisperers only take money for appearances and dictate their own missions. Members are masters of disguise and often pass themselves as part of the clergy of Kaalon or as sell-swords. They only reveal their true allegiance to their closest friends or employers.

Death Whisperers are divided into numerous clans spread across the whole of Teth-Ammon. Whole villages can be dedicated to their studies and practices. Supposedly, these clans are all controlled from a mythical mountain called Phoenix's Rest. The clans are ostensibly allies but many are rivals and some have even gone to war over time. Rogue clans have also been known to appear over the centuries.

**Grand Arcanum:** The Grand Arcanum is the largest organization of wizards in Teth-Ammon. Uninterested in the private affairs of its members, the Grand Arcanum only exists to propagate magic and teach those with mystical potential how to use it. Individual "Lodges" however, exist within the Grand Arcanum. These organizations can be devoted to anything from self-indulgence to world domination. Others, actually, want to use their magical might to help the world as a whole.

## Heroic Factions

(Cont.)

Members of the Grand Arcanum are not necessarily more powerful than those wizards trained outside of the order but they are far more thoroughly educated. They also have access to great resources of magic (amongst other topics).

**Holy Orders of the Twelve:** The Holy Orders of the Twelve are the dozen (really eleven since the Church of Wynessa has no formalized clergy) faiths that worship the Great Twelve Gods of Alacarn. Being part of the Holy Orders means almost instant respect wherever you go. Few people want to anger the gods and there's no surer way than attacking their priests.

This doesn't mean that all individuals like clergy or even won't do them harm. Quite a few are quite good at rationalizing ways of getting around the prohibition against harming holy men. Still, even bandits will generally give pause at spilling the clergy's blood.

While most members of the Holy Orders do not adventure, a small selection of zealots believe it is their duty to go forth and spread their gods influence. Priests of Kaalon, Paalok, Tyros, Sybus, and Wynessa are particularly interested in the adventuring lifestyle. It allows them to serve their god through sacred war and enhance their god's reputation through great deeds.

**Knights of Winterweir:** The Knights of Winterweir are famous throughout all the Great Kingdoms. They are reputed to the most courageous, heroic, and honorable warriors in all of Teth-Ammon. Not all of its members live up to this high standard. Some merely maintain the appearance of it, but many make the attempt to deserve their lofty reputations. Even in lands where the Winterweir nation is despised, few will turn away the Knights in times of duress.

Shockingly, not all Knights of Winterweir actually hail from that nation itself. The Code of Tyros and skill of the order has lured many from all over Alacarn. After their initial period of study is over, they are free to return to their home nations and fight for Tyros' ideals there. This despite the fact that the main order is pledged to protect Winterweir's Royal Family. These Knights are called Knights of Tyros instead.

Being a Knight of Winterweir is a heavy burden but its members are one of the few lights in a grim world.

**Watchmen:** The Watchmen are a group of bards, herald, rangers, and travelers that have devoted themselves to preserving the fragile peace that exists in Alacarn. Usually, this is by supporting just and noble monarchs, but sometimes it involves assassinating or overthrowing corrupt regimes.

The Watchmen are an outlaw organization that many nobles hate. This is because of their tireless defense of the peasantry. Some Watchmen are nothing more than classicist bandits or revolutionaries more obsessed with their own theories than caring for the innocent. Surprisingly, most Watchmen are genuinely just people who want to make the world a better place.

Many nobles grudgingly tolerate the Watchmen, despite the radical nature of their views, due to their unparalleled skill at gathering information. Few would also believe that a noble would hire them to deal with problems that are politically sensitive yet it happens all the time.

**Heroic Factions**

(Cont.)

**Witches of the Fallen World:** The Witches of the Fallen World are a group of all-female seers that live in the northern forests of Winterweir. Devoted to the idea of influencing the future to bring about favorable outcomes for all mankind, the Witches of the Fallen World are considered to be untrustworthy seers who may lie by telling you the complete truth.

The Witches of the Fallen World's manipulative reputation hasn't stopped the entire fates of kingdoms being decided by their prophecies.

In addition to the actual witches themselves, the organization employs a number of permanent agents and mercenaries to aid them in their quests (while protecting them from retribution). A few witches use their foreknowledge for selfish gain but these are shunned and drummed out when discovered.

## New Hindrances

All of the standard Savage Worlds' Hindrances are appropriate for a *Winterweir* game, and function normally with the following exceptions:

- **Bloodthirsty** characters receive a -5 to their Honor/Integrity score.
- **Doubting Thomas** is an inappropriate Edge for a world where magic is a common and easily accepted part of reality.
- **Illiterate** is the default assumption for any characters that do not take a written language amongst the languages they receive at character creation. Thus, this Hindrance does not exist in *Winterweir*.
- **Poor** and **Young** result in a loss of -5 points from the player character's Honor/Integrity score.
- **Outsider** results in a loss of -5 points from the player character's Honor/Integrity score.

**Dark Knowledge (Minor, Major)**

There are many things that Man Was Not Meant to Know in the *Winterweir* setting. Some of these things are mortal secrets like the King has been replaced by a doppelganger. Others are the horrifying things beyond time are the only true gods (whether true or not). Some are keeping personal secrets like they butchered an orphanage before finding religion. Depending the results for the secret coming out, the Hindrance may be Minor or Major.

**Dishonorable (Minor)**

The character has a reputation as an oath breaker and a man who cannot be trusted. They may have been accused of committed some major public sin in the past or they built up the reputation slowly. This kind of reputation is enough to cause a -2 Charisma penalty when dealing with most individuals until they come to trust the individual. When dealing with people who have the Code of Honor Hindrance, this penalty raises to -4 and makes interaction almost impossible.

**Eunuch (Minor)**

Due to an old war injury or being a part of the Divine Order's religion (only priests are required to take this step but many laymen choose to undergo it), the player character no longer has functioning sex organs. They unable to enjoy sex or reproduce through natural means. Eunuchs suffer a mild social stigma but it is not one that comes up unless the player characters make it a point to reveal their affliction.

**Homicidal Fury (Major)**

Due to some fundamental flaw in your nature, when you get angry, you lash out violently against those around you. This is especially bad for individuals with the Bloodthirsty Hindrance. In that case, someone who interrupts you or gets in your way, even potentially friends or allies, can get cut down because you're so immersed in the killing.

To avoid striking targets of one's anger with lethal force, one must make a Spirit check (Modified by intensity of emotion and personal relationship). A person with Homicidal Fury may make an additional spirit check each subsequent round to stop attacking.

**Insane (Major)**

You suffer from a serious psychological ailment. This might be Acute Paranoia, Disassociative Identity Disorder, Psychopathic Breaks from Reality, or Schizophrenia. This Hindrance may be taken with the Delusions Hindrance. This Hindrance may be 'bought off' in time with treatment or magic. Game Masters should be careful of allowing players with this Hindrance for the possible damage it could do to party dynamics.

Insane characters suffer a -2 penalty to their Psyche scores. Already shattered minds are easier to crack even further.

**Melancholy (Minor)**

For whatever reason, your character suffers a near-permanent state of gloom and wistfulness. He is not crippled by this sadness but is a decided kill joy. Social roles where a happy or upbeat attitude is required are at a -2 penalty. Suicidally depressed characters instead suffer from the Death Wish Hindrance.

**Mutation (Minor, Major)**

Mutation is a common result of magic being used too much in an area or as a result of a Netherdeep creature's prolonged presence. Severe social stigma occurs from being a Mutant and many people react as if they can 'catch' their deformity. As a Minor Hindrance, the player character's mutation is a minor one. They have an extra eye or digit that can easily be hidden with appropriate steps. As a Major Hindrance, the Mutation is utterly impossible to hide and people will always recognize the player character as a Mutant.

Recognized Mutants are treated as having the **Outsider** Hindrance. All characters with the Arcane Background (Super Powers) have this flaw, but it can be taken without it. Those with the Arcane Background (Super Powers) Edge can only gain half the benefit from taking Mutation (Major).

**Nightmares (Minor)**

The character suffers from horrible nightmares every night. This results in an almost permanent state of mild sleep deprivation and irritability. For an hour after awakening, all rolls are at a -1 penalty. Worse; the character suffers a -1 penalty to his Psyche score as his dreams torment him.

**Power Mad (Minor, Major)**

Those who do not crave power are unlikely to make any mark on Teth-Ammon. Rampant social injustice and the hypocrisy of Winterweir's leaders means that few people have any real objections to accumulating greater authority for themselves. Those with this Hindrance are driven by the need for it.

As a Minor Hindrance, they will jump on any chance to increase their personal strength or authority so long as it doesn't conflict with their ethics. As a Major Hindrance, they are outright megalomaniacs that can only be dissuaded from the strongest personal ties to avoid accepting any temptation for greater influence (or some flaw in the offer that might weaken them in the long run).

**Tormented (Minor)**

Tormented characters suffer from some agony that afflicts them at all times. This can psychological or physiological. Whether because of crushing guilt, a curse, or an wound can never fully heal, they are in a never-ending state of dull agony. Because they've learned to cope with it, it merely affects their attitude.

People pick up on the character's mood and it inflicts a -2 penalty to all Social Tests. Player characters are encouraged to role-play out the torment that afflicts them in a dramatic manner (coughing in-between words, grunting, or melodramatic speeches regarding the pain).

**Xenophobe (Minor, Major)**

Some people just don't like non-humans (or Non-Bathas or Non-Valken). This is hardly an uncommon attitude for regular people in Alacarn but few let it stand in the way of business. A minor version of this Hindrance means you have difficulty getting along with them and probably make frequent cracks about them (-2 Social Test penalty).

A Major version of this means that you are honestly ready to believe the worst about them in any given situation and are almost incapable of working with them unless in the most dire circumstances. Game Masters should restrict this Hindrance as necessary.

**Zealot (Minor, Major)**

Causes like service to one's nation or religion are powerful allures in the otherwise meaningless world of Teth-Ammon. These characters live and breath their devotion. As a Minor Hindrance, their worldviews are colored by their attitudes and they will react extremely negatively towards any slight towards their cause. They will actively pursue things that benefit their cause whenever possible. As a Major Hindrance, they're card carrying fanatics, *everything* in their lives is sorted by relationship to their cause. Attempts to dissuade them of this view will only anger them.

## New Edges

All the standard Savage Worlds Edges are available in a *Winterweir* campaign except for Arcane Background (super powers). However, the following Edges have different requirements from the standard Savage Worlds versions or operate differently in the *Winterweir* world.

- **Champion:** In the *Winterweir* world, this Edge does not require an Arcane Background or the Faith skill.
- **Holy/Unholy Knights** must belong to one of the organized factions of warriors on *Winterweir*.
- **Noble** characters receive a +5 to their Honor/Integrity scores.
- **Rich** and **Filthy Rich** result in a +5 to the player characters Honor/Integrity score.

### Background Edges

**Holdings**

Requirements: Novice, Noble

The player character has control over a feudal territory of some kind. This is usually a barony or small city. Presumably, either the player characters operate from the territory or have very understanding subjects if they leave it for long periods of time to go adventuring.

The player characters have the right to pardon criminals and dispense justice on the subjects as they see fit.

**Laboratory**

Requirements: Novice

The player character has a fully equipped Alchemical Laboratory that allows them to conduct experiments with a much greater ease than a scientist without it. Repair Rolls are at a +2 within the confines of the Alchemical Laboratory and can re-roll one failure here.

**Mentor**

Requirements: Novice

The player character has a mentor figure that teaches them magic or other skills for free. The Mentor character is also one that is willing to go out on a limb for the player character to a certain extent; serving as a source of advice and aid to the extent that he's able to give it. At the Novice level, a Mentor is a Veteran character and he is one level above the player character if the rank is taken later.

If the player characters ever exceed their mentor in rank, the Game Master may have the Mentor figure become a Sidekick.

**Occult Library**

Requirements: Novice

The player character has an extensive number of volumes related to spell-casting and the macabre. This includes at least one copy of the *Sanguine Codex*. Player characters gain a +2 bonus to all Knowledge (Arcane) rolls conducted in their Occult Library and can re-roll one failure here.

### Combat Edges

**Big Sword Wielder**

Requirements: Strength D8+

The player character is capable of wielding deftly a ridiculously large blade in combat. The player character does not suffer the usual penalties for wielding a Giant Sword (see Chapter2: Possessions, Page 32) in battle. Furthermore, he is capable of wielding a Great Sword one handed in combat.

**Cleave**

Requirements: Novice, Strength D6+

The player character is especially good at using his natural strength to break through the armor of individuals that are opposing him. Taking this Edge allows the character to ignore 1 point of Armor when attacking an armored opponent. It also inflicts an extra point of damage against unarmored foes.

**Mighty Cleave**

Requirements: Seasoned+, Strength d8+

The player character is capable of using his extraordinary strength to do even greater damage against armored enemies. The character can ignore two points of armor when making attacks. Unarmored opponents take an additional 2 points of damage when struck.

**Fast Shot**

Requirements: Veteran, Master Archer, Shooting D8+

The archer is skilled in rapidly reloading and firing accurately in such a way that he is capable of firing at two targets near-simultaneously. The archer can fire two arrows per round with a penalty of -2. Because of the difficulty of this, the targets must be within short range. If successful, both arrows will hit for normal damage.

This Edge only works with bows, not other ranged weapons.

**Improved Fast Shot**

Requirements: Double Shot, Heroic, Shooting D10+

The archer now suffers no penalty in making this shot.

**Inhuman Aim**

Requirements: Novice, Shooting or Throwing D8+

The player characters have a particularly talented eye for throwing things accurately. They may fire into melee without a chance of hitting their comrades. They also recieve a +1 to all attacks against opponents with Cover.

**Natural Berserker**

Requirements: Novice, Berserk

The player character is capable of entering his blood rage at will, not requiring a wound in combat before he goes into his mad fighting frenzy. In addition, his bonus in this state is raised to a +3 to Fighting, Strength, and Toughness rolls. Unfortunately, a Natural Berserker is even harder to calm down and must make a -3 Smarts check to calm down or do nothing for a full action.

**Thunder Wand Adept**

Requirements: Novice, Shooting D6+

A hero with this Edge is capable of reloading faster than normal. He can fire a black powder weapon every other round rather than every third round.

**Improved Thunder Wand Adept**

Requirements: Novice, Shooting D8+

The mechanical clockwork precision of the character in reloading is so fast that there's little difference between his use of a firearm and another weapon. A character with this Edge is capable of firing three times every four rounds.

**Wall of Fury**

Requirements: Natural Berserker, Notice D8+

A fighter with this Edge is a creature of unchecked primordial rage and passion. He is capable of slaughtering almost everything that gets near him by reacting on pure instinct. Unlike other Berserkers, he is capable of fighting defensively in this state (specifically through the principle of killing anything that comes at him).

Attackers gain no Gang Up bonus against a character with this Edge.

## Professional Edges

**Assassin**

Requirements: Seasoned+, Fighting D8+, Throwing D8+ Stealth D8+

While anyone can kill for money, True Assassins are trained in the arts of stealth and murder to a great degree. Most of them are also given knowledge about how to fight just as well as sneak about to deliver poison or fatal strikes. A player character with this Edge is so talented at their use of Stealth and Fighting that should they ever fail an attempt to get the drop on a opponent, they can reroll the result.

**Bard**

Requirements: Novice, Knowledge (Music) D8+, Persuasion D8+

Bards are intensely charismatic individuals that travel around Alacarn, playing for their keep and sharing news from other lands. Some Bards become extraordinarily famous and give concerts or found colleges that thousands flock to. Others are little more than glib conmen and seducers. Bards receive a +2 to all Knowledge (Music) and Persuasion checks related to performance and receive a +2 Charisma bonus to dealing with audiences they have successfully performed for. The rules for Performance are on page 39.

**Holy Man**

Requirements: Novice, Spirit D8+

Holy Men in Alacarn are the professional priests and spiritual leaders of the people. Holy Men receive a +2 Charisma bonus to all followers of their deity (Priests of the Great Twelve receive this bonus to the followers of all Twelve Gods, no matter which one is their personal deity).

**Master Archer**

Requirements: Seasoned+, Agility D6, Inhuman Aim

Master Archers are the tremendously skilled warriors of Winterweir who specialize in the use of the bow. They receive a +1 bonus to all attacks with bows of all sorts and they may draw their bow and fire it in the same action.

**Sharpshooter**

Requirements: Veteran, Improved Thunder Wand Adept, Shooting D10+

Sharpshooters are masters at using the relatively new invention of black powder weaponry. The weapons are cumbersome and take a lengthy time to reload but pack a considerable punch. Sharpshooters are highly sought after by the armies of the world, especially when they use magical ammunition. Sharpshooters can draw their firearms as a free action and inflict an extra dice of damage due to their deadly accuracy.

**Ranger**

Requirements: Novice, Survival D8+, Tracking D8+

The Ranger is a character well-acquainted with the wilderness and large stretches of rural civilization that are quite numerous in Alacarn. They provide their own brand of law and order across territories that cannot handle it. Most worship Obaq the Forester while others serve Tyros and some venerate both. Rangers receive a +2 to all Common Knowledge checks regarding territories they frequent and wilderness lore. They also receive an equal bonus of +2 to all Tracking and Survival rolls.

## Social Edges

**Good Reputation**

Requirements: Novice

The player character has managed to establish, whether through fair means or foul, a reputation as an honorable and decent individual. Possessors of this Edge start with a +5 bonus to their Honor/Integrity score.

**Fearsome**

Requirements: Novice

The player character has worked hard at cultivating a bad attitude and fearsome image. While he can be charming if he wants, something about him is terrifying to those who arouse his wrath. PCs receive a +2 check to their Intimidation rolls.

**Seducer**

Requirements: Novice, Attractive, Persuasion D8+

The player character with this Edge is well-versed in the arts of seducing others to become enamored with him or her. They may use their Persuasion skill to make Tests of Will check against targets. Those that fail become hopelessly smitten with them.

## Weird Edges

**Artificer**

Requirements: Veteran+, Arcane Background (Faith or Spells), Arcane Background Skill D10+

The player character is capable of crafting arcane magical items as described in Chapter 5: Magic on page 57.

**Famiiar**

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Faith or Spells)

The player character has bonded his soul with a normal animal of some kind. The immediate result of this is that the animal gains a Smarts score equal to the magician in question. The animal will also live as long as his master. Depending on the Game Master's inclinations, a familiar may be a small and easily transportable creature like a Toad or Eagle or a large creature like Bear or Dire Wolf that might be difficult to take into cities.

The animal is fearlessly loyal but often develops personalities similar to the traits of their master crossed with their species' own natural tendencies. The animal can communicate telepathically with his master and some wizards use the Speak Languages power to bestow the permanent ability of speech to their familiars.

**Hardened Mind**

Requirements: Spirit D6+, Guts D8+

The hero with this Edge is especially toughened against the sort of things that might impact a normal person's state of mind. They gain a permanent +2 to their Psyche scores.

**Immortal**

Requirements: Novice

While many races are very long lived in Winterweir, you simply do not age. Immortals are assumed to have gained a great deal of experience and receive a +2 to their Common Knowledge tests.

**Visions**

Requirements: Novice

The player characters is an exceptionally powerful diviner, even if he's untrained and can thus see the future in brief prophetic visions. A Game Master should provide a player character at least one short vision about upcoming events in the campaign about once an adventure.

**Wings**

Requirements: Novice, Half-Celestial, Lilin, Valken, or Mutant

The character possesses functional wings. Unlike the Fly ability, they are capable of being used at any time. They can only move at the characters' walking speed however and take them twelve feet above the ground.

## Wild Card Edges

**Divine Intervention**

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned+, Must be sincere follower of a deity (GM's discretion)

The gods may or may not exist as mortals believe in them but *something* is looking out for you. You happen to believe it is your deity. When a Joker is dealt to you during combat, the Divine Manifests in some way that aids you. This may be a double damage roll or the enemy's armor suddenly cracks open. It could even be something as dramatic as lightning coming forth to strike down the player character's opponent. Divine Interventions are subject to the Game Master's whims and may be more or less useful as they see fit for their campaign. The ways of the gods are mysterious.

## Legendary Edges

**Monarch**

Requirements: Legendary, Followers, Holding, Honor 40+, Noble

It is possible, however unlikely, for player characters to acquire rulership of a realm through storytelling purposes. Characters with this Edge, however, have greatness fostered upon them. Their reputations and deeds have come to the point that those around him desire to make him or her a King that answers to no monarch above them. Once this occurs, many surrounding territories will join the player character's new realm. The player character gains the Filthy Rich Edge as part of this, if he does not already have it, and also his number of Followers doubles.

# Possesions

This chapter will focus on the equipment that is available to heroes in the *Winterweir* setting. It will discuss not only the commonly available equipment but also some rare and unique items that adventurers might be able to pick up in their travels.

People inhabiting the world of Teth-Ammon tend to be an overall impoverished lot. Only a rare few characters are capable of doing much more than live a subsistence lifestyle. Player characters, already exceptional by their skill, are not assumed to be amongst the hungry masses (unless they took the Poor Hindrance).

Player characters in Teth-Ammon start the game with a riding mount, a change of clothing, and 500 bronze pieces ($500). They should use their starting money to purchase equipment appropriate for their Concept. This money will not go very far and some player characters may be cheated out of things that are central to their concept, particularly Knights. In this case, it is up to the individual Game Master whether or not to 'fudge' on starting possesions.

One thing to remember is that *Winterweir* is partially inspired by Sword and Sorcery epics where money is always short. Game Masters who want to utilize this feel should be lavish in their rewards to player characters, but only on the assumption that they are equally generous in their spending habits.

**Currency**

Each of the Great Kingdoms stamps its own currency. There's considerable difference between the size and make of some of these coins. Given there's no real exchange office, except for the Temples of Veethor, most simply attempt to negotiate the value of the metal. This leads to clipping, counterfeiting, devaluation of coinage, and playing on ignorance about as often as you might expect.

The most commonly used piece of currency is the Bronze Penny. Whatever the nation's stamp that they bear, most will accept these without question. The value of all coinage varies tremendously by what the seller is willing to accept for them but it is an old Merchant's adage that "A bronze penny's worth should always be equal to the cost for a warm cup of beer." Like all Merchant's adages, this is more or less true. In Savage Worlds terms, this translates to one bronze piece being equal to $1 Dollar.

For large payments, all notes are expected to paid up in silver. Silver is the metal that most individuals associate with tremendous wealth on Alacarn. While gold is considered the most valuable of all metals, few individuals can afford even a small amount of it. Theoretically, a pure gold coin could buy a small farm and probably a small farmer.

As a note, very few coins in Alacarn are the same size or purity of metal. It is an old trick for nations to dilute the value of the metal in a coin during times of financial difficulty. This tends to have a rather catastrophic effect in the long term but it's effective enough in the short term that Aristocrats still do it on occasion. The Empire of Turlon is considered the most financially stable of all Alacarn Kingdoms and makes it a point that all of its coins are at roughly 4/10ths purely the metal they're supposed to represent.

Coinage is rarely re-minted unless one finds a large amount of pure metal and one wants to "make change." Thus, coins in Alacarn often have vast amounts of variance in the faces and symbology on the objects in question. It is not impossible for one to find coins that still bear the face of the original Empress Alacarn.

Some of the more common coins are listed below.

| Table Four: Coinage of Teth-Ammon | |
|---|---|
| 1 Clipped Bronze Penny | 1/2 Bronze Penny |
| 1 Bronze Penny | 1 Bronze Penny |
| 100 Bronze Pennies | 1 Piece of Silver |
| 100 Pieces of Silver | 1 Piece of Gold or 1 Silver Bar |
| 100 Pieces of Gold | 1 Gold Bar |

| Armor | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personal Armor** | **Armor** | **Weight** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Chain Hauberk | +2 | 25 | 300 | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| Crysteel Armor | +4 | 15 | --- | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| Daemon Steel Armor | +4 | 25 | --- | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| Giant Armor (chain) | +3 | 40 | 600 | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| Giant Armor (plate) | +4 | 65 | 1500 | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| Leather Armor | +1 | 15 | 50 | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| Helm | +3 | 8 | 150 | Covers head. |
| Horror Helm | +3 | 8 | 500 | Covers head. |
| Plate mail(Full Suit) | +3 | 50 | 1000 | Covers torso, arms, legs. |
| **Barding** | | | | |
| Buckler | +3 | 30 | 1250 | For Horses. |
| **Shields**** | | | | |
| Buckler | --- | 8 | 25 | +1 Parry. |
| Medium Shield (Kite) | --- | 12 | 50 | +2 Parry. +1 Armor to ranged shots that hit. |
| Medium Shield (Kite) | --- | 12 | 12 | +2 Parry. +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit. |
| ** Shields protect only against attacks from the front and left (assuming a right handed character). | | | | |

| Melee Weapons | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Blades** | **Damage** | **Weight** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Dagger | Str+d4 | 1 | 25 | |
| Great Sword | Str+d12 | 12 | 400 | Parry -1, 2 hands. |
| Flail | Str+6d | 8 | 200 | Ignores Shield parry and cover bonus |
| Katana | Str+d6+2 | 6 | 1000 | AP 2. |
| Long Sword | Str+d8 | 8 | 300 | Includes Scimitars. |
| Rapier | Str+d4 | 3 | 150 | Parry +1. |
| Sai | Str+d4 | 1 | 50 | +1 to parry blades. |
| Short Sword | Str+d6 | 4 | 200 | Includes cavalry saber. |
| **Axes and Mauls** | **Damage** | **Weight** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Axe | Str+d6 | 2 | 200 | |
| Battle Axe | Str+d8 | 10 | 300 | |
| Great Axe | Str+d10 | 15 | 500 | AP 1, Parry -1, 2 hands. |
| Maul | Str+d8 | 20 | 400 | AP 2 vs. rigid armor, Parry -1, 2 hands. |
| Warhammer | Str+d6 | 8 | 250 | Ap 1 vs. rigid armor (plate) |

| Melee Weapons | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pole Arms** | **Damage** | **Weight** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Halberd | Str+d8 | 15 | 250 | Reach 1, 2 hands. |
| Lance | Str+d8 | 10 | 300 | AP2 when charging, Reach 2. |
| Nunchucks | Str+d6 | 8 | 25 | +2 against unarmed. |
| Pike | Str+d8 | 25 | 400 | Reach 2, requires 2 hands. |
| Staff | Str+d4 | 8 | 10 | Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands. |
| Spear | Str+d6 | 5 | 100 | Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands. |

| Ranged Weapons | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Range** | **Damage** | **RoF** | **Cost** | **Weight** | **Shots** | **Min Str.** | **Notes** |
| Axe, Throwing | 3/6/12 | Str+d6 | 1 | 75 | 2 | --- | - | |
| Bow | 12/24/48 | 2d6 | 1 | 250 | 3 | --- | d6 | Parry -1, 2 hands. |
| Crossbow | 15/30/60 | 2d6 | 1 | 500 | 10 | --- | d6 | AP 2, 1 action to reload. |
| Long Bow | 15/30/60 | 2d6 | 1 | 200 | 5 | --- | d8 | |
| Knife | 15/30/60 | Str+d4 | 1 | 25 | 1 | --- | - | |
| Shuriken | 3/6/12 | Str+d6 | 1 | 30 | 1 | --- | - | |
| Sling | 4/8/16 | Str+d4 | 1 | 10 | 1 | --- | - | |
| Throwing Dagger | 3/6/12 | Str+d6 | 1 | 30 | 1 | --- | - | |

| Black Powder Weapons | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Range** | **Damage** | **RoF** | **Cost** | **Min Str.** | **Notes** |
| Amanian Musket | 10/20/40 | 2d8 | 1 | 500 | d6 | 2 actions to reload. |
| Flintlock Pistol | 5/10/20 | 2d6+1 | 1 | 300 | d6 | 2 actions to reload. |

| Special Weapons | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Range** | **Damage** | **RoF** | **Cost** | **Min Str.** | **Notes** |
| Cannon (shot) | 50/100/200 | 3d6+1 | 1 | Military | --- | --- |
| Shrapnel Shell | 5/10/20 | 3d6 | 1 | Military | --- | M. Burst |

| Ammunition | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Weight** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Arrow | 1/5 | 1/5 | |
| Arrow, Man Killer | 1/5 | 1/5 | +1 Damage |
| Quarrel | 1/5 | 2 | Ap 2 |
| Shot (w/ powder) | 1/5 | 1/5 | |
| Sling Stone | 1/10 | 1/20 | Stones can be found for free with a Notice check. |

| Adventuring Gear | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Cost** | **Weight** |
| Backpack | 50 | 2 |
| Bedroll | 25 | 4 |
| Blanket | 10 | 4 |
| Death Whisperer Kite | 200 | 10 |
| Flask (ceramic) | 5 | 1 |
| Flint and Steel | 3 | 1 |
| Fogged Goggles | 5 | 1 |
| Grappling Hook | 100 | 2 |
| Hammer | 10 | 1 |
| Lantern (4ft) | 25 | 3 |
| Lock picks | 200 | 1 |
| Manacles | 15 | 2 |
| Oil (1 pint) | 2 | 1 |
| Quiver (20) | 25 | 2 |
| Ring, Signet | 200 | - |
| Ring, Poisoned | 500 | - |
| Rope (10') | 10 | 15 |
| Shovel | 5 | 5 |
| Soap | 1 | 1/5 |
| Thieves Tools | 500 | 1 |
| Tool Kit | 200 | 1/5 |
| Torch (4") | 5 | 1 |
| Water skin | 5 | 1 |
| Whetstone | 5 | 1 |

| Clothing | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Cost** | **Weight** |
| Hiking Boots | 100 | - |
| Normal Clothing | 20 | - |
| Formal Clothing | 200 | - |
| Winter Gear | 200 | 3 |
| Winter Boots | 100 | 1 |

| Food and Services | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Cost** | **Weight** |
| Courtesan, Poor | 50 | - |
| Courtesan, Clean | 100 | - |
| Courtesan, Noble | 500+ | - |
| Drink, Ale | 2 | - |
| Drink, Beer | 1 | - |
| Drink, Wine | 5 | - |
| Drink, Bottle | x10 type | - |
| Inn, Poor Room | 10 | - |
| Inn, Good Room | 20 | - |
| Inn, Luxury Room | 100 | - |
| Meal, Cheap | 5 | 1 |
| Meal, Good | 15+ | - |
| Meal, Rations | 10 | 5 |
| Slave, Poor | 1000 | - |
| Slave, Good | 5000 | - |
| Slave, Specialist | 10,000 | - |
| Soyoma, Injected | 25 | - |
| Soyoma, Smoked | 10 | - |

| Animals and Tack | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Cost** | **Weight** |
| Horse | 300 | - |
| War Horse | 750 | - |
| Saddle | 10 | 10 |
| Elaborate Saddle | 50 | 10 |
| War Horse barding (+3) | 1250 | 30 |

## Equipment Notes

Note: Several of these items below are unavailable for sale. Thus, they are not included in the above tables. In the case of weapons, they will inflict damage as the type they most closely resemble.

### Armor

Armor is an extremely important tool for all adventurers on Teth-Ammon. While powder weapons will render armor useless in a few centuries, it is still common for it to be worn everywhere but the Free Republic of Amania.

**Death Whisperer Night Suit:** As the most elite killers in the world, the Death Whisperers have developed numerous tools for making sure they're able to get away with their assignments. One of the most effective is this camouflaged skin-tight leather night suit. They come in a variety of environmental types to reduce visibility. They also completely obscure the face. While they provide less protection than other armor types, they do little to obscure movement. They cannot be worn with any other armor.

**Horror Helm:** Horror Helms are hideous masks that are specifically carved to terrify opponents on the battlefield. They are often decorated with human skulls or made in the appearance of monsters. Horror Helms are often worn by mercenary leaders or those serving the forces of Martok.

### Arcane Armor

In a world with so much magic as Teth-Ammon, there's plenty of individuals who attempt to use magic in order to strengthen their chances to live. For the most part, commissioned magical armor is available only to the absolute wealthiest and passed down as family heirlooms. Occasionally, a hero is presented a enchanted suit of armor as a reward for past services or as part of the equipment for a very important quest.

**Berserker's Armor:** A suit of full plate mail with a Horror Helm. Berserker's Armor must be fully intact to gain the functional benefits thereof. The suit magnifies the existing rage of a subject and allows him to use the Berserk Edge at will. Some suits of Berserker's armor are also Enhanced or provide the benefits of Natural Berserker rather than just Berserk.

**Crysteel Armor:** A incredibly lightweight armor that is created from mixing regular steel with a crystalline powder that is only found in the Silver Eternity. Crysteel armor provides a +1 pip of protection over normal armor of its type. Crysteel armor appears to be normal steel except impossibly shiny and reflective. It is frequently Enhanced or blessed to be Holy.

**Daemon steel Armor:** A tough and powerful armor that is created by creating steel from the blackened iron of the Netherdeep. Daemon steel Armor has many superstitions about it but is still worn by those who crave its awesome protective abilities. Daemonsteel Armor provides a +1 pip of protection over normal armor of its type It is frequently Enhanced or cursed to be Unholy.

**Enhanced Armor:** Enhanced Armor has been enchanted to be stronger against attack without the increased weight that comes from thicker armor. Magical sigils are painted on the interior of the armor and then the entire suit is bathed in the energies of the Aether for an extended period. Enhanced Armor is notable for never rusting or needing maintenance. Damage to Enhanced Armor can be repaired normally as the magic affects new material added to replace damaged.

**Giant Armor:** The Jotuns of Teth-Ammon wear their own variant of armor. Half-Jotuns have also been known to wear it. Some humans, especially tall and powerful ones, have also fallen in love with the thick and powerful armor. While tremendously heavy and difficult to wear, it provides incredible protection on the battlefield. This Armor type provides +1 pip of protection over normal armor of its type.

### Weapons

It is a transition period for weapons in Alacarn. The Free Republic of Amania and Lartan have both developed firearms. As a result gunpowder weapons will soon begin replacing blades and bows. Due to the presence of magic and the sheer size of Alacarn, this transition will not occur immediately. In fact, it will probably take a course of two or three centuries. In the meantime, Alchemists will come up with any number of strange solutions and variants on existing devices. Player characters should be allowed a broad range of options to choose from in their choice of weapon.

**Crysteel weapons:** Just as Crysteel can be used to create armor, so can it be used to form extraordinarily lightweight and sharp weapons. Crysteel weapons are often enchanted by priests to be Enhanced or Holy. This weapon type adds +1 to all damage inflicted against enemies.

**Daemon steel weapons:** Daemon steel weapons are the same as the armor. While difficult for normal humans to wield, they seem to be far better for inflicting damage than regular steel. They are often Enhanced or made to be Unholy. This weapon type adds +1 to all damage inflicted against enemies.

**Giant Sword:** Giant swords are blades that are often upwards to six feet in length on average and weigh upwards to ten pounds due to their double thickness. Almost impossible for humans to wield, Jotuns and Half-Giants have been known to wield them in combat with little difficulty. While impractical for all but the strongest, they are feared for their ability to tear through armor. This weapon type adds +1 to all damage inflicted against enemies.

**Katana:** The Katana style of sword is mostly found on the Isle of Lartan. It has also gained popularity with the Death Whisperers. Many master sword smiths in large cities will be familiar with the art of crafting them.

**Nunchucks:** A form of flail that is used by certain masters of the martial arts to disable opponents. Nunchucks are noteworthy for their ability to inflict Non-Lethal Damage as well as Lethal damage.

**Sai:** A Lartan weapon used for the entrapment of swords, Sai are mostly the preferred tools of assassins in Alacarn proper. They are easily concealed and especially useful in protecting oneself from the weapons of guards.

**Shuriken:** Another Death Whisperer weapon, Shuriken are often covered in a terrible contact poison that makes them all the more lethal. Shuriken can easily be hidden and there is a -2 penalty to find them with a Notice check on a person.

**Sword Staff:** Sword Staves are a weapon of the Death Whisperers and a few other assassin groups. A sword of varying size is hidden within the folds of the staff and can be withdrawn at will. Sword Staves are allowed in many places that normal weapons would not be.

**Throwing Knife:** Knives especially made for throwing rather than use in hand-to-hand combat. Throwing knives are easily manufactured, if one is able to find a smith willing to make them. They have an unsavory reputation. Most believe them to be weapons fit only for hired killers and Lilin.

**Arcane Ammunition**

While no one has yet invented enchanted bullets, it is a common enough practice for magicians to place killing spells on arrows or bolts. These weapons are hideously expensive but provide a useful advantage on the battlefield.

**Arrows of Slaying:** Inscribed with a rune on the end of each, Arrows of Slaying are nightmarishly effective against specific types of foes. They can be utilized against any particular race of creature or even a specific person. Even better, should an Arrow of Slaying be recovered, it can be reused again so long as the rune hasn't been damaged. A target struck by an Arrow of Slaying, and is of the type the arrow was made to kill (for example: a Trow struck by an Arrow of Trow Slaying), must make a Vigor check or die.

**Assassin Bolts:** Assassin Bolts are a useful tool for killers who want to attack an opponent unseen. They will pass through armor and even physical barriers in order to strike flesh.

**Arcane Weapons**

Arcane Weapons are powerful objects during war. Even more common than Arcane Armor, many magicians have crafted devices to aid them in battle. Most Arcane Weapons do not last longer than a few years. Even magic is unable to hold off the rigors of constant warfare through which they are frequently put. Still, some magics are powerful enough to preserve weapons for centuries or even millennia.

**Hammer of Tyros:** Hammers of Tyros are sacred objects to the Church of Tyros. Made in the image of Tyros' own legendary weapon, they take twenty years to manufacture and are passed down as sacred relics amongst the church's holy warriors. Being presented a Hammer of Tyros is a great honor and the recovery of a lost one is a source of many quests. A Hammer of Tyros may be used to 'repel' a Power used against a wielder. This is represented by the wielder making an opposed Guts roll vs. the Arcane skill of the caster.

**Holy Water:** Creatures of the Netherdeep can be affected by holy water. The flask breaks on impact and splashes in a small burst. Holy water must be enchanted

by a Spell Casting priest, however, or it is ineffectual. All priests with the Arcane Background (Faith) can bless up to a gallon of holy water a day.

**Weapons of Slaying:** Similar to Arrows of Slaying, Weapons of Slaying are created for the purposes of killing specific types of creatures or an individual. Weapons of Slaying are often created by particularly racist and hateful parties in order to try to wipe out a species. Some consider Weapons of Slaying to be status symbols in areas of particularly high tension. Weapons of Slaying work identical to Arrows of Slaying in terms of their effect on specific targets.

**Notes on Selected Weapons**

**Thunder Wand:** While the term "Thunder Wand" is used to describe most forms of firearm in Teth-Ammon, it refers specifically to a kind of crude black powder shotgun. It can fire pellets (+2 to Shooting rolls, 4d6 at short range, 3d6 at medium range, and 2d6 Damage at long range). The weapons are notoriously unreliable, however. They have a 1d10 chance of misfiring and needing repair before they can be used again.

**Equipment**

There's plenty of specialized equipment in the world of Teth-Ammon. Despite most citizens being trapped at a Medieval level of technology, they are hardly stupid. Civilization is very old in Alacarn and there is countless specialized devices that serve purposes many people would be quite surprised at. Game Masters should not be adverse to things like clocks, plumbing, or other anachronistic elements showing up.

**Fogged Goggles:** A typical possession of Bathas, they dim the light in bright areas in order to prevent their over sensitive eyes from being hurt. If worn in dim lighting, they result in a -1 penalty. Most Bathas simply remove them in these circumstances. Other races who wear them receive the penalty regardless.

**Death Whisperer Kite:** Death Whisperers have learned to produce a kite that is capable of carrying them over high places in order to sneak into their opponents' fortresses. A person using a Death Whisperer Kite must have no more armor on them than a Death Whisperer Night Suit and no weapon larger than a dagger (unless it is enchanted or otherwise remarkably light weight). It cannot be used by Half-Jotuns or characters with the Brawny Edge. Those who use a Death Whisperer Kite move at a flying rate of 6' in good wind.

**Soyoma, Injected:** A powerful drug derived from the Soyoma flower. It is the preferred rejectional drug of addicts and the utterly decadent. Injected Soyoma is far more powerful than smoked. It is often used either as a painkiller by doctors or by those who require even greater highs than smoked Soyoma can produce. It reduces all penalty to wounds or fatigue by two. Soyoma is highly addictive and regular users (GM's decision) gain the Major Habit Hindrance.

**Soyoma, Smoked:** A recreational use for Soyoma that has destroyed countless lives across Alacarn. It results in a feeling of euphoria and sluggishness that many find very relaxing. Anyone who smokes Soyoma must make a Vigor check or gain two levels of Fatigue for five hours. Smoking Soyoma will also alleviate pains and reduce any wound penalties by 1, even if the Vigor check is made. Soyoma is very addictive and repeated use (GM's decision) will result in the Major Habit hindrance.

**Thieves' Tools:** Locks are not terribly precise in the world of Teth-Ammon and a good thief can get very far with the appropriate tools. Thieves tools add a +2 to all Lock picking tests.

**Ring, Signet:** Signet rings are the most important tool for identifying the validity of documents in Teth-Ammon. Each individual ring is manufactured specifically to be unique and replicating them is very difficult. They are used to 'stamp' official notices and even presented as signs of fealty. Officers and other high officials are trained to recognize individual marks as authentic or not. Signet rings are not a perfect means of guaranteeing safe correspondence, many forgeries can and do occur, but they are the best system that currently exists.

**Ring, Poison:** Poison Rings are normal rings that contains a small compartment underneath the gemstone. These compartments are filled with a virulent poison in powder form. These are used to sneak poison into banquets and other places they may be ingested. A person poisoned must make a Vigor check or instantly die.

**Arcane Equipment**

Magic is not just used for combat. Individuals have found many uses for sorcery that go well beyond mere use in battle. Arcane Equipment is often one-use and while expensive, available for sale to weathier citizens. More expensive or long lasting arcane objects are just as troublesome to acquire as magical weapons or armor.

**Airships:** Largely identical in composition to regular ships, Airships have not yet been adapted for military use. Enchanted with spells to keep them aloft and give them swift travel, Alchemists have added hot air balloons and coal powered propeller systems to add movement. A typical airship can travel at a rate of twenty leagues per hour. All airships are manufactured in Lartan.

**Artificial Limbs:** Creations of the Bathas, artificial limbs are fine enough that users have no penalties when using their skills. Artificial limbs do not naturally heal but damage done to them will not cause a wielder any injury penalties (since they feel no pain). Artificial limbs can be modified to conceal compartments or even something like a Thunder Wand.

**Ether Potion:** Ether Potions are the concentrated magical essence. A person who drinks an Ether Potion will have their Ether Point score restored to full. They must be drunk in full or no effect will result.

**Ether Stones:** Ether Stones are concentrated magical essence in physical form. They come in 1, 5, and even 20 Ether Point form. These objects can be used in place of the magic users own Ether Points. Ether Stones can be used 'in part' rather than all at once on a single power usage. Once all of their essence is used up, however, they crumble to dust.

**Fairy Powder:** Fairy Dust is collected from areas where sprites are known to gather. Sometimes, the mischievous creatures willingly part with it while other times its necessary for collectors to hold them prisoner. Fairy Dust has medicinal properties and functions as equivalent to a usage of the *Healing* Power. A bag of fairy powder has typically 1d4 doses within.

**Magic Items:** Standard Magic Items in Teth-Ammon are capable of performing a specific Power approximately once or twice a day. They naturally regenerate their Ether Points to the level that they are capable of performing these acts. Some magical items maintain their spell effects indefinitely. Game Masters are encouraged to create whatever types of magical devices they want and not to worry too much about specifics.

**Potions:** Potions contain the capacity to bestow the effects of a specific spell (Usually like Armor, Boost/Lower Trait, or Deflection). Drinking a potion is assumed to result in an automatic success for the power to be used. Potions, as to be expected, can only be used once and must be downed completely in order to be effective.

**Potion of Medicine:** Produced by the Priests of Kaalon, ironically. Potions of Medicine are the panacea for nearly all wounds and sought after by warriors like some sort of holy grail. Fully imbibing a Potion of Medicine will heal all wounds that a soldier currently has suffered. An extra-strength variant also exists that will re-grow lost limbs, restore lost eyesight, and even remove scars.

**Potion of War:** Produced by the Priests of Paalok, Potions of War increase the Fighting skill of a character by one dice type or add a +2 if they already have the highest die type. Drinkers of a Potion of War do not have to make Guts checks during combat either. The effects last for 24 hours.

**Scrolls:** Mystically inscribed spell-effects that are possible for even non-spell casters to use. The energies to unleash the spell are encoded into the paper itself. They come in Arcane Background (Spells) and Arcane Background (Faith) varieties. A caster with the appropriate background can use their Arcane Skill to unleash the energies within. Others must make use of their Spirit trait.

**Spell Book:** A typical Spell Book usually contains about 1d6 Powers. A player character with the Arcane Background (Spells) may learn a Power within by studying the materials for one week per Rank of the Power in question. Spell Books are illegal to sell to parties outside of the Grand Arcanum in most nations. This does not decrease their sale, only makes buyers more discreet. In fact, many Grand Arcanum members are involved in the trade.

**Rings:** Rings function just like Magic Items. Often, they are used to bestow the permanent benefits of a specific spell upon a person (like Armor or Beast Friend). Rings are often linked to the life-force of a wearer and

users should beware that they have a large chance of being haunted.

**Rods/Staves/Wands:** Rods, Staves, and Wands are used to store spells. A Game Master should determine how many Ether Points a specific item has by rolling a 1d6 and determining whether it has 10 to 60. Each has 1d4 Powers that it can use this batch of Ether Points to accomplish. Those with the appropriate Arcane Background Skill can use them to operate the device. Others must use their Spirit score.

**Artifacts**

There are certain items that exist in Winterweir that go beyond the abilities of most ordinary devices. These objects are beyond the normal skill of wizards to replicate and possess histories that often stretch back to the earliest days of the setting. Possession of such an object is an almost guaranteed ticket to eternal fame (or everlasting infamy).

**Crown of Chaos:** The Crown of Chaos is a terrible artifact that was presented to the House of Alacarn by the Shadow King during the war against Malaxas. Wearing the Crown instantly gives a wearer the Arcane Background (Spells) skill of 1d12+2. The wearer also gains 50 Ether Points to use as he sees fit per day. Finally, it bestows knowledge of 1d20 previously unknown powers.

The wearer of the Crown of Chaos can enspell listeners with the sound of his voice using an opposed Charisma vs. Spirit check. He also can raise a 200 room castle from the depths of the Earth (even in the middle of the ocean), once per month.

The Crown of Chaos' wearer gains the Power Mad Hindrance (Major) and eventually will gain the Insane Hindrance (Major).

**Ebon Heart:** Ebon Heart is a legendary sword that was originally created by the Formorians to fight the Dragons. The terrible magics were enough to summon a fragment of the Drakkath into the universe and give it a malign intelligence. The sword takes the appearance of a Daemon steel long sword of particularly elaborate make but is lightweight and beautiful.

Wielders immediately have their Fighting skill go up a dice level or gain a +2 to their Fighting skill if they are already maxed out. The sword inflicts Str+1d12 damage and those struck must make a Vigor check or be instantly slain. Those killed by Ebonheart have their souls consumed by the Drakkath and cannot be revived or come back as the undead. Wielders gain the Homicidal Fury Hindrance and the Natural Berserker Edge.

**Malaxas' Tears:** Malaxas' Tears are exactly what they claim to be. The blood red tears of Malaxas themselves, given solid form by his magics. These objects are collected by his demonic servants and taken to the mortal world and given to unsuspecting mortals. There, they whisper to mortals the secrets of how to perform a human sacrifice that will allow them to merge with a creature from the Far Chaos to become an Undying One.

The transformation is automatic once the sacrifice has been slain. It is irreversible and the soul of the user is permanently transformed into that of a Undying One.

**Terra'ssar Devices:** The Dragons left behind many priceless and incredible relics in their fall to barbarism. Terra'ssar Devices are 'sufficiently advanced' technological devices that operate by use of one's Spirit Attribute or the Arcane Background (Psionics) skill. Each Terra'ssar device is unique and capable of accomplishing any imaginable effect. Game Masters should be imaginative about their use and have them utilized as Maguffin or Plot Devices.

# New Setting Rules

In addition to the standard *Savage Worlds* rules, *Winterweir* adds the following skill modifications. These are included to make the Great Kingdoms feel more alive and more interesting. Winterweir is a somewhat more socially orientated campaign world than many other Savage Worlds settings and also emphasizes personal combat more.

We believe these adjustments will make games more enjoyable for mature gamers. Others may wish to stick with traditional *Savage Worlds* rules. These are for the benefit of Narrators and meant as an enhancement to the game rather than absolutes that must be followed.

## Combat Modifications

These Combat Modifications are meant to create an environment where player characters feel the visceral nature of combat in *Winterweir.* Yet also feel that they are capable of recovering enough to go once more into the battlefield when they please. Likewise, it is meant to simulate an environment where sheer force of will is sometimes more important than actual skill.

The die-hard nature of *Winterweir* protagonists is one that they are meant to be able to endure tremendous trauma and emerge triumphant if they are willing to endure. As Friedrich Nietzsche once said "What does not kill us, makes us stronger."

### Ignoring Wounds

An injured player character may attempt to focus on their anger and adrenaline to ignore the pain from them for the duration of the combat. This includes player characters who are Incapacitated. Doing so requires the player character to make a Vigor check and then a Guts check. If both are successful, they will be capable of continuing fighting as if they were not wounded. There is a price for this, a +1 will be added to enemies' subsequent attack rolls. Player characters cannot focus on dodging in this enraged state.

At the end of combat, the player character will be able to do nothing but rest for 1d6 rounds.

### Iron Will to Live

A player character can make an attempt to reduce a Critical Failure on an Incapacitation check to a Bleeding Out result. The player must first role-play out the character's desire to live and give reasons why he wants to do so. Then he must make as successful Guts check and then a successful Vigor check. The player character may use Bennies on these rolls.

### Maiming Rules

It is possible to use melee and ranged weapons to inflict Non-lethal damage on Extras. While *Winterweir* is an extraordinarily violent setting, there's something to be said for player characters who don't want to kill huge numbers of locals (yet can't be bothered to use their fists). If a player character states that he is going to Maim rather than kill, then a successful strike results in the Extra suffering an Injury and being incapacitated for 1d6 days. Depending on the injury, it may prevent them from ever fighting again.

While this is brutal, it is preferable to killing outright for many. Player characters who make it a standing policy to wound rather than kill enemies outside of wartime receive a +5 to their Honor/Integrity score.

## Social Modifications

*Winterweir* is a place where player characters can interact with the setting for extended periods of time with no combat. It is perfectly appropriate, and even encouraged, for players just to role-play out this downtime. However, some players prefer the random element of the dice to a certain extent and these rules help simulate such.

### Carousing

Having a good time is something that is readily available for all player characters who have sufficient coin. However, some tastes are more discriminating than others. Carousing checks allow player characters not only to have a good time but become intimately acquainted with the area's local hot spots as well. This can be used at wharf dives or upscale taverns that cater only to the nobility.

**System:** A player character must make a Streetwise check first to see if he can locate a sufficient spot to enjoy himself. Next, a Persuasion check is necessary to see if he locates suitable company. If only one success is made then the player character enjoys himself and becomes familiar with the area. Two successes indicate that the player character has made himself numerous friends and romantic liaisons, which add a +1 to his Charisma checks in that area until the next Carousing check.

### Courtly Behavior

The courts are a place where a single misstep could result in total humiliation. Worse, their very Honor could impinged to the point that they are dismissed as uncouth barbarians. Many careers of would-be-Kings have been destroyed, not on the battlefield, but because of simple bad etiquette. This system is used whenever a player character is trust into a situation where they are expected to adopt the mannerisms of a noble or in functions that require exceptional courtesy.

**System:** If the player characters have the Noble Edge, they make a Common Knowledge check for their first roll. If not, they must have the Knowledge (Court) skill. If successful, they then make a Persuasion check.

If both rolls succeed, the player characters are a smashing success and come off extremely well to their associates with a +1 Charisma bonus for the rest of the week relating to court functions. If they make one success, they simply do not humiliate themselves. A failure results in the player characters coming off as loud and boorish.

### Intrigue

The *Winterweir* setting is one where player characters can immerse themselves in the cloak and dagger activities that go on behind the scenes. Whenever the player character wants to do something covert like hire an assassin or arrange for a secret meeting then this is a useful rule for them doing so.

**System:** The player characters make a Knowledge (Courts) or Streetwise check, depending on whether they will be interacting with upper or lower class individuals. This reflects knowing who to contact and how to involve it. If successful, the player character successfully gets to meet with a subject and may make suitable arrangements with them. This may or may not require a Persuasion check, depending on whether their goals align with the PCs.

After the meeting, they should then roll Stealth to reflect how well they have covered their tracks. If the Stealth roll fails then their meeting has been detected by some interested party that may use it to their own advantage.

### Leadership

Heroes in Alacarn often attract large groups of followers around them. They may end up ruling Petty Kingdoms or becoming leaders of mercenary bands fairly early in their careers (at least by comparison to other *Savage Worlds* settings). This system represents the day-to-day management of an organization to making sure that it runs smoothly. It can represent anything from a kingdom to a corporation to a bunch of bandits.

**System:** The hero makes a Knowledge (Leadership) every month. They may substitute Common Knowledge if they have the Noble Edge or an appropriate Professional one. A successful check means that the organization continues functioning smoothly and requires no outstanding maintenance.

A failure means that the group requires immediate in-game help of some kind (such as an infusion of funds or a stirring speech). Three failures in a row will result in the organization collapsing or a full scale revolt.

### Listening for Rumors

Information is the stock and trade of successful heroes. Players do not necessarily want to just wait around for plot hooks to happen and occasionally want to chase them down directly. This system represents them conversing with the knowledgeable, tracking down informants, and

bartering for secrets. It's rarely 100% accurate but usually will give them a far better grasp of the situation than they would have if they just played things by ear.

**System:** Listening for Rumors requires a simple Streetwise check. If successful, then the player characters will hear 1d6 rumors about the campaign. These should be facts about the adventure or the important characters in the area. If they score higher than 1 on the rumors roll, then one of the rumors will be incorrect. Unlike simple gossip, rumors in a campaign are usually true.

## Skill Modifications

One of the chief appeals of the *Savage Worlds* system is the fact that it is fairly straight forward. Thus, there's no need for this supplement to add new skills. Instead, we desire to find innovative ways of using existing skills to cover the kind of things that player characters might want to do in *Winterweir* that the initial Skill list might not seem to cover.

### Craftsmanship

It is possible for player characters to craft incredible armor and weapons (amongst other materials). Given the available prospect of enchanting objects, heroes may want to create their own items. Other players may just find the idea of a hero who crafts his own sword to be cool.

**System:** The user must first roll a Knowledge (Crafts) check. This represents their being skilled in the profession. This is enough for most elaborate objects but not for items like armor or weapons. Then the player character must make a Strength check to represent having the necessary physical power to hammer the metal into a suitable form. Once the player characters have made their Strength check, they must then make a Vigor check. This is so that they are capable of working long enough to actually accomplish the job.

Should all three rolls be successful then a *Masterpiece* work is created. This item is suitable for enchantment and may be sold for 10% higher than the normal costs for the item. Should only two rolls be successful then the item is serviceable but flawed in some way and can only be sold for the regular cost. It is otherwise a normal example of the item created but is unsuitable for enchantment. Should all three rolls fail then the item is hopelessly flawed. The player character is unable to even recover the cost of the materials to produce it.

### Performance

Some heroes are performers by trade. They play musical instruments or act in theatre troupes. This may be a disguise for a more lucrative profession like thievery or is just some way for adventurers to pay the bills while they travel around looking for greater opportunities. Of course, it doesn't mean a thing to perform if you don't have any skill at it. This section gives a system for allowing player characters to put on shows and gage an audience's reaction.

**System:** The player must first make a Knowledge (Arts) or Knowledge (Music) check, depending on what sort of performance he is putting on. Characters without this skill are capable of performing at a -2 penalty by making a Common Knowledge check.

After making this roll, the hero must then make a Persuasion check. A hostile audience gives them a -2 penalty while a merely unhappy or surly audience gives a -1. Charisma bonuses apply. This represents the actual performance of the piece.

Should both rolls be successful then a favorable impression has been made on the audience. Only one success means that a mediocre performance has been made. The audience is neither entertained nor bored. A failure means that the audience actively hates the playing.

# Honor and Psyche

The *Winterweir* setting introduces two new additions to the character sheets of *Savage World* characters. These are *Honor/Integrity* and *Psyche*. They are meant to provide a richer role-playing experience by providing rules to simulating some of the most important concepts in the setting. Specifically, that people in *Winterweir* are very status conscious and that fighting the setting's horrors is not very conducive to one's sanity.

**Honor/Integrity**

*Honor* and *Integrity* are incredibly important concepts in the *Winterweir* setting. The distinction between the two is a purely classicist one, however. Aristocrats and Ennobled Commoners have Honor while merchants and the peasantry are expected to have Integrity. The two carry separate social assumptions and expectations with it.

To give a simple explanation of what Honor/Integrity is, it is a reputation for fairness and valor. It is separate from the concept of Good and Evil because such ideas are not very well developed in the setting. Heinous villains can be considered honorable champions of valor in Alacarn if they regularly perform great deeds to balance their villany. Simultaneously, a pacifist healer might be treated to be Dishonorable if he broke his word routinely to protect others.

Worse, the concepts of Honor and Integrity are rather slanted towards the powerful and wealthy rather than the decent. As long as an individual performs great deeds or is sufficiently grandiose in his appearance, he can get away with pretty much anything. The public will forget the darker portion of their careers if the light is interesting enough. *Winterweir* is simply too uncivilized to concern oneself with the worst activities of those few who are willing to stand up and make the place a better world.

Most nobles find it useful to cultivate a reputation for Honorable behavior, even if they have no real concern for morality themselves. A character's Honor/Integrity score does not represent how genuinely moral a character is, it merely represents how they are perceived by the public at large. A wrongly accused criminal, for example, will have to go to great lengths in order to clear their name of treasonous charges.

Simultaneously, High Integrity will result in peasants believing a character is a champion of the people and someone that can be trusted. Even murderous outlaws have been known to try and keep their Integrity up in order to prevent locals from cooperating with authorities against them.

Player characters who work to maintain their Honor/Integrity scores will be lavished with praise wherever they go. Their reputations will precede them and they will be

approached by individuals for quests as well as being feted in song. If they are truly successful, then they might be raised in rank to the peerage or given great gifts.

**Honor vs. Integrity**

The distinction between Honor and Integrity has been highlighted above but deserves some stronger mention. The kind of behavior that a noble may engage in is markedly different from the one that commoners are allowed to get away with. The penalties for a noble being caught in treasonous activities is far higher than for a peasant. Likewise, a commoner doing something that is the province of the nobility (like participating in a jousting tournament) would be considered a shocking breach of propriety that could cost him Honor rather than gain him it.

Nobles are expected to live within the bounds of their class. They are expected to wear only the finest of clothing and live in a lavish lifestyle. Nobles who do not, even if due to poverty, are treated as shady characters. They are expected to obey the laws of chivalry, called the **Code of Alacarn**. A code that demands fair treatment of fellow nobles and keeping one's word. Honorable nobles should not shy away from challenges either.

Commoners, on the other hand, are expected to be courteous to one's social betters but are rarely required to pay much heed to the ideas of Honor. Instead, they are derided for criminal acts that endanger the public good and duplicity in business. Nobles tend to be more forgiving of commoners turning against than they are of fellow nobles. This is because they are considered lesser beings. Simultaneously, the arrogance and violence allowed nobles is far more harshly punished when practiced by the masses.

**Charisma Modifications**

Charisma is based on a player character's good looks and personality. Occasionally, it is modified by their behavior in a specific area. Honorable characters have an established reputation that puts people at ease and causes them to want to be nicer to them. A Honorable character with high Charisma is going to be well received almost everywhere he goes.

**Honor and Rank**

The Rank rules are modified in the *Winterweir* setting by the Honor/Integrity system. Player characters may earn incredible experience by performing great deeds but unless people hear about them or they are done in a noble fashion, no one will really pay the characters much mind. A Legendary character can be utterly unheard of if he keeps his deeds a secret.

**Honor vs. Stealth**

Honor is something that reflects the player character's reputation. However, it is not something that people innately sense. If the player characters disguise themselves then they automatically lose their Honor bonus to Charisma, if they have one. It is possible to also impersonate an individual of higher Honor with a pair of successful Stealth and Persuasion checks. Doing this for a long term period of time isn't advisable for a game's stability but might justify the player characters ocassionally having to clear their names.

If a player character is actively trying to be recognized then outsiders may make a Common Knowledge check with a +1 bonus for every ten points of Honor/Integrity that they have. A successful result leads to the player characters being recognized by those looking upon them. Likewise, they receive this bonus for every ten points of *Dishonor* that they have.

**Gaining and Losing Honor**

Honor is measured with *Honor Points*. Characters accumulate them in the same way that Experience Points are built up. Characters can rise to become famous and well beloved figures of the setting while relatively weak in power level. They may also become truly despicable villains in relatively short order.

Game Masters have the ultimate authority for what determines a Dishonorable and Honor action but we've provided a small chart of example benefits and penalties that might come in game time. To separate Honor and Integrity, we've provided charts that incur specific penalties to each side. Dishonorable actions that will affect the Honor/Integrity scores of both peasants and nobles will be listed under the General Table.

Positive bonuses always make a character more Honorable and move him upwards from Negative totals. If a truly despicable rogue with a -30 Honor were to rescue a town and receive a +5 bonus then he would now have -25 honor.

Remember, actions must be known to be the actions of the heroes to affect their Honor/Integrity scores. If a Honorable character murders a horde of children, disturbingly, it won't effect his score if he successfully covers it up. Game Masters should also keep the drastically different morality of the setting in mind if they think any of the modifiers are too low or too high for a specific action.

**General Bonuses to Honor/Integrity**

+ X for taking certain Edges.

+ 1-3 For successfully completing an adventure. The longer the adventure, the higher the bonus.

+ 1-2 Giving a gift of extreme value to those in need (not less than $10,000 value). The award applies for all gifts given in an adventure, not every one.

+ 1 Protecting a community from bandits or monsters that the law is uninterested in handling (in addition to any adventure rewards).

+ 1 Destroying a particularly powerful monster or group of evil doers (may only be awarded once per adventure).

+ 2 Destroying a Demon or Cult of Malaxas (may only be rewarded once per adventure).

+ 1 Accepting no reward for a significant service done for a community or kingdom.

+ 1 Giving Free Healing to innocents in need of it (Arcane Background characters and those with the Healing skill only. May be awarded once per adventure.)

+ 1 Being exceptionally pious and faithful (awarded only once).

+ 1 Arranging for a Bard to sing about your honor (a sign that not all honor is hard won).

**Honor Bonuses (Nobles Only)**

+ 5 Ennoblement (initial award. After this, their Integrity score becomes a Nobility score with no penalty).

+ 2 Every time a player character goes up in rank (Knight to Baron, Baron to Count, Count to Duke, etc).

+ 1 Avenging an insult to one's cause, faith, family, or liege (may only be rewarded once per adventure).

+ 1 Fulfilling a serious Sacred Oath (swearing revenge or vowing to return a holy item for example. May only be rewarded once per adventure.)

+ 1 Pardoning honorable captured foes (may only be awarded once per adventure. Does not apply to releasing criminals).

+ 2 Pardoning a captured noble without ransom (may only be awarded once per adventure).

+ 2 Succeeding in a major quest.

+ 1 Winning an honor duel against an equally matched or greater opponent.

+ 2 Winning an honor duel against an equally matched or greater opponent who is championing an evil cause.

+ 1 Winning a jousting tournament or other noble competition.

## Integrity Bonuses (Commoners Only)

+ 5 Turning down Ennoblement.

+ 4 A noble forsaking his title (and thus switching his Honor score to Integrity)

+ 2 Avenging a slain family member (Immediate Family and cousins only).

+ 2 Overthrowing a corrupt nobleman.

+ 1 Humiliating an evil nobleman or clergyman (may only be awarded once per adventure).

+ 1 Killing a corrupt nobleman or clergyman (may only be awarded once per adventure).

+ 1 Slaying a Tax Man coming to collect from a poor village (pretty much of all them).

+ 1 Saving the life of an innocent from unjust punishment by the Church or Nobility.

+ 2 Saving a group of people from unjust punishment by the Church or Nobility.

+ 1 Giving a portion of stolen money from the rich to the poor.

+ 1 Deals fairly with others in business (awarded once).

+ 1 Returning stolen property that was recovered from thieves (awarded once per adventure).

## General Penalties to Honor/Integrity

-X for taking certain Hindrances.

-20 for swearing service to the Netherdeep or Malaxas (characters immediately forfeit all Honor above zero if their score is higher than twenty. They cannot raise their honor higher than zero so long as their service continues).

-10 for consorting with infernal forces.

-10 for the most monstrous deeds imaginable.

-5 for the massacre of an entire community (The penalty if halved if the victims are Far Folk).

-3 for triggering a Chaos Effect (see Page 56) in a populated area.

-1-3 For failing to complete an adventure. The longer the adventure, the higher the bonus.

-1-2 for engaging in acts of torture. The penalty depending on the severity of the violence.

-1 for acts of minor blasphemy (such as assaulting a innocent priest or defiling a temple. Making oaths or using the gods in curses does not count).

-2 for major acts of blasphemy (such murdering a helpless priest or burning down a holy temple. Cultists and Priests of the Divine Order do not count)

-1 for killing an unarmed man or woman.

-2 for killing children, the elderly, or other innocents.

-1 for engaging in banditry and the robbery of innocents (only counts if the subjects were impoverished or harmed).

-2 for acts of rapine and partaking in violent looting (Game masters should be especially wary of this from players).

-1 for making false accusations (one point for each spread).

**Honor Penalties (Nobles Only)**

-4 for High Treason against one's liege lord (halved if he is serving another liege lord against him).

-1 Looting the dead for their possessions (doesn't count if they get a servant to do it).

-1 Executing prisoners (executing criminals do not count)

-2 Executing a captured noble (executing them after a trial does not count).

-2 for Kin slaying (Children, Spouses, Siblings, Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, and 1st Cousins only)

-1 for every slave that you own (Winterweir and Amania only)

-1 for using regular equipment and dressing in common clothing (one time penalty only)

-2 for using substandard equipment and dressing poorly (one time penalty only)

-1 for breaking a sacred oath.

-1 for extensive debts.

-1 for social faux pas (GM's judgment)

**Integrity Penalties (Peasants Only)**

- 5 Converting to the Divine Order (nobles find the religion quaint while commoners are genuinely threatened by it).

- 5 for dealing in slaves (awarded once).

- 2 for being tied to a criminal organization that preys on the poor (awarded once).

- 2 for conducting slavery raids against commoners (every time that one engages in one).

- 1 Informing on a fellow Commoner for a minor crime to the Nobility (does not include crimes against a fellow Commoner).

- 2 Being a regular informant for the Nobility on criminal activity.

- 1 Destroying the livelihood of an innocent man (burning crops, destroying a shop, etc).

- 1 Running away from Family Responsibilities.

- 2 Leaving behind a spouse and offspring to fend for themselves.

Game Masters are the final judge of what sort of award that a player characters' actions should have for their conduct during an adventure.

**False Accusations**

The bane of all genuinely honorable individuals everywhere. There is nothing worse than being falsely accused of a crime and the penalties that result. False accusations are often made by Enemies and propagated, despite the social cost o the accuser if they are proven false.

False Accusations must be credible to some degree to gain any real veracity. For a Medieval society verging on the Renaissance, the people of Alacarn are remarkably good at checking facts. If the player character is accused of

massacring a village then somewhere, there must actually be a village that was killed by someone who could have been the player character.

Idle talk rarely gains the traction necessary to smear a character's name. That requires deliberate malice or, at least, ignorance to the point that the smeared is genuinely believed to be guilty.

**Dishonorable Characters**

Nothing prevents characters from engaging in Dishonorable behavior and generally behaving like the worst anti-heroes imaginable. Given *Winterweir's* permissive standards of behavior, this usually means the player characters are really stretching the limit of the word "Hero."

Eventually, if a player character passes the threshold detailed on the Honor Rank Benefits/Penalties table then they become an NPC villain under the Game Master's control. They will then enter the ranks of Winterweir's most despised monsters.

Unlike in other settings, being a lovable rogue doesn't imply being Dishonorable. Dishonorable individuals are, as a general rule, scum. The rare exceptions are all the more tragic for the way they are treated.

**Distance**

Honor/Integrity depends on the spread of one's reputation. Outside of the player characters home nation, they are at a -10 penalty to their Honor/Integrity scores. This cannot lower a person's score below zero or make a Dishonorable character more infamous. Rather, it merely means that fewer people have heard of them. This penalty increases to -20 outside of the player character's continent.

## Honor Benefits

If a player character role-plays himself with High Honor/Integrity then his reputation will spread far and wide through the setting. This has positive benefits for the characters. Individuals are interested in the player characters and want to treat them well for their good deeds. Others want to patronize them or invite them to become part of the aristocracy's ranks (or promote them higher if they are already nobles).

The most honorable of characters become lightning rods to those who seek valorous leaders to pledge their loyalty to. Many a would-be monarch has discovered that it is far better to pretend to have great honor than play the part of a dastardly villain.

| Honor RankBenefits/Penalties | |
|---|---|
| -40. | Character becomes a villainous NPC under the GM's control |
| -30 to -39 | Enemy (Major). |
| -20 to -29 | -2 to Charisma. +2 to Intimidation. |
| -10 to -19 | Enemy (Minor). |
| -1 to -9 | -1 to Charisma. +1 to Intimidation. |
| 0 to +9 | The player character is unknown for his deeds. Good or ill. |
| 10 to 19 | +1 to Charisma. |
| 20 to 29 | Patron. |
| 30 to 39 | Gifts. |
| 40 to 49 | Ennoblement & Holdings. |
| 50 to 59 | +2 to Charisma. |
| 60 to 69 | Followers. |
| 70 to 79 | Patron. |
| 80 to 89 | Expanded & Holdings. |
| 90 to 99 | Sidekick. |
| 100 | +4 to Charisma. |

**Charisma Bonus:** Honorable characters are well liked and treated with deference. Many individuals want to be their friends or instinctively let their guards down with them in a way that they would not normally with other people. This helps the Honorable tremendously in social dealings.

**Ennoblement and Holdings:** Player characters who are already nobles are not Ennobled but moved up the next rank in terms of title (Baron become Counts, Counts become Dukes, and so on). They also are gifted with expanded holdings. Clergymen are also promoted within their Church with control of a Dioceses given or expanded.

Those who turn down Ennoblement are still offered a position of authority; like leader of a guild, an officer's rank, the title of "Sheriff" (a far more lucrative career in Winterweir than its equivalent on Earth), or a counselor's position.

**Followers:** The hero gains a band of five devoted followers. These may be apprentice wizards, fellow knights, newly ordained priests, or any other appropriate sort of character. Any casualties are not automatically replaced. So long as the hero has the Honor necessary to gain this benefit, he may trade an Honor Award to gain five more followers. The followers must be cared for by the players, though a Leadership check (see Page 38) will allow them to fend for themselves. Otherwise, they are completely loyal to the hero and obey him through most things. They have equipment appropriate for their station.

Take note that one doesn't need the Followers Edge to assemble an army. These are just exceptionally loyal.

**Gifts:** The player character receives a gift appropriate to his station. These are not minor gifts but exceptionally important ones like a mystical sword or a small keep. Gifts are meant to convey the profound gratitude of a very powerful group or force. Depending on who the player characters helped in the past, they may even be esoteric in nature like a set of limited wishes.

**Patronage:** The player character gains either the Mentor or Connections Edge. The player character is contacted by an organization or a powerful individual that wants to subsidize their activities. They will give aid as appropriate while working to help the player advance any mutual goals that they share. If the player character's Honor ever drops below the score necessary to acquire Patronage then the group immediately drops its ties. Mentor characters tend to be more loyal but even they will eventually break ties if the character's Honor continues to drop.

**Sidekick:** Sidekicks are drawn by the player characters fame. The character in question should have a reasonable amount of useful skills and be a Wild Card. They are not going to be as talented as the player character themselves but are anxious to learn. A Game Master should take full advantage that most are drawn to the player character because of (likely exaggerated) legends about them.

## Dishonor Penalties

Dishonor has its own problems. Infamy is not something to joke about in Alacarn. It carries a burden of fear and hatred wherever it goes. Those who have been dishonored do not carry a noble mystique. For the most part they are hated and despised wherever they go. The only benefit is that they tend to induce fear far more easily in those that they encounter. When a man has lost his Honor and Integrity, then he has very little to hold him back.

The Dishonored rack up enemies very quickly and often find themselves on the run from the law across many lands. Few will defend a dishonored character from recriminations. This only causes them to become more bitter towards society as a whole. Thus, a cycle of dishonor and retribution against the innocent begins.

Most Dishonored are quite content in their roles as hated outlaws but a few take up the long and difficult road of redemption.

**Charisma Penalty:** Dishonored characters are considered to be rogues and are often the subjects of rumor. Even if their crimes are already dastardly, the Dishonored will soon find that they have even more heinous deeds attributed to them. This Charisma penalty afflicts all Social tests where they are recognized. The exception is Intimidation, where their Charisma penalty becomes a bonus.

**Enemy:** The Dishonored rack up enemies very quickly. These may be people or associates of individuals that they have wronged or they may simply be meddling do-gooders who consider it their duty to bring the character to justice. Others may hope to make a name for themselves by destroying the character. As long as they remain Dishonored, these enemies will not go away. Killing one merely results in another replacing them after a month's time. This will continue so long as they remain at Negative Honor/Integrity.

**Psyche**

*Winterweir* is not a horror setting. In a horror setting, player characters would be expected to be largely overwhelmed the creatures that they face. Instead, the world of Teth-Ammon is meant to be one where characters persevere against the unnamable monstrosities that exist in the dark. However, the setting does contain horror *elements*.

*Psyche* represents a character's mental fortitude. The countless atrocities in the setting are enough to shake

the sanity of even strong-willed men. A character with a weak psyche will be subject to deliberating mental effects from the many things they encounter over the course of their adventures. They may develop nightmares or even full blown madness if what they encounter is sufficiently horrible.

In addition to the Psyche System (see below), a character's Psyche score modifies any check where someone is attempting to influence a player character. Psyche scores are added to any roll involving Guts or defensive Tests of Will.

**Psyche System**

The Psyche System largely replaces the Fear rules described in the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*. So long as Narrators are able to get the proper reaction from player characters regarding traumatic events, the previous system can function fine. But we believe that the Psyche System is a more effective tool for realizing the mood of desolation and madness that haunts Teth-Ammon.

The first thing that Narrators should know when using this system is that it is divided into three separate types of tests. Fear Tests, Horror Tests, and Madness Tests. Each one represents a very different kind of effect that a player character must undergo. The Game Master has broad discretion to determining when a character should be required to make a check. A 12 year old character with the Yellow and Young Hindrances is much more likely to make a fear check against a threatening man with a sword while a soldier with a backstory of surviving a terrible war would just shrug it off. Some recommendations for when a check may be called upon will be placed below.

It is possible for characters to quickly rack up mental infirmities in this game, so Narrators should beware of driving their player's characters completely over the edge. Someone who wants to run a more light hearted game should probably look into using the *Savage World's* Fear rules rather than the Psyche System. Characters should also be allowed downtime to seek Treatment or otherwise learn how to handle their fears (see below).

One thing to remember about the Psyche System is that it does not wholly deal with the supernatural. Player characters can be horrified and stricken mad by encountering entirely man made evils. Some human beings are capable of being far more evil than most demons.

Whenever a character is called to make a Psyche System check, he must roll his Guts score modified by his Psyche. He may roll a Spirit check in place of Guts if he lacks this skill (also modified by his Psyche score). A successful result means that the player character is unaffected. While a failure results in them making a roll on the appropriate Test table.

## Fear Tests

Fear Tests are made when a character is faced with something that not only threatens the character but actually overwhelms them. A Fear check should not occur when player characters are faced with danger, even when novices. Instead, it is a reaction to the realization that combat seems to be futile.

| d6 Fear Test Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | No Effect | By the luck of the dice, the hero actually suffers no ill effects for his encounter. |
| 2 | Scream | The player character lets out a horrified scream that prevents any chance of surprise and instantly alerts the enemy to their presence. They are also lose the initiative for that round. |
| 3 | Stunned Shock | The player character is so appalled by the sight that he is unable to move for a full round, even to dodge or defend themselves. |
| 4 | Berserk Reaction | The hero launches himself to attack the object of his fear in a freakish overreaction. |
| 5 | Flight | The character is set to running for 1d6 rounds from the sight at their full pace. |
| 6 | Horror Stricken | The player character is treated as if failing a Horror check. They should roll on the Horror Test table. |

A Game Master should call for a Fear check whenever player characters are faced with foes that seem to be utterly impossible to face. Outrageous enemy numbers or particularly powerful opponents that have demonstrated their superiority to the characters might bring about a Fear check. Supernatural creatures or sights from the Far Chaos and Netherdeep are well known to induce Fear. Particularly grizzly sights or displays of violent cruelty can also induce Fear Tests.

## Horror Tests

Horror Tests are one level higher than Fear Tests. They are the result when a sight is not only frightening but genuinely traumatizing to the character. Not only is the character scared but his entire world view is shaken by the sight that they see. This may the death of a loved one, the sight of a particularly horrific murder, or the sight of an unholy monster's grizzly handiwork. An analogy would be encountering a ghoul might incur a Fear check. Watching a ghoul devour a bunch of corpses or an innocent traveler would be a Horror check.

| d6 Fear Test Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | No Effect | By the luck of the dice, the hero actually suffers no ill effects for his encounter. |
| 2 | Delayed Effect | The character suffers no ill-effects for the moment but will develop them later on. Re-roll this table until you achieve results other than 1 or 2. They will manifest 1d6 hours after the encounter. |
| 3 | Revulsion | The player character becomes violently ill and must make a Vigor check not to regurgitate for a full round. They are at a -1 penalty for as long as they are at the scene, becoming nauseated from the sight. |
| 4 | Hallucination | The hero suffers from visions related to the incident in his day to day life for 1d10 days after the incident. |
| 5 | Nightmares | The player character gains the Nightmares Hindrance. |
| 6 | Insanity | The player character rolls on the Madness Test Table instead. |

| d20 Insanity Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Berserking Fury | The hero gains all the flaws from the Berserk Edge but none of the benefits. Characters with the Berserk Edge already instead get the Bloodthirsty Hindrance. |
| 2 | Delusions of Grandeur | The player character gains the Overconfident or the Delusional Hindrance. They believe themselves to be greater than they are; possibly even different people altogether. They cope with the horror of what they have seen by pretending to be better than they are. |
| 3 | Dissassociative Identity Disorder | The hero develops a second personality that they revert to in times of extreme stress. This personality should be nearly the complete opposite of the player's regular personality. They may or may not be aware of what they do while acting on this new personality. |
| 4 | Religious Mania | The hero gains the Zealot Hindrance. They delude themselves into a religious fervor; seeing signs and portents of the End of the World all around. Their views on religion color everything and they become fanatically devoted to the most minor tenants. |
| 5 | Quixotic Worldview | The hero retreats into a romantic and chivalrous worldview about the world. Unfortunately, this is *Winterweir* and this is a decidedly aberrant view of the place. Things are seen in shades of black and white while good deeds are rewarded with evil doers punished. People are naturally good and everything will work out in the end. This view is conducive to adventuring but borders on the hopelessly naive at times. They will also refuse to face anything too horrible or believe the absolute worst of people. |
| 6 | Masochism | The character likes to feel pain. They will allow himself to suffer an Injury whenever he enters combat unless a Spirit check is made. The character will often whip themselves or otherwise engage in acts of violence against themselves. This is an insanity due to the fact they allow themselves to become actually injured. |
| 7 | Sadism | The hero likes to inflict pain in a violent manner. They must kill or torture a character at least once an adventure unless they make a Spirit check. Sparing an enemy also requires a Spirit check as they desire to cause them agony. |
| 8 | Bloodthirsty | The player character gains the Bloodthirsty Hindrance. |
| 9 | Megalomania | The player character gains the Major form of the Power Mad Hindrance. |
| 10 | Addiction (Minor) | The character gains a minor addiction to something like alcohol, sex, Soyoma, or gambling. Really, compared to some other results on this table, they got off light. This takes the form of the Habit Hindrance. |
| 11 | Addiction (Major) | The player character gains a Habit in its major form. They become full blown addicts to their particular vice and must have it in copious quantities to feel normal. It will be a drain on both finances and morale. |
| 12 | Paranoia | The player character develops a fear that their are enemies around every corner. All Social Reactions are at a -1 Penalty due to his inherent suspicion. The exception to this is Intimidation. On the plus side, the character gains a +1 to his Notice rolls as he is always on alert. |
| 13 | Amnesia | The player character completely loses their memory in the attempt to blot out what they've seen. Their skills are unaffected but they must be told that they have a skill to realize they have it. |
| 14 | Fascination | The character develops an unhealthy fascination with whatever it is that scarred his mind. He is interested in learning all that he can about them and what makes them tick. This may develop into affectionate feelings for them that could eventually corrupt the soul. |
| 15 | Unthinking Hatred | The character develops a unimaginable hatred towards some thing or group, probably related to whatever drove him to madness. When they see the object of their hatred, they must make a Spirit check not to fly into a murderous rage at them. |
| 16 | Melancholy | The afflicted gains the Melancholy Hindrance. This is similar to a form of Depression and will often result in them having difficulty becoming motivated or caring about their fellow man's plight. Game Masters may want to substitute the Death Wish Hindrance. |

| d20 Insanity Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | Aversion | The hero becomes gut sick at anything related to what he saw. A character who failed this check while fighting a vampire may become faint at the sight or blood or physically ill. They may even avoid anything that even remotely reminds them of what caused their madness. |
| 18 | Pyromania | Fire is the great cleanser and many believe it can heal the spirit or destroy evil. The hero develops a love of fire and burning things. He will use it above all other weapons and must make a Spirit check (modified by Psyche) to move out from a burning building or put out a fire. *This includes if the player character is the one on fire.* |
| 19 | Whisperings of the Unseen | The character hears voices from the gods, demons, or the ghosts of those that he's slain. Whether they are genuine or not is up to the Game Master. However, they torment the character with paranoid fantasies and taunts. Player characters are at a -1 penalty to all rolls in stressful situations and if discovered, they will treated as if they are demonically possessed (see below). |
| 20 | Demonic Possession | The character's madness has attracted a Horror from the Netherdeep and he is Possessed. The character will be burned at the stake or hung if discovered (only rarely will anyone attempt an Exorcism). The Game Master should role-play the Demon as a voice in the player character's head and occasionally make Tests of Will. Unlike the other options, Demonic Possession cannot be cured by other methods of treating insanity. It's a supernatural affliction. |

## Madness Tests

Madness Tests occur when a player character has the very core of his identity ripped to shreds by an encounter. Unlike in H.P. Lovecraft, this rarely occurs because they've encountered a supernatural horror (though it may be the result of seeing something truly godlike and terrifying).

| d6 Madness Test Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | No Effect | By the luck of the dice, the hero actually suffers no ill effects for his encounter. |
| 2 | Delayed Effect | The character suffers no ill-effects for the moment but will develop them later on. Re-roll this table until you achieve results other than 1 or 2. They will manifest 1d6 hours after the encounter. |
| 3 | Temporary Insanity | The character gains the effect of an Insanity roll (see below) for 2d6 weeks. Afterwards, they will snap out of it. |
| 4 | Catatonic | The player character is paralyzed by the sight and cannot move as if he was subdued by lethal damage. He must succeed in a Spirit check to break out of the state. Wild Cards can make one every hour but Extras are considered permanently afflicted unless treated. |
| 5 | Driven Mad | The player character gains the effects of an Insanity roll until treated. |
| 6 | Total Lunacy | The player character rolls twice on the Insanity table and gains the effects of both until treated. |

Things that might induce a Madness Test include the horrible betrayal of a close and personal friend, the slaughter of one's home community or loved ones, the realization that one has killed innocent people, being tortured for an extensive period, or being mentally tampered with. Madness checks should not be causal things and only occur at suitably dramatic moments in a campaign when a character's life has been utterly brutalized.

## Forms of Madness

It would be a very poor game if we provided characters with rules for inflicting madness but did not provide examples of what sort of afflictions that might occur to a character. Whenever a player character is afflicted with Madness, make a D20 roll from this chart and afflict the appropriate penalty. Another option will be to choose one that fits the situation or the player character's reaction as role-played. It is recommended that Narrators mix it up so that a player character is not afflicted with the same form of madness twice. When the same roll is achieved twice, re-roll and choose another form of madness to use.

Take note that these conditions are meant to reflect what would be interesting for role-playing. Genuine insanity rarely lends itself to drama and entertainment. These are meant to show a more cinematic form of madness that allows players to continue their play in peace.

## Hardening your Soul

A hero must only make one successful Fear, Horror, or Madness Test regarding a specific horror. From that point on, they are immunized to that type of event. A warrior who witnesses the brutal impalement of an entire army will never have to worry about being sickened by the sight of it again (though he may be morally revolted). If the character fails his Test then he is considered still subject to making checks in its presence. Only by overcoming a fear can its presence be permanently removed.

### Treatment

Winterweir is not really a good place for the insane. Asylums and Sanitariums exist in the world but they are almost uniformly places where the deranged are meant to be placed away from their family's prying eyes or to safeguard the public rather than to get well (perhaps it is not so different from our own world). Exceptions exist, almost always run by the priests of Kaalon, but these are rare places of refuge in a sea of horror. To be cast amongst the insane is as close to a permanent prison sentence as exists in a world that usually prefers to maim or execute its criminals.

Ironically, this environment has encouraged most individuals with mental illness to try and hide their affliction. A frightening number of lunatics walk the streets of Alacarn's cities or are accepted amongst the armies of the world. If a person is not a gibbering madman spouting blasphemies down the street then he's usually able to pass himself off as a normal member of society. Really, when a knight takes a little TOO much pleasure in slaughter or a nobleman declares himself a god; it's almost expected in some quarters. This leads to an even larger number of murders and suicides than might be found in more civilized realms.

Player characters can choose to try and get better. Here are some options for those who seek to rid themselves of the Insane Hindrance.

**Alchemy and Medicine:** Doctors are not really capable of coping with serious mental illness in this time. Still, some have made some effort into the study of the mind. The most effective are Alchemists and Apothecaries who have experimented in various powders for purifying the mind. If a player character chooses this route, have them roll a 1d6. They may only attempt this method once per month but it does not interfere with adventuring.

| 1d6 Alchemy and Medicine Chart | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dangerous Quack | The player character suffers an Injury of some sort in the physician's care. |
| 2 | Quack | The player character gains no benefit or penalty for his treatment (other than lost income). |
| 3-4 | Addictive Medicine | The player characters are capable of making a Spirit check to throw off the effects of their insanity but gain an Habit (Minor) to the medicine ascribed to them. Failure means that they keep their insanity and are still addicts. They may shake off their addiction with three consecutive successful Spirit checks (modified by Psyche). These rolls can only be made once a month. |
| 4 | Healing Medicine | The player character is capable of making a Spirit check to throw off the effects of their insanity but must also make a Vigor check (modified by Psyche) to avoid getting the Habit Hindrance. |
| 5 | Successful Treatment | The player character throws off the effects. |

**Faith and Counseling:** Faith and the insane are a volatile mixture. However, the mental discipline and empathy required by some faiths is enough that it might substitute for more modern treatments. Retreating to a monastery of some sort and devoting oneself to a life of prayer or meditation can often help a character cope with his demons.

Once there, they may make a Spirit check, modified by the character's Psyche score, for every week spent in contemplation. If five successes are achieved then the player character will be rid of his insanity. These rolls may be modified by Bennies. Three failures in a row will transform the character's Insanity to Religious Mania. This is an excellent time for a time jump in-game.

**Magic:** Adventurers have the option of seeking out spell casters that might possess the knowledge and wisdom to create a mystical cure for their condition (especially those with the *Greater Healing* power, which removes mental maladies as well as physical). Such things rarely come cheap and the priests of Kaalon usually have worse cases to deal with than anything a player character will tend to suffer. Still, they are the most effective method to cure insanity even if it requires an extensive amount of searching to find priests or wizards skilled in such arts.

**Training and Willpower:** Shocking as it may seem, some player characters may attempt to cope with their insanity through simply attempting to fight it off mentally. They throw themselves into a intense training regime or their work while trying to work through their condition alone. This option has the benefit of not keeping player characters from adventuring, they simply have to roleplay out trying to drive themselves back to sanity. Player characters who attempt this may make a Spirit check, modified by Psyche, every month. Three consecutive rolls will result in the insanity vanishing. Any failure means that the player character must start again.

# Magic

Magic is a result of the Terra'ssar tinkering with the fundamental nature of the cosmos. Magic is a product of a time when the physical laws of the universe were decidedly different. It is something meant to be practiced by beings that can only exist in the Far Chaos (or SHOULD only be able to exist in the Far Chaos). Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your opinion, the Dragon's experiments have permanently altered the genetics of the races on Teth-Ammon.

Almost all beings are capable of channeling mystical energy to some degree. Still, the potential that exists within certain humans varies drastically. Only a small few show have the potential to learn how to do anything more than pick up a vague feeling of dread in tainted magic's presence. Like being a Doctor or an exceptionally talented surgeon, true magic requires inborn genius or dedicated decades of study to practice.

Users of magic must beware in the world of Teth-Ammon. While magicians do not suffer the automatic hate of others, they must either command a people's awe or fear. Magic is not loved in *Winterweir* but it is respected for its power. Those who show weakness while wielding sorcery will find themselves subject to a torch-wielding mob.

### The Aether

The Aether is the source of all sorcery in the universe. A sunless and surreal dimension of mists mixed with mysterious lights, the Aether is the border between the Far Chaos and the physical world. Believed to have been artificially created by the Terra'ssar, the Aether filters the raw energies of the Far Chaos into something that can be safely channeled. The pure energies of magic are thus referred to as the *Ether*.

Every time sorcerers use magic, they summon a little Ether from the Aether to empower themselves. This energy is not totally used up in the spells and causes minor effects in the surrounding area like the growing of flowers (for spells relating to life and healing) or the raising of the temperature for a league's distance (if the spell was to summon a blast of fire). The dimensional barriers weaken because of this use. Some believe will eventually cause the world to fall into one of the various realities bordering it.

Ether that has bled off into reality often gathers in certain places, these are called *Vortices*. Wizards seek out Vortices because they make magic easier. Even if they are subject to strange happenings. Almost as important as Vortices is *Ether Stones*, which are a literal gathering of Ether in physical form.

### Alchemists, Sorcerers, Priests, and Wizards

The majority of player characters will fall into one of the above four categories if they are wielders of magic. Each of them carries a different set of social expectations and should be role-played accordingly.

***Alchemists*** (*Arcane Background: Weird Science*) consider what they do not to be magic. Or at least, they consider what they do to be a mixture of magic and science. Most Alchemists disdain the barriers that are placed between the Common Man and wizards to a certain extent. This is in large part due to the Children of the Divine Spark's egalitarian philosophies. They believe magic should be spread amongst the world and the populous educated for the good of all. In truth, Alchemists are considered even less reliable than wizards and often shunned for their bizarre experiments.

***Sorcerers*** (*Arcane Background: Psionics*) are those individuals whose magical talent is so incredibly powerful that they develop supernatural abilities on their own. Many are quite arrogant about their powers and by the time they are discovered, find they have no patience for regular wizardry. Sorcerers tend to come in two varieties; those who were shunned for their abilities at an early age or those who were almost religiously revered for their powers. Neither lends itself to a stable personality type.

***Priests*** (*Arcane Background: Faith*) are aware of the Aether. But only the Priests of Heton believe that their power does not come from the gods they worship. Many actually become quite offended at the idea that they are just working another form of sorcery (if technically true). The populous also believes that they work miracles and tend to treat spell-casting priests with suitable religious awe. Many priests, especially those who lack magic, the deification of spell-casters.

***Wizards*** (*Arcane Background: Spells*) are the formally trained magi of *Winterweir*. Most serve apprenticeships that last from adolescence to early twenties. Only a rare few are able to study the path of a magician and take up spell-casting much quicker. Wizards are not beloved by the populous but few people would do them harm out of fear of their abilities (often greatly inflated in the public consciousness).

**Charlatans, Diabolists, and Hedge Mages**

For every formally trained wizard, there are said to be ten imposters and goodness knows how many dabblers.

***Charlatans*** (*Arcane Background: None*) are an all too common sight across Alacarn. The roads are constantly filled with individuals claiming tremendous powers of sorcery or supernatural acumen. This is considered chicanery and hokum by even uneducated peasants. But people still fall for their charms and predictions on the off chance that it might contain a grain of truth. Charlatans use *Persuasion* and parlor tricks to get by. Ironically, many real wizards spend some time with the more talented con men. Thus theyz learn how to impress the skeptical without wasting precious Ether.

***Diabolists*** (*Arcane Background: Faith or Spells*) are a fearsome sight and hunted relentlessly by Demon Hunters. The Demons of the Netherdeep make a habit of mass producing books of easily understood *Summon* spells and personally teaching covens the ways of magic. Many circles of druids, goddess worshiping witches, and minor priests have agreed to make pacts in order to learn how to work miracles. From there, the unforgivable nature of the sin leads to eventual full corruption. Others, especially peasants, note that they have little to lose in the miserable world of Teth-Ammon by serving the cause of evil (nothing to lose but their souls, that is).

***Hedge Mages*** (*Arcane Background: Psionics or Spells*) are something the Grand Arcanum wishes it could stamp out but probably never will. Usually, they are the result of Sorcerers spontaneously manifesting powers and developing their own superstitions about how to work their magic. These they pass onwards and form corrupt oral traditions. Hedge Mages are reckless with their powers and are often easy prey for demons or cults. Some also develop delusions as their minds are ill prepared for mystical power.

**Mutants** (*Arcane Background: Super Powers* or the *Mutation* Hindrance) Mutants are the hated products of sorcery's warping effects. The vast majority of them do not possess powers, they are merely deformed in some kind of horrifying way. Those that do have powers often have a stronger sense of self-worth than others and become leaders amongst their wretched kind.

The luckiest mutants are able to pass themselves off as normal humans. But most are instantly recognizable as products of sorcery. Children born mutants are usually smothered in their cribs unless their parents can protect them from infanticide. Even then, it is often the result that they must live in exile.

Unluckier still are those who develop mutations from exposure to magical energies. These are forced into hiding by the events that occur. When they are discovered, panic usually ensues amongst the populous and many innocents are killed over it.

Mutants are not innately evil and it is only in certain areas that they are killed on sight. They are, however, decidedly unwelcome wherever they go. Certain countries like Amania or Winterweir even allow them to form their own communities. However, even their mercy is a poor substitute for the sympathy that they deserve. Many turn to evil or the black magic that warped them in revenge.

A few heroic mutants, despite all prejudice, have emerged.

**New Language: Sharoth**

Sharoth is a language based on a variant of the Dragon's own precise language. Over the centuries, it has mutated so that regular mortals can pronounce it and to add words to properly describe concepts that are utterly lost on Draconic minds (like compassion and deities). The spoken form of Sharoth is a mysterious and terrifying sounding language that is used to precisely calculate how to perform specific magical effects. It is also very useful for impressing locals and adds a +1 to all Intimidate and Persuasion attempts when invoked. Variants are used by both the Crimson Oath and Grand Arcanum.

The written form of Sharoth is only useful for making calculations and describing Spell Work given it solely

deals with matters magical. Likewise, the spoken form is useless for communication.

### Learning New Powers

Learning new spells is not an automatic thing in *Winterweir*. Simply wishing to know a power is not enough to have it actually occur. There are vast arcane abilities available to those who are willing to probe for them and discovering them is important. No new power may be purchased without first learning it in-game. Player characters must either find a mentor, consult tomes, or create their own powers (see below).

Thankfully, this is actually easier than it sounds. Alchemists who belong to the Children of the Divine Spark, Priests who are in good standing with their church, and Wizards who belong to either the Crimson Oath or Grand Arcanum can just go down to their local chapterhouse or library to perform research. In most cases, this doesn't even require a roll or that far of a distance to travel.

Heretics, Sorcerers, and Rogues are a different story. They must develop their own abilities, find mentors, or go to the old adventuring standby of murdering more powerful magicians to take their books of spells. Many are said to plumb tombs because that is one of the easiest ways of uncovering unguarded magic. The Grand Arcanum, as one wizard put it, locks up the best stuff.

### Creating New Powers

It is possible for player characters to create their own powers. Indeed, it is encouraged by the setting. To do so, however, requires the *Knowledge* (*Arcane*) attribute. This represents a fundamental knowledge of magic's nature. New spells must be approved by the Narrator. Game Masters should use the other spells present in this book as a guidepost.

The costs of creating a spell can be defrayed by going for the components directly rather than purchasing them. Sorcerers have it slightly easier time as the Research Costs and Study times are halved. Adventurers can continue adventuring during Study Time, it simply is done 'off camera.'

### Magical Side Effects

Magic is a bitter master and its use can have a powerful effect on those that do not properly know its application. Unfortunately, according to most peasants, magic has a tendency to backfire against those around spell casters who attempt more than they can handle rather than the magicians themselves. **Chaos Surges** are the most infamous of results for ill-advised magical use.

Some suggest that too much magic use in an area can also have long term consequences as well. Areas become perpetually trapped in one season or another, gravity is permanently destroyed in a spot, or the dead rise from the grave as undead whenever they fall in a certain place. Such things are beyond the scope of the rules but Narrators should always remember this maxim "Magic is a demanding mistress that always enacts a heavy toll of those who court her favors."

**Creating Spell Requirements**

| Spell Rank | Study Time Requirements | Research Cost | Successes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Novice | 1 month | 1,000 Bronze Pieces | 1 success |
| 2 Seasoned | 2 month | 2,000 Bronze Pieces | 2 successes |
| 3 Veteran | 3 months | 5,000 Bronze Pieces | 3 successes |
| 4 Heroic | 6 months | 10,000 Bronze Pieces | 4 successes |
| 5 Lengendary | 1 Year | 10,000 Bronze Pieces | 5 successes |

| Chaos Surge Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Backfire | The player character suffers the effect of the spell instead. |
| 2 | Misfire | The spell strikes another target instead of the intended. |
| 3 | Overload | The spells effect is increased dramatically and goes out of control in the surrounding. |
| 4 | Mystical Explosion | Everyone for one hundred feet takes 1d6 damage. |
| 5 | Befoulment | All water becomes fouled and all food rotted for a ten block radius. |
| 6 | Monstrous Transformation | The subject of a spell is Shape-shifted into something else. The transformation is permanent until dispelled. |
| 7 | Wave of Terror | All people in the immediate area are effected with a Cause Fear effect. |
| 8 | Uncontrollable Effect (minor) | Things fly through the air, hair grows, and mirrors crack. |
| 9 | Uncontrollable Effect (medium) | Plants uncontrollably grow, Meat on plates becomes living, the walls start to bleed. |
| 10 | Uncontrollable Effect (major) | Houses levitate into the air, trees become permanently animated, creatures become intelligent, and stoves belch forth infernos. |
| 11 | Horrifying Sight | Everyone in the immediate area catches sight of something terrible behind the magic and must make a Horror check. |
| 12 | The Damned | The ghosts of the nearest dead bodies are summoned. Alternatively, fresh corpses are animated and compelled to seek out the caster. |
| 13 | Wave of Destruction | All plant life is killed for half a mile radius. |
| 14 | Demonic Attention | A Demon senses the character and becomes interested in their doings. |
| 15 | Cursed(minor) | Either the caster or someone surrounding him is cursed (GM's choice). |
| 16 | Cursed (major) | Either the caster or someone surrounding him is cursed (GM's choice). |
| 17 | Teleportation | The hero and his party are teleported 1d20 miles away or even further at the Game Master's discretion. |
| 18 | Physics Breaking Down | The laws of physics in an area are permanently warped in some way. |
| 19 | Mutation | A nearby person is Mutated by the Chaos Surge. |
| 20 | Rift | An explosion of magical force tears open a rift to another dimension. It will remain for 1d6 rounds and anything can reach in or walk through from both sides. |

**Chaos Surges**

Whenever a spell caster fails at using an ability, excluding Alchemists or Mutants, they must roll a 1d6. If the result is a 1 then a Chaos Surge occurs. A player then must roll a D20 to determine the form that a Chaos Surge manifests.

A player character may spend a Benny to avert a Chaos surge or re-roll on the Chaos Surge table, showing a caster desperately attempting to correct the magical flaw that he's unleashed. This is impossible at Vortices and may be denied by the Game Master if they feel that the power unleashed was done so recklessly.

**Vortices**

Vortices are magical locations that make spell-casting easier. They are places where magical power flows freely and is almost intoxicating to those of mystical senses. Mystics can sense the potency of such places and attempt to build chantries, holy pools, sacred circles, monasteries,

and temples around such places. Many small wars have been fought over such places with magicians pulling the strings to acquire them for their own use. Such power has its risks, however, with chances of Chaos Surges being far more likely.

They are also central to being able to create magical items in *Winterweir*.

**System:** Casting at a Vortrice adds a bonus of +1 to +5 to one's Arcane Skill check, depending on the power of the location. The chance for a Chaos surge is increased proportionately by the bonus, so that any failure at the most powerful of Vortices will result in a 100% chance of a Chaos Surge.

### Crafting Magical Items

A player character who wishes to create a magical item can certainly do so in the world of Teth-Ammon. Such items are incredibly valuable but not at all impossible to actually find. Magical Items can only be created by Veteran or greater characters with the appropriate Edges.

**One-Shot Magical Items:** Doing so requires material equal to a hundred Bronze pieces per Ether Point spent and a day's time spent in a Vortrice for each power level of the spell. It also requires a successful Arcane Skill check. Player characters acquiring too many of these objects can be balanced by the fact that it is rather difficult to lug around a large number of them.

**Enhanced Items:** Require a *Masterpiece* work (see Craftmanship on page 39) and approximately one month's time of enchantment for every point of enhancement. The enchantment process is limited by the skill of the magician.

| Enhancement Table | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Roll** | **Cater Rank** | **Enhancement Limit** |
| 1 | Novice | N/A |
| 2 | Seasoned | N/A |
| 3 | Veteran | +3 |
| 4 | Heroic | +4 |
| 5 | Legendary | +5 |

Each level of Enhancement requires a success on an Arcane Skill check. A failure during any of these rolls will result in the entire work being ruined. They also must make a Knowledge (Arcane) check to understand how to properly apply all the magical runes.

**Multi-Use Magical Items:** A Multi-Use magical item requires the player character to have a Masterpiece Item in his possession. This item must then be prepared with a Knowledge (Arcane) check over the course of a month. From there, they may recast spells over it to charge it for up to ten uses with their Ether Points. If any of the spells fail then the item is ruined and all of the work lost. They may spend an additional month enchanting it for every extra ten uses they want to use. Recharging such items require the same system but do not require commissioning a new Masterpiece work.

**Permanent Magical Devices:** A device that restores its Ether Points in order to perform a continuous magical effect is created just like a Multi-Use Magical Item but the character must acquire a continuously replenishing mystical power source. This must be done in game and may include binding a Demon or Dream Spirit, removing the heart of a Vortrice, or sacrificing some of his own Ether Points permanently to the device.

### "MacGuffin Powers"

*Winterweir's* magic is something that Narrators should take full advantage of for its majesty and versatility. This includes the creation of MacGuffin powers. Does the Game Master need to create a spell that has the potential to destroy all life on the world? Go ahead and create it. Does he need something to create massive amounts of undead that will march across the world without worrying about specific Ether Point costs? Entirely possible. MacGuffin powers should not normally pass into the hands of player characters but with so many immortal and Demon associating wizards across the setting, there's nothing stopping magic being a MacGuffin to get the plot moving.

It only really matters if the Game Master lets the player characters near the villain's spell book.

**New Powers for Savage Worlds**

There are no end of Powers available for player characters. In the world of Teth-Ammon, there are actually *thousands* of Powers that have been researched by wizards. The untold and unimaginable vistas available for spell casters represents ultimate power for those who crave it.

| Chimera | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Seasoned |
| Ether Points | Special |
| Range | Special |
| Duration | Special |
| Trappings | Chemicals, Hypodermics, Scapels, Sew, Syringes |

*Winterweir's* alchemists frequently perform unnatural experiments into the creation of life (or transformation of it). Some wizards and priests are also guilty of this act, using the Power of the Mind to twist flesh in hideous ways. For the most part, creating *Chimera* is a time-consuming process that takes a great deal of time and effort. Those who can warp bodies instantly are to be feared indeed. A person with this Power may create a creature with one pip of Attributes, Skills, or Edges per Ether Point spent. The creation process can be dragged out over months or even years.

They may reduce the cost by half for incorporating parts of existing life forms with stats equal to or greater than the pips already incorporated. Likewise, the cost of Ether Points may be reduced by 1 for every 1000 bronze pieces ($1000 equivalent) spent in chemicals and equivalent. The Laboratory Edge provides 10 free Ether Points for each creation of this power. Despite the name, this Power can be used to create creatures of non-living material as well, like golems or homunculus.

Game Masters are free to restrict the abilities of chimera. It is recommended that no creature can be created that has more stat points than the Creator himself. At least for player characters or those without an in-story reason to make such a beast.

| Communion | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Novice |
| Ether Points | 1 |
| Range | Special |
| Duration | 10 Minutes (1/10) |
| Trappings | Dolls, Glowing Eyes, Meditation, Pools, Words |

*Communion* allows the player character to communicate across vast distances, potentially even planes of existence. Both images and words can be shared with the user communicating telepathically. Unless the user has the *Speak Languages* Power, they must either communicate through imagery or share a language. Those who 'hear' the listener will be able to recognize the 'voice' of the speaker if they are familiar with them. Two-way communication is possible at the discretion of the caster.

In order to establish mental contact, a caster must be familiar with the person's general location and appearance. If he possesses a personal possession of the individual or fragment of their body then they can be contacted automatically with no roll necessary. Knowing the full true name of the contacted will provide a +2 bonus to rolls in order to communicate with them.

| Illusion | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Novice |
| Ether Points | 2+ |
| Range | Smarts |
| Duration | 10 Minutes (2+/10) |
| Trappings | Drawn Pictures, Hand Gestures, Prisms, Words |

The users of this power are capable of crafting immaterial tricks of light and sound. Illusions are capable of being seen by either everyone around the caster or by a single subject. Constructs, Elementals, Ethereal Beings, and the Undead are immune to *Illusion* due to the fact that it is a mind-based effect. It has no ability to influence beings of different physiology than mortals.

For each subject being effected, the Illusionist must make a resisted Spell Casting versus Spirit check. A successful result means that the subject believes that the Illusion is real. If a subject is more familiar with an illusion's

subject than the caster, they may make an additional Smarts check against the original Spell-casting roll. An additional Ether Point must be spent for every subject to be effected.

Illusions are non-physical and touching one will instantly reveal its false nature (unless it is an illusion of an already immaterial construct like smoke or a ghost). Certain wizards have crafted variants of *Illusions* that are capable of being felt. These are very uncommon and cost an extra Ether Point to use.

| Oracle | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Novice |
| Ether Points | 1 |
| Range | Special |
| Duration | Special |
| Trappings | Astrology Charts, Crystal Balls, Tarot Cards, Tea Leaves |

Just as travel through space is possible, so is travel through time. However, navigating time is far more difficult and almost all those who have attempted it have failed to return. Instead, most magicians attempt to merely view the future and gain insight from it. These divinations are never perfect. An infinite number of possible futures exist and human action can change them. Nevertheless, many *Winterweir* seers exist.

For each success on a *Oracle* check, a player character can ask one question about the immediate future. For the sake of storytelling, the Game Master is free to state that any critical plot ruining information is "obscure" and cannot be known. In general, the Game Master should provide some clue regarding whatever questions that player characters are willing to ask. Failures may provide either no information at all or actively misleading answers.

| Revive | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Novice |
| Ether Points | 10 |
| Range | Touch |
| Duration | Special |
| Trappings | Altars, Body Runes, CPR, Electricity, Phoenix Feathers, Staves |

*Revive* is a power that many magicians covet, erroneously assuming it provides the secret to eternal life. At its simplest, *Revive* restores life to a corpse. Neither life and death are romantic in *Winterweir*. This spell is more like repairing a broken machine than a religious experience.

There are numerous conditions that make magicians wary of using *Revive*, however. The spell will not restore anyone who has died of acid, decapitation, fire, old age, or who has missing organs. *Revive* will not restore anyone who has died of acid, decapitation, fire, old age, or has missing organs. Next, *Revive* must be cast within three days unless extraordinary steps are taken to preserve the body from decomposition. Finally, the experience of death is intensely traumatic and anyone who is revived must take a permanent mental related Hindrance (Homicidal Fury, Insane, Melancholy, Nightmares, Tormented and the like are all appropriate).

Variants of the spell do exist that allow older or more damaged corpses to revived but these usually involve a human sacrifice for every year that a subject has been dead. Others variants are capable of restoring life but only bring them back as powerful undead. It is said only the Celestials, Divine Emperor, and Shadow King can restore life unconditionally. This spell is restricted at the Game Master's convenience but is one of the rarest to be found in *Winterweir*.

| Scry | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Novice |
| Ether Points | 2 |
| Range | Special |
| Duration | 10 minutes (2/10) |
| Trappings | Crystal Balls, Bowls, Mirrors, Pools of Water |

*Scry* is a spell designed to allow magicians to be able to view other places. A successful check allows them to view any area that they are able to approximate the location of. Scrying provides both auditory and visual feed of the location being viewed. It does not provide a spell caster with any more information than they might have unless they were present. Blind or Deaf spell-casters may use this Power even if they no longer have the necessary Sensory organs.

| Summon | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Seasoned |
| Ether Points | 2 |
| Range | Special |
| Duration | 1 Day (5/per Day) |
| Trappings | Braziers, Chalk Circles, Chants, Incense Pyres |

*Summon* is a Power that causes a entity (or a number of smaller entities) to be brought forth before the wizard in question. The subjects of the *Summon* Power must arrive on their own power unless the wizard has the *Teleport* Power (which can be used in conjunction with *Summon* to bring forth beings instantaneously).

Intelligent creatures may resist being summoned with a contest of wills. Those who fail are made aware of where they are being summoned and may make a resisted check for every day of travel necessary to reach the location. In order to summon an intelligent creature, their full true name must be known and a piece of their body or possession must be in the hands of the magician. Without a fragment of the body, the summoner can only make it known to a subject they wish to communicate and their general location. Non-intelligent creatures may be summoned as a group (such as a swarm of rats or insects). It is also possible to be vague in a summoning (such as summoning "Trow warriors").

*Summon* provides control over non-intelligent creatures but does not give any control over Intelligent ones unless the *Puppetry* power is used. For this reason, only experienced spell-casters regularly make use of the Summon Power and rarely without extensive preparations.

# Faiths of Winterweir

In most fantasy settings, religion plays a vital role in the lives of most people. This is still true for the people of the *Winterweir* setting. Unlike most fantasy settings, the people of *Alacarn* have no assurances of a happy afterlife. They rarely recieve direct visitations from their gods. Instead, they must take their deities' existence on faith.

Shocking, isn't it?

Given the fact that the gods of *Teth-Ammon* take no active hand in the lives of their faithful, this section of the book will more deal with the religions of the world rather than the deities themselves. Pertinent facts relating to the gods and their mythology will still be listed since, whether they exist or not, people certainly think they do.

## The Role of the Gods in Winterweir

*Winterweir* is a setting with uncountable gods of every name, shape, and variety. However, they are decidedly different from the literal anthropomorphic humanoids that exist in most settings. Instead, they are totally defined by their relationship to their human followers.

### Do the Gods exist?

Whether the gods exist is the major question that Game Masters and player characters will want to know. The official answer is "Maybe." No one is going to tell you how to run your fantasy game and we have no desire to be Lovecraftian (where a bleak and empty universe is a fact of life).

*Winterweir* is a place where such questions must be wrestled with. There's certainly ample evidence that the gods are distant and removed entities if they do exist; they make no move to protect their faithful or to stop the rampant corruption that exists in many temples. Yet, faithful will swear up and down about their encounters with the gods in dreams or minor miracles.

If one wants to run a more traditional fantasy campaign where the player characters get stopped by Paalok

in the street for a drink, there's nothing wrong with that (though it certainly changes the mood of the game). In all actuality, such encounters are far more likely to be Celestials impersonating the gods or powerful magicians

utilizing the faithful for their own purposes. Are the spirits who inhabit the Dreamland the 'real' gods of *Winterweir*? When they wield nearly omnipotent power, does it matter that they're products of human imagination? Theologians debate these questions. The average peasant doesn't care.

This is, of course, only referring to the more common gods of *Winterweir*. "Gods" like Malaxas and the Drakkath most certainly do have a literal existence. Also, what separates a nearly omnipotent magical being like Malaxas from being a god is merely a matter of terminology. The people of *Winterweir* are eager to deify something that has more power than they. Player characters might well find themselves facing something other-dimensional and unspeakable that a town has been worshiping for generations.

Really, it's all just a matter of perspective.

**Gods as Sources of Power**

It should be noted that, despite the agnostic nature of the setting, the gods play an extremely important role in *Winterweir* magic.

Despite the Grand Arcanum insisting that magic is a purely secular force that has no relationship to the divine, not even all members of that body believe it. Magic's transcendental power puts many people in a religious frame of mind and most non-Grand Arcanum "spells" are invocations to the gods.

Almost all of the major faiths in Alacarn have their own magical traditions. Traditions that attempt to pass down their secrets through their spell-casting priests. Any person with potential to wield the Power of the Mind can almost certainly write their own ticket should they choose to enter the clergy.

Part of this is simply self-serving, magic is almost a sure-fire means of compelling obedience. Few disagree when one states that one's power is a manifestation of a god's will. Also, many sincerely religious magicians believe that their sorcery is genuinely different from other the magic of other faiths.

In game terms, there is no difference between magic that draws on secular sources and those that supposedly draw on the power of the gods.

**Miracles**

Given the gods may or may not exist, one might be quick to write off the existence of miracles. This would be a mistake. Miracles play a tremendously important role in the minds of the faithful. Most citizens of Teth-Ammon believe they occur regularly and often. Those who don't believe in them are considered to be fools by the populous at large.

For the most part, these 'miracles' are little more than the daily coincidences that keep people going through their long lives. Coincidence and inexplicable phenomenon are written off as the will of the gods.

More dramatically, powerful priestly magicians often use their magic to display the glories of their god. Very few individuals understand the principles of quantum mental manipulation and "I called upon my god and something happened" is a great deal easier to grasp.

Sometimes, on Teth-Ammon, things do occur that are not easy to explain. Spontaneous prophecy and portents seem to point to a larger hand of Fate (or maybe not). There are powerful forces above humankind operating in the setting of *Winterweir*. The question of whether they are divine or not may never be answered.

## The Role of the Clergy

With the gods taking such an inactive stance or just being the product of their worshiper's minds, the role of the clergy becomes much more important. They are the closest that most beings will ever come to interacting with the divine. They serve an important role of in Teth-Ammon. Since the majority of priests and priestesses do not wield magic in the Winterweir setting, what they do other than cast spells is much more important. Below is listed the typical functions that clergy perform in Alacarn.

**Blessings**

This is the most common act that all priests perform in Teth-Ammon. The people of Alacarn are intensely

superstitious and rarely undertake any major venture without seeing the blessing of one or more of the gods. Everything from attempting to conceive a child to starting a new business is sanctified by the gods. The people of Alacarn believe that these blessings are vitally important to actually achieving any results.

A rather lucrative market exists for holy items and objects. The clergy of *Winterweir* sell countless items of blessed paraphernalia at their temples. Good luck charms, holy symbols, idols, pieces of sanctified scripture, and incense are just some of the items that countless people purchase every year.

This environment does not particularly lend itself to honesty or humility. While most priests may sincerely believe in the gods, they do not see anything wrong with enriching themselves from these purchases. Only the threat of divine retribution for fraud keeps many from becoming outright thieves.

Thankfully, only a rare few sects like Veethor's are ones that actively encourage corruption.

**Oracles**

The gift of precognition is real in *Winterweir*. Those who are not snatched up by the Grand Arcanum or Witches of the Fallen World are almost all taken in by the clergy. The majority of fortune-tellers in Alacarn are unwitting frauds. The reading of bones, cards, dice, entrails, and omens is about as effective in Alacarn as it is on Earth (in other words; not at all).

Most people of Teth-Ammon's citizens believe sincerely in the power of priests to the divine the future, however. Their insights may be metaphorical or vague but interpreting omens is one of the major duties of holy men. Individuals often consult holy men and women for oracular advice nearly as often as they seek their blessings.

The average priest is often aware that the advice that they give is going to be obscure or misleading. Most are inclined to blame themselves and their ability to interpret signs rather than doubt the gods sending them, however. Quite a few mystics are fully convinced of their own ability to tell the future and believe they receive frequent insight from the gods.

**Performers of Rites**

There are a million rites that exist in the world of Teth-Ammon. Birth, celebrations of holidays, divorce, elevation to the nobility, funerary, marriage, and the swearing in of an official to his office are just some of the more familiar rites to readers. The clergy fill out all of these roles as secular officials only exist in the Free Republic of Amania (and most of those are members of the Church of Liberty).

The precise performance of rites is what compromises the majority of a priest or priestesses training. Most of these rites are passed down orally rather than through scripture. It is rather shocking, then, that they remain as uniform across the land as they do. Whenever a rite differs from nation to nation, it is usually because a sect has made a deliberate choice to change it. Fear of the gods is a powerful motivator for getting rituals correct.

Even those citizens that are not particularly pious do not lightly disregard the necessary rites for most important social functions. A noble who does not have his army sworn to him by the gods is going to find them a great deal less loyal than they might otherwise be. Religion is a powerful unifying force throughout Teth-Ammon.

## Forms of Worship

While the clergy perform a wide variety of functions and services, the role of religious intermediary is still important to them. Almost all of Teth-Ammon's people believe in the gods even if only a few of them are particularly pious towards them. Thus, the various ways that individuals in Alacarn worship deserve description.

**Mysticism**

Despite the gods being distant, there's no end of individuals who want to get closer to them. Mystics exist at the periphery of most gods' religions. Small cults of individuals frequently gathered around prophets and hermits who attempt to achieve a deeper understanding of reality through asceticism. Mystics are not particularly appreciated by the mainline religions of Alacarn. Mystic sects tend to draw people away from worship (and tithing) and almost invariably have some major grievance against the way that the established temples carry about their business. Some even grow powerful enough to attempt to challenge their parent faiths.

Those mystics who are born with the Power of the Mind are especially dangerous. Their lifestyles almost invariably cause them to develop their power at a faster rate than is normal. Quite a few become powerful and uncontrolled in their sorcery, only further convincing them they've stumbled on great universal truths.

Half-Celestials are especially common as Mystic cult leaders. Valken seem to prefer Mysticism over mainstream religion. Mystic cults to Demae, Obaq, and Sybus are especially common.

**Ritual**

Rituals are the way that most people in the world of Teth-Ammon pay their respects to the gods. The gods tend to have services performed for them at weekly intervals. In fact, there is rarely a day when a priest is not performing some form of service in his temple. There's simply too much competition amongst the gods not to carry out services whenever people are available for them. It's only on holy days very specific to the gods that a temple is usually filled completely.

As indicated above, rituals help strongly accent the communal ties that exist on Alacarn. Most divine rituals go to elaborate lengths to also be slightly arcane and strange. Speaking in different languages, strange music, and smoke from colored fires are all part of the process. Many shocking practices are also part of common religious rituals in Alacarn. These include temple prostitution and ritual sacrifice (see below).

Some magicians have learned to harvest the psychic force in religious ritual to enhance the power of their spells. As a rule, the Grand Arcanum disapproves of such as dangerous and outright blasphemous. This does not stop it from happening.

**Sacrifice**

The people of Teth-Ammon are bloody and violent. Death walks alongside them every day and it is the great mystery of existence. It is unsurprising that sacrifice plays a tremendous role in their religious practices. The offering of lives unto their gods is considered to be the most holy act that can be performed.

For the most part, sacrificial offerings are limited to animals. Only the Temples of Demae, Paalok, and secretive cults like the Immaculate Doom practice human sacrifice. Demae's sacrifices are all chosen by lottery or from volunteers. Paalok's disciples limit these offerings to slaves and the sanctifying of those slain in battle. It's simply too expensive to do anything else. The Immaculate Doom, being an illegal religion, simply resorts to kidnapping.

Common sacrifices are birds and other small animals, while bulls and other large animals are offered for special occasions. The animals are usually eaten by priests or the performer afterwards, often with preparation by cooks who treat the act of preparing them as a semi-holy rite.

**Tithes**

Money is a powerful motivating force on nearly any world. The idea that even the gods can be bribed is not an unheard of idea in Teth-Ammon. Offerings of money are thus one of the most common of all gifts to the Temples.

The majority of these gifts are not particularly grand but it adds up. Even the most venal beggar usually is able to muster a coin or two into a temple's strongbox. It is a common belief that the gods will give you rewards equal to or greater than what you give unto the gods. Needless to say, the results of such a philosophy have varied wildly.

The most pious of individuals in Teth-Ammon donate a portion of their income, perhaps as much as ten percent, towards the upkeep of temples. These individuals are a major source of temple income. These individuals often receive the most attention from the priesthood (especially the wealthier ones).

## The Great Twelve Gods

The Great Twelve Gods have been the major divinities of the continent since the time of Empress Kalinka. Most of these gods existed as popular independent entities before they were all united under one pantheon by the Empress' decree against other faiths.

While most educated people are aware of Empress Kalinka's role in combing Alacarn's diverse religions into a single faith, the clergy have the official position that it was divinely inspired. According to church doctrine, they

were always twelve. It was merely through Empress Kalinka that the 'truth' was revealed.

The common people are less interested in history. They could care less if the Twelve were once multiple deities. Commoners have no difficulty believing in deities outside of the pantheon (or that they are simply a facet of an existing god). There is a recent, though heretical, idea that the Twelve are part of a greater singular entity. Orthodox priests reject the idea since it is too similar to the vile religion of the Supreme Throne.

**Demae**

*The Great Mother, The Harvest Mistress, The Life Giver, The Peaceful Hand, The World Goddess*

Demae is the daughter of Sybus and Tyros. She is said to be the occasional consort to her half-brother Kaalon but has many lovers (both god and mortal). Her body is the world and it is from her womb that all mortal races sprang. Mortality is said to exist because the father of all races is Kaalon, Death.

Demae is a goddess of fertility, motherhood, plants, and life in general. Parents of both sexes revere her as the caretaker of children. Demae is an easily angered goddess. Her wrath manifests in barrenness, famine, illness (especially of children) rot, and stillbirth.

The Great Mother is not a goddess to be trifled with. Blood and sacrifice play an especially important role in her faith. Aside from Paalok, she is the only goddess who practices human sacrifice to any significant degree. Individuals give up their lives so that the earth's fertility can be renewed.

Demae's priesthood exists in roughly equal amounts in both cities and rural areas. However, farming communities tend to revere her as the most important of deities. She is one of the most widely worshiped of the Twelve.

The Harvest Mistress is one of the goddesses who is usually venerated in statue form. Those communities that cannot afford to produce a statue tend to appoint a young woman to serve as the vessel for the goddess during ceremonies.

Sexuality plays an important role in her rites. Often, young men and women couple during her ceremonies. Children conceived during this time are said to be sacred to the goddess. Mystical sects to Demae pop up repeatedly and often grow to be the dominant religious interpretation of her in rural areas.

Curiously, Demae attracts more male magic users than female. The ecstatic nature of the religion mixed with the control of the natural world has created a large number of followers who are convinced they have been selected to be her consort.

These magicians tend to pass on their knowledge and have produced some truly powerful occult lineages. They are especially talented at Elemental magic of all sorts, Healing, and the giving of life.

**Clergy:** Demae's clergy tend to wear crowns of mistletoe and hold wooden staffs that are carved from pine wood (the most powerful of the clergy hold staffs of Doriandor wood). Green is a sacred color for Demae, but so is brown and other autumn colors. Demae's clergy are referred to as Great Father/Great Mother with the only higher rank being Hierophant (granted as a title of respect more than anything to an especially aged or venerated Demae mystic).

**Dogma:** The Life Giver is involved in the birth of every living thing. All things in the world fundamentally owe their lives to her and she should be revered accordingly. Failure to pay the goddess the proper respect will only result in terrible suffering. Offerings unto her will bring great blessings onto one's offspring and properties.

**Filanti**

*The Beautiful One, The Dancing Goddess, The Fire Maiden, The Creative Urge, The Immolator*

The daughter of Kaalon and Vaasti, Filanti is the consort of Paalok and one of the youngest gods. A whimsical creature and wrathful, she is infamous throughout legend for her rivalry with the goddess Wynessa. The two of them are akin to sisters and constantly attempt to upstage one another.

Filanti is the goddess of craftsmanship, creativity, dance, fire, and inspiration. She is a jealous deity who

constantly punishes mortals for their hubris. She is especially infamous for wiping out the mythical civilization of Tarthos. Ostensibly, for claiming that their power was greater than the gods. In truth, this story is merely a corrupted form of the Terra'ssar Empire's collapse.

Filanti's clerics are an epicurean bunch. They constantly attempt to recruit beautiful new members and those who possess artistic talent. Her temples are often the most lovely to look upon and filled with the most elaborate decorations. Almost all of them keep a flame burning perpetually, the extinguishing the flame is considered a sign of the goddess' disfavor.

Celebrations often include elaborate feastings on cooked meat and dance followed by love making. The faith has a disturbing tendency to produce pyromaniacs. This is despite the fact that the temple abolished the practice of human sacrifice by immolation long ago.

Filanti's name is usually written above fire pits and hearths as a charm against the flames burning out of control. While not one of the most popular of all goddesses, most artisans and craftsman pay her respect as their patron goddess. Young people pray to Filanti in hopes that their beauty can be preserved against the ravages of time.

Filanti's faithful have an especial fondness for gemstones and tend to keep their wealth in this form. No one is quite sure why this is the case but the faith is famous for producing its gem cutters who consecrate each of the objects to their goddess. Many gem mines are owned by the faith and it is always prospecting for more.

Filanti's followers are the ultimate masters of enchantment and fire magic. Oddly, many of Filanti's faithful are also alchemists and learn things like how to breathe fire that they pass off as magic.

**Clergy:** Filanti's faithful dress in black, orange, and crimson robes depending on their rank. They have no official hierarchy and tend to give themselves elaborate titles that often sound vaguely ridiculous (The Grand High Master of Ash, The Supreme Mistress of Fire, The Burning Queen of the Red Palm).

Most of Filanti's faithful carry around a bronze tipped staff that will usually have a small brazier hanging from it.

**Dogma:** Filanti teaches that the entirety of the world is transitive and in a constant state of flux. What exists now will possibly not exist tomorrow. Clergy must encourage the construction of beautiful things and surround themselves with loveliness.

They must also encourage the destruction of ugly things and all that is displeasing to their goddess. Fire is to be treated as a cleansing and powerful force that individuals must revere.

### Heton

*The Deliverer, The Glorious Sun, The Lore Master of Time, The Unconquered, The Wise King*

Heton is the Father of the Gods and one of the three deities that emerged from the Far Chaos with his consort Sybus and Obaq. Alongside the Moon Goddess, he is one

of the two rulers of the gods. Heton is one of the most important figures in Alacarn mythology.

Heton is viewed as a wise and scholarly figure whom is patron of all Aristocrats and Scholars. Supposedly, he knows all things in the cosmos and uses this knowledge to govern the maintenance of the universe. Heton is the Patron Deity of Scientists and Philosophers. Magic users who venerate him are those who prefer a logical approach to their sorcery (as opposed to mysticism).

Heton is the patron deity of D'Henna and Tythan, though in differing aspects. Rulers almost always consecrate their reigns to him directly. Heton's faithful encourages wise governance but maintains strongly that social stratification is blessed in the eyes of the gods.

Aristocrats are meant to properly maintain their holdings while Freeborn are meant to serve at the whim of the nobility. Perhaps because of this tireless support of the social order, Heton's temples are usually the most glorious and well-funded in Alacarn. Only those built by the Supreme Throne in Saiya are able to rival them in beauty.

Despite its rigid hierarchy, Heton's worship is almost always localized. Emperors, Emperesses, Kings, and Queens choose who will be the heads of the faith. Heton's High Priests rarely attempt to interfere with this process.

Cronyism and toadying is rampant within the organization. Despite this, the faith has wide respect and often governs its own territories in place of traditional nobility. It is said that the faith of Heton owns more land than some of the Great Kingdoms. This is only a slight exaggeration.

Most priests of Heton are the second and third born children of nobility. It is considered a viable career to pursue and a profitable one. Even those priests of Heton that exist in more rural regions are often local leaders of considerable power. The Sun is worshiped as a primordial force in these places. The Slythin hold up Heton as their chief god despite their low social class.

Magic-using Priests of Heton tend to study the Grand Aracanum's secrets of magic and do not maintain their own style of sorcery. They do, however, specialize in certain types of magic. Heton's priests are masters of conjuring and the manipulation of light.

**Clergy:** Priests of Heton wear elaborate golden and red robes that tend towards the ostentatious. The faith does not teach that finery is a sin and jewelry is quite common for both sexes. The only exception to this general lack of humility is amongst scribes. Scribes of Heton dress in simple robes and disdain overt displays of wealth. Even they tend to wear gilded golden amulets, however.

**Dogma:** The world is governed by inalienable and unchanging laws. The sun will rise and set, one plus one is two, and there will always be those who lead while others follow. Studying the universe's laws and the world's workings can only make one more like Heton.

The faithful are commanded to pursue a thorough education and to manage their holdings in a manner befitting Heton. They should obey their leaders and defy the law only when it has lost the blessings of Heton.

**Kaalon**

*The Gentle Deliverer, The God of All Death, The Inescapable One, The Unforgiving Judge*

Kaalon is the Lord of Death and Master of the Underworld. According to Alacarn mythology, Kaalon is the child of Sybus and Heton. He is also the twin brother of Paalok. Kaalon is married to Vaasti the Goddess of the Night with two divine children. His marriage is a loveless union, however. Kaalon frequently mates with Demae the Goddess of Life and the product of their union is the majority of Alacarn's present-day races.

Contrary to what people might think of Death, Kaalon is not particularly cruel or vicious. In fact, he is the gentlest god of the pantheon. Unfortunately, even the kindest of divinities on Teth-Ammon has an unimaginable cruel side. Kaalon is the Judge of the Dead and those souls he finds lacking are sentenced to unending torments. Salvation from punishment in the afterlife is one of the chief services that Kaalon's priests offer.

Kaalon's faithful teach that mortals should uphold the sanctity of life and not to transgress against the gods. Kaalon's ethics are not particularly complex; one should not be a blasphemer, murderer, oath-breaker, rapist, nor thief. Despite these simple laws, the faithful often worry themselves sick over the possibility that they might be judged poorly by the Inescapable One.

Many worshipers take a sort of grim satisfaction that the powerful and wealthy will be judged just the same as the poverty-stricken. Unfortunately, the wealthy often have far more room to barter with Kaalon's clerics, who are oft-susceptible to bribery.

In addition to the ministering of the faithful's spiritual needs, Kaalon's clergy handle the disposal of corpses and funerary rites. The position of undertaker and professional mourner are sacred ones to Kaalon's faithful.

Kaalon's faith seems to invite a great number of peculiar people to it. Mystics find the God of Death to be particularly attractive and he has a substantial number of monastic orders dedicated to him. These orders frequently engage in asceticism and self-denial to achieve a closer union to him. Kaalon is also the patron of medicine and pharmacology. Pious Doctors will frequently request that a family make an offering towards the god when a case looks particularly grim.

Kaalon's faithful tends to attract charitable and compassionate sorts in addition to the venal hoping to bilk the grieving out of their wealth. Kaalonites get along with most other churches and frequently coordinate for funerary services. While Kaalon's faithful merely have a distasteful rivalry with the faith of Paalok, they actively loathe the Immaculate Doom and utterly hate the Supreme Throne. Many are surprised when the gentle faith of Kaalon requests the maximum penalty for any crime committed by a Supreme Throne member.

Kaalon's magicians tend to practice magic related to healing and necromantic effects.

**Clergy:** Kaalon's clergy tend to live frugal and humble lives if they are faithful to their god's precepts. Even corrupt Kaalon clerics tend to wear drab and dark colors in public. Weighing scales are particularly sacred objects to their god and are often mounted on staffs as holy items. Due to the nature of their duties, Kaalon priests are encouraged to be dour and serious in public. Priestly titles are recognized as Initiate, Brother/Sister, High Brother/High Sister, Father/Mother, and Great Father/Great Mother.

**Dogma:** Kaalon is the master of the Underworld. Those souls who transgress against Kaalon's decrees will be cast inside the Vault and subject to tortures by his demons for all time. Those who have lived particularly pious lives will be allowed to dwell in his eternal gardens. The majority of people will live lightless lives in a world of eternal darkness. Kaalon commands that life be held to be sacred and not to kill someone unless it is justified. Kaalon's touch cannot be escaped, only delayed.

### Obaq the Forester

*The King of the Forests, The Horned Lord, The Lonely Walker, The Woodsman, The Stag King*

Obaq the Forester is a god that emerged from the Far Chaos like Heton and Sybus. While some traditions hold that he is the consort of Demae, others suggest that he is a fundamentally solitary god. Obaq neither desires company nor receives it from the other gods. The Woodsman is believed to be a Valken god that was incorporated into human religion. He is primarily worshiped in rural regions.

Curiously, heroic stories are filled with heroes receiving divine aid from him. A series of folk tales also describe his own curious adventures against giants and monsters. This is something that most priests would regard as blasphemous if were told about their own gods, but which Obaq's clergy eagerly propagate.

Obaq the Forester is said to manifest as a towering hairy man, almost as if he was covered in fur, with antlers on his head. Sometimes Obaq will appear as a simple Woodsman that is neither young nor old but possesses a timeless wisdom about him. His altars are usually cairns formed of simple rock or stone circles.

Obaq is frequently worshiped outdoors and even his temples in cities are more like parks than anything else. Obaq is said to grant great skill in archery, hunting, and survival. This last quality has curiously identified him as the God of Beggars amongst his other titles. A deity of male sexuality, Obaq the Forester is said to grant sensual prowess and is prayed to by men who wish to sire offspring.

Obaq's faithful tend to draw hardy sorts and even the city clergy to him are individuals whom must journey to the countryside for long retreats. They are a people that teach self-reliance and their blessings are primarily about giving strength to individuals to endure on their own.

Obaq's clergy posseses little political influence as a rule. It is only because no one wants to offend any of the Twelve that he has a temple built in every city.

In agrarian communities; he is one of the major gods revered with Demae, Kaalon, and Paalok. Many festivals exist to honor the god and bring good hunting. Sacrifices are made to him to allow boy children to grow up strong and tall. He is also placated to ward away animal attacks. Scouts almost uniformly revere him as they are frequently required to traverse difficult terrain and passages with no support.

Obaq has neither enemies nor friends amongst his fellow gods. He is a god with equal parts a beneficent and terrible side. Obaq's faithful tend to specialize in elemental magic with control over plant and animal life being especially revered.

**Clergy:** The clergy of Obaq wear pants and a shirt with a heavy long cloak rather than the robes of most other religions. During important ceremonies, High Priests and Priestesses wear masks made out of the head of a dead stag. Obaq's clergy forego most of these accruements inside of cities and often are recognized as priests of the Horned Lord simply on their word.

**Dogma:** Man is the King of all Beasts and a creature that should not abandon his primal side. He should keep himself mentally alert and physical fit. Man should have a healthy respect for nature and their powerlessness before its ultimate power. Conversely, they should also seek to become capable and strong. Obaq's faithful are encouraged to ward after their community and home, while rearing many children.

**Paalok**

*The Lord of Chaos, The Six Armed-Horror, The One-Eyed Tyrant, The Storm Bringer*

Paalok is one of the most feared gods of Teth-Ammon and also one of the most widely worshiped. The One-Eyed Tyrant is the son of Heton and Sybus. He is also the twin brother of Kaalon and consort of Filanti. Paalok is routinely cited as the father of countless illegitimate mortal children, particularly those who grow up to become powerful warriors. He is wrongly accredited as the father of many Half-Celestials.

Paalok is a non-human god that proclaims that all things belong to the person strongest enough to take them. The patron of war in its most primal and raw form, he is popular with soldiers whom owe their allegiance to no nation. He is also the official god worshiped by the Turlon Empire.

Paalok is the god responsible for famine, disease, drought, and other natural disasters that afflict the people of Alacarn. He is said to give the battle lust to individuals and transform otherwise rational soldiers into rampaging killing machines. Rather than curse him as an evil god, most citizens simply recognize he is a wrathful deity and attempt to appease him with offerings.

As the God of War, most soldiers and strategists attempt to appease him before major battles. Paalok plays no favorites and will bring victory to whichever side pleases him the most at the moment. While more noble warriors may pray to Heton and Tyros, even they understand that conflict is almost always decided by who is capable of dealing the most damage to the enemy.

Paalok is said to rule over a vast battlefield in the god's homelands where he takes the most worthy souls to become part of his Eternal Army. There they feast and make love to Paalok's countless gorgeous children before going out to slaughter one another on the battlefield. Paalokites teach that they then rise again on the next day. Paalok's blessing is said to be the only way that someone can escape Kaalon's judgments.

Rural citizens worship Paalok for his role as the Lord of Rain. When drought or flooding is a problem, they are known to select volunteers to be offered up as human sacrifices to appease Paalok's hunger for death. His priests accept these offerings eagerly and often use these times to point out the various ways that they have offended the Storm Bringer.

Paalok attracts few magicians. Those that do come to him, tend to specialize in wild and destructive magic. Many more primitive magicians learn to control the weather in order to wield vast influence over farming communities.

**Clergy:** Paalok's clergy tend to be instantly recognizable. If they can afford it, they will garb themselves in ornate spike covered armor to make themselves more

terrifying. They often dye their armor the color of blood as well. If they cannot afford such a luxury, they will dress in animal skins and wear masks of skulls (either human or animal).

Paalok's clergy tend not to cut their hair or nails and often indulge in hallucinogenic drugs, giving them a crazed and wild appearance. Only a rare few seem calm and ordered. Ironically, these later ones are usually the most dangerous and destructive.

They are referred to as "Brother" and "Sister."

**Dogma:** Strength is the only truth in the world. All life is a battle and everyone will fundamentally lose except for Paalok the Immortal. Do not show weakness, obey only those who have earned your respect, and take what you like. Paalok is pleased with those who show courage in battle and kill many. He will bestow his blessings on those who face overwhelming odds or refuse to back down.

**Sybus**

*The Dark Crone, The Goddess of Passion, The Queen of the Gods, She of the Moon Eyes, The Weaver of Destiny*

Sybus is the first born of the gods. The first to emerge from the swirling mists of the Far Chaos, she wed Heton afterwards and together they conceived the stars before the other Great Gods were born. She is the mother of most of the Twelve and lover to nearly all the rest. Despite this, she is not a particularly maternal or wifely figure. Instead, Sybus is alternatively a terrifying monster or the most sensual creature in existence. She is the least human of the gods, even more so than Paalok. Sybus is also the most powerful of Alacarn's deities.

Sybus is the goddess of fate, love, magic, the moons, retribution, and sex. Individuals pray to Sybus for the satisfaction of their desires or to cure their enemies. Sybus is said to control the destinies of all beings in the cosmos. She holds a position even above the ostensible ruler of the Gods, Heton.

Of her children, she favors Paalok the most. Yet, it is Kaalon whom has escaped her web of Fate and will eventually end the universe. While the Grand Arcanum publicly disdains Sybus' temperamental and wild forms of magic, almost all of them secretly offer her a prayer or two in order to make sure that their spells function.

Sybus' priesthood is made up of slightly more women than men, especially those who practice the arts of magic. The Witches of the Fallen World's breeding program has resulted in many more magic-users in Sybus' faith than all other churches combined. This only adds to the powerful aura of awe and mystery that surrounds them.

Sybus worshipers tend to hold services in equal parts the city as well as the outdoors. They are a faith that places great stock in astrology and the tracking of the star's movements. The first observatories built by humans on Teth-Ammon were devoted to the faithful of the Weaver of Destiny. Most seers venerate Sybus over all other gods and her priestesses are said to be especially gifted in the arts of soothsaying.

The Dark Crone's religion is an ecstatic one. Services include music and the creation of hallucinogenic smoke that places attendants in a state of euphoric bliss. More intimate services occasionally spill into wholesale Bacchanalian celebrations. Like Demae, Sybus has numerous mystical cults venerating her above the other gods.

Sybus' faith is the largest concentration of magicians on Alacarn after the Grand Arcanum. All forms of sorcery are known to it, even if it is often divided up amongst many priests. Many talented magic users seek out the Sybus mysteries as an emotional alternative to the hard logic of the Grand Arcanum. They are also believed to be the best readers of the future in the world, despite their magic being effectively identical to other seers.

**Clergy:** Sybus' faithful are amongst the few that are allowed to wear midnight blue robes. It is considered to be their sacred color. These robes are often woven with stitches to resemble stars.

The goddess' symbol is the moon and many wealthier faithful sport silver discs as amulets around their neck. Those who favor the goddess' more sensual side often go about wearing only a translucent body wrap and adornments to accent their beauty. Both male and female clergy do this.

Sybus' faithful is organized along the lines of Acolytes, Priests/Priestesses, Revered Elders, and Glorious Masters.

**Dogma:** Sybus is the Mistress of Fate and thus is in command of your entire life. Nothing you do can alter the destiny she has appointed for you and to attempt to defy it is to result in great suffering for yourself and those around you.

Followers of Sybus must consult regularly signs and portents to discover her will and pursue it. They are to regularly indulge themselves in drugs, sex, and other activities of pleasure to help achieve a mystic communion with their goddess. Followers of Sybus are to avenge any slights against them and help those who come seeking aid in their vengeance.

**Tyros**

*The Champion of the Gods, The Judge of the Living, The Justice Bringer, The Law Giver*

Heton molded a statue from the Far Chaos to embody the glories of the orderly cosmos he devised. Sybus then used her magic to bring him to life. This statue became Tyros the Justice Bringer, a god that existed apart from the ranks of Heton and Sybus' children. Only Obaq shares this distinction. Tyros is the consort of Wynessa, though he is also known to be a lover of Sybus.

Tyros' clergy attempt to elevate the behavior of Teth-Ammon's people to a higher level. They foster codes of chivalry, honor, integrity, and morality. With the aid of the faith of Kaalon, Tyros' clergy has done much to create modern Teth-Ammon philosophical thought than any other faith.

While the majority of its members are still deeply entrenched in the social order of the day, they have a strong reputation as progressives. Progressives that are considered as dangerous to the powerful as they are to criminals. Yet Tyros' clergy is also absolutely necessary to the continued survival of the social order in Alacarn.

The faith of Tyros is devoted to the ideals of equal justice and fair laws. These ideas are not especially popular with either the nobility or the common people. Commoners fear change and nobles fear the loss of their privileges. Yet, the faithful continue to forward their ideas despite the dangers of persecution.

The majority of judges and magistrates are members of the clergy who offer their services to the Alacarn kingdoms. They only have the authority that the aristocracy gives them but they've managed to greatly alleviate the causal abuses of the law found in Alacarn.

Tyros' faith maintains numerous holy knighthoods, the largest being the Knights of Winterweir. In addition to feudal oaths to various lords and ladies, the knighthoods of Tyros make an active effort to root out bandits and what they term as 'monsters' (usually the result of magical experimentation gone wild).

These knights are rarely as altruistic as the stories told about them might suggest they are. Many Knights of Tyros are as motivated by a lust for glory as they are by religious devotion. Nevertheless, when they survive long enough to achieve great deeds, they are raised up as legendary heroes.

While Tyros is primarily worshiped in the nation of Winterweir, most nations maintain shrines to the God of Law. He is considered more to be a god for ennobled commoners than true aristocrats. Despite this, he is the second most popular god amongst nobles after Heton. Most of Tyros' holy knights are drawn from the wealthy. he expenditures of knighthood are enough to preclude most citizens.

Tyros' faithful do not employ magic very often. The majority of their magic is inherited from priests of Sybus or the Grand Arcanum. What magic they do employ is primarily in the area of defensive and healing magic. Despite their phobia of magic, Priests of Tyros are fond of magical weapons and armor.

**Clergy:** Clergy of Tyros wear a mixture of white and blue robes with an engraved hammer symbol. The hammer is an image that is used in most ceremonies. Knights of Tyros, of course, wear armor that is appropriate for their social class.

Knights of Tyros adorn themselves in a white tunic that has the holy symbol of their faith emblazoned on its front. The Knights of Winterweir take this a bit further and wield only war hammers in close combat.

**Dogma:** The Law of Tyros is eternal and unchanging. The Law of Tyros compels human beings to bring order

out of chaos and civilization to the wilderness. The strong should use force to protect the weak to rule over them justly.

Those who abuse others and behave in a malicious manner should be replaced by more ethical rulers. Extenuating circumstances should be applied to judgments but never to the point that criminals are allowed to thrive.

**Vaasti**

*The Dark Queen, The Lady of Night and Winter, The Lurking Lady, The Mistress of Lies*

Vaasti is the daughter of Sybus with Tyros. She is the consort of Kaalon. Vaast is also the mother of Filanti and Veethor. As treacherous as she is beautiful, Vaasti is considered a goddess to be called upon by those who work ill deeds. Oddly enough, she is the favored child of Heton.

Vaasti is the goddess of lies, night, sadness, secrets, stealth, and treachery. Vaasti is said to have dominion over the cold and it is her ascendancy that causes a quarter of the year to plunge into winter. Those who pray to Vaasti tend to do so out of fear rather than love. She is not considered an evil goddess despite her portfolio. Most pray to her in order to ward off her wrath.

The clergy of Vaasti are most often raised by the Temple from birth, purchased from their families as small children. They are an insular and mysterious lot, as befits their objects of devotion. The clergy cultivates the image they are holders of hidden wisdom and are not averse to actively making their prophecies come true. Many merchant lords and nobles actively seek a member of Vaasti's clergy to place on their staff as a source of advice.

The differences between the city based and rural Vaasti clergy is considerable. These differences are only accented when the two groups meet one another. The two aspects are complimentary rather than oppositional. In rural areas, Vaasti is mostly venerated for her quality as the Lady of Night and Winter. Few communities actually have priests of the Night Goddess. Instead, they merely offer up prayers to her shrines and makes sacrifices to her idols.

In the cities of Alacarn, Vaasti is a figure whom all those with power pray to for protection against treachery. Those who crave authority and influence pray to her in hopes of gaining it.

Vaasti's clergy specialize in illusions and shadow magic above all others. They are said to maintain vast arcane libraries that even the Grand Arcanum would envy, storing away their secrets and using them to barter with. Even if it is not true, many wizards believe it to be so and bargain with the clergy from a position of weakness.

**Clergy:** Vaasti's clergy dress in black and heavy clothing. The two sexes have two very different sets of clothing but both keep their faces covered by thick veils and cowls. The symbol of a large yellow eye is usually sewn into the sides of the robes. Rather than staves, Vaasti's clergy wield rods that are tipped with a quartz star.

**Dogma:** Vaasti teaches that the universe is fundamentally an illusion created by the gods. Truth is entirely subjective and magic is the proof of this. Vaasti's faithful may create whatever reality they wish by simply working to bring about this. Nothing is a lie because nothing is true. Thus, it is entirely the fault of individuals if they live a life they do not enjoy.

**Veethor**

*The God of Merchants, The Lord of Greed, The Treasure Hoarder, The Two-Faced Coin, The Wealth Master*

Veethor is the child of Kaalon and Vaasti. He is the lover of the god Vulthoo and the chief counselor to Heton. Veethor supposedly taught mankind the concept of commerce and trade. There is no market place in the whole of Alacarn that isn't graced with some small idol to the deity of wealth.

Veethor is the god of commerce, greed, trade, and wealth. He is a thoroughly materialist deity whose clergy gleefully engage in speculation. She is not considered an evil goddess despite her portfolio. Most pray to her in order to ward off her wrath.

There is one small catch to being a member of Veethor's clergy, though. One can never actually own anything for oneself. It all belongs to the temple. When one dies, all of one's property goes to the faith rather than a priest's heirs. The clergy of Veethor believes this helps

enforce a kind of strange honesty on its members. It has also caused many children of Veethor clergymen to become bitterly resentful to the church.

Temples to Veethor often double as banks and counting houses. They vary from lavish centers of opulence to secure looking miniature fortresses. Usury is a holy rite to the God of Greed and they use soothsaying to help determine what will be wise investments. Most of the time, its high priests prove to be extremely capable businessmen.

The Two-Faced Coin's faith is not a religion with a reputation for honesty, but they rarely beggar their worshipers completely. The holy canon of Veethor doubles as a sort of crude guide to economics. Its holy proberbs are clear about not killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

Veethor is not a particularly beloved god. The Freeborn tend to despise the god's favoring of the privileged over them. This only results in them praying even harder to be able to achieve wealth in the future. Some small heretical sects have attempted to argue that unlimited accumulation of wealth by the already rich few only hurts the faith in the long run. Most members of Veethor's clergy find this to be nonsense.

Veethor's magic users tend to focus on how to transmute base metals to gold and other get rich quick schemes. The books of magic held by the clergy are almost all devoted to 'useful' spells with precious few that are any use. Veethor spell casters are notoriously stingy with their spells and one should always beware them hiding their strongest magics. It should be noted that almost all spell-casting priests are fabulously rich, even by the standards of their faith. Oddly enough, Veethor's magicians are amongst the best diviners after the worshipers of Sybus.

**Clergy:** Clergy of Veethor wear expensive purple dyed robes. They usually surround themselves with armed men and wear vast amounts of expensive jewelry in order to display their god's affluence. All clergy of Veethor keep a solid gold coin amulet around their necks on a chain. Stamped on both sides of this coin is their god's faith. It is a major taboo to ever remove this. Clergy of Veethor are divided only into two ranks, Priests and High Masters.

**Dogma:** Clergy of Veethor are explicitly told to accumulate as much power and wealth as possible. They teach that material success is a measure of their gods pleasure and they are to spend as much of their time in pursuit of greater amounts of it as possible. The faith has no moral objections to how wealth is achieved and only condemns those who achieve it by stealing from one of the major temples.

Veethor's faithful are encouraged to use their money to make more wealth rather than simply accumulate it. Also, they are meant to use their fortunes to live luxurious lives as a display of their god's power.

**Vulthoo**

*The Athlete, The Fish King, The Lord of the Oceans, The Perfect Form, The Thunder Prince, The Valorous King*

The child of Paalok with a half-mortal daughter of the moon, Vulthoo was raised to full divinity by Kaalon. The Death God burned away all of his mortality after Vulthoo won an athletic contest against Kaalon's finest champions. The lover of Veethor, he is the patron of athletes and physical prowess. He is also the god of water. He is not lord of rain due to Paalok having won it from his son in a duel.

Vulthoo is the god of athletics, courage, fish, lightning, oceans, navigation, and rivers. With Tyros, Vulthoo is the patron of heroes. All those who derive their trade from physical strength are quick to offer him prayers. Vulthoo does not care what sort of deeds that individuals perform, so long as they are great deeds.

Vulthoo draws his city based clergy from physically fit young men and women. Vulthoo's clergy host numerous athletic competitions and sporting events. Priests of the Perfect Form have created gymnasiums in most cities to help individuals become healthier. Every year, Vulthoo hosts the Great Games that includes athletes from all over Alacarn to compete in.

Those areas along coasts or rivers have a much more elemental view of the god. Vulthoo is called the Lord of the Oceans and he is considered a being that all other gods are inferior to. Fishermen and Sailors consider him their personal totem and speak of him in personal terms. Neither feels any problem with cursing him or shouting oaths by him, which they consider a form of prayer.

Vulthoo's Temples are often mixtures of sporting arenas and pools. Great amounts of salt are imported by the temples to mix into fresh water in order to host their holy rites. Baptism and near-drowning experiences play an important part in Vulthoo's rites. Alone out of the various gods, blood sacrifices do not play any part in Vulthoo's rites.

Vulthoo is a popular god amongst the young and very few individuals have anything against him. Much of his fame and popularity comes from the many events sanctified in his name rather than any real need to entreat him. Only in areas that make their fortune from rivers or the oceans are his priests treated as one of the major gods.

Vulthoo's magical traditions are, unsurprisingly, mostly related to the controlling of water. Some magicians in his service also master the art of manipulating electricity and the weather.

**Clergy:** Vulthoo's clergy wear mouse gray robes for the most part and practical attire for travel. Most carry around a wineskin filled with saltwater or blessed water that has had salt added to it. While some choose to adorn themselves in the fish symbol of the god, many do not bother.

Athletics competitions of Vulthoo and sporting events are competed in without clothes. Vulthoo's clergy are referred to as Ocean Riders, Ocean Lords, and Ocean Masters. The titles are the same for both sexes.

**Dogma:** One's bodies are a temple to Vulthoo and to abuse them is to draw his ire. One should devote oneself to keeping them pure from misuse and poison. Vulthoo will reward those who do this with good health and long life.

Vulthoo is the master of the lakes, oceans, and rivers. All those who derive their livelihoods from these places should worship Vulthoo or he will take away their success in harvesting bounty from them. All those who travel should also hold up Vulthoo as an example to follow. Cowards draw the wrath of Vulthoo and will be punished by having their skills fail at the last minute.

**Wynessa**

*The Gambler's Goddess, The Goddess of Chance, The Luck Maiden, The Maid of Misfortune, The Mistress of Risk*

The youngest child of Heton and Sybus. Wynessa is the consort of the much older Tyros but it is stated that the two genuinely love one another. Their children are said to be numerous minor Graces that possess dominion over concepts like honesty and integrity.

Wynessa is the goddess of chance, fortune, gambling, luck, and mischief. A goddess known in equal part for the boons she gives to mortals as well as the curses. Wynessa

is said to deliver more shifts in a mortal's life than any other two gods combined. She favors the bold and the risk takers while punishing the cautious.

Wynessa's clergy are almost all self-appointed and there is no real structure to the faith. Public temples are maintained by the state and often filled with any number of charlatans and impersonators. It is oddly appropriate that the goddess of luck is a deity that one must take one's chances with.

Many individuals have been bilked out of small fortunes by con men acting in Wynessa's name. This blasphemy would not be tolerated in any other temple but the Goddess of Chance supposedly compensates for this bad luck by giving good luck to other worshipers in an equivalent amount.

The Temples of Wynessa are not terribly distinctive from others but the clergy has an interesting tendency to sanctify gambling and intrigue parlors to the goddess. Despite the seeming silliness of this, it is treated with deadly seriousness by many. The allure of danger and risk is something that Wynessa's believers actively cultivate. Strange as it may seem, Wynessa's faithful are amongst the most sincere believers in all of Alacarn.

Wynessa plays an important role in theatre as well as chance dens. There, she plays the patroness of acting and storytelling. The goddess is believed to be one of the few forces who actively attempts to make mortal lives better.

While she punishes as often as she aids, there are a number of sects that deny her malevolent aspect altogether. Only Kaalon and Tyros are considered to have a higher regard for humans. Both of those deities are too serious for the majority of people to invoke causally.

Wynessa's faithful tend to master the magic of charms and luck. Curiously, they also seem to have an especial gift for summoning and warding.

**Clergy:** Wynessa's clergy come from all classes and sizes. To become a priest or priestess of the goddess, one must simply proclaim oneself to be one. Most of the faithful sport a prominent good luck charm around their neck, however. Typical charms include a necklace of dice and a single card from a fortune teller's deck.

**Dogma:** Wynessa teaches that people live and die by the grace of Fortune. While no one can escape Fate, Wynessa can bend and weave the strands for a short time. The Luck Mistress can be fickle, however, and those who offend her or her priests will surely feel her wrath. Show regular offerings towards Wynessa will bring you good fortune and a prosperous life.

## Lesser Gods

The Twelve Great Gods are far from the only gods worshiped on Alacarn. Empress Kalinka's decree was a very long time ago and even then, she wasn't able to wipe out all of the divergent religions of the realm.

Hundreds of smaller cults and religions exist in addition to those of the Twelve Great Gods. Indeed, very few people in Alacarn see any particular problem with revering other deities in addition to the Twelve Great Gods. Anyone worshiping only one deity would come off as a lunatic to most. This is part of the reason that the Supreme Throne's monotheism has not particularly caught on beyond Saiya.

It should be also noted that most gods are eventually incorporated into the mythology of the Twelve Great Gods. Whether as different facets or servants, the clergy are very effective at reconciling various cults back into the mainstream faith (with a few notable exceptions).

The gods listed below are just a few examples of the kind of lesser gods that people might encounter.

### Abryss the Dragon King

Abryss the Dragon King was a hated tyrant and an embodiment of evil while he lived, yet the people of Tythan still revere his strength. The Dragon Lord is a reminder that Tythan once reigned supreme amongst all kingdoms of the continent. Thus, while his slayer is revered, Abryss the Dragon King has never left the nation's mythology.

The common folk of Tythan believe that Abryss continues to watch over them from the realm of Paalok. They create massive wicker statues of him during the pre-harvest season and then burn them in his honor. It is stated that Abryss will return in the time of Tythan's greatest need to defend it from her enemies.

The Black Dragon is also a symbol found in the heraldry of many Noble Families in Tythan.

**Alacarn the Uniter**

As part of Empress Kalinka's desire to cement the unification of the continent, she had her Aunt elevated to the status of Demigoddess. She justified this by claiming that Alacarn was actually the daughter of Sybus. Despite the fact that the Imperial Cults have largely died down, Alacarn is still revered in many places as a deity (along with a few of the other notable Empresses). Many Kings and Queens of the continent invoke Alacarn's name for their ceremonies.

Due to the extensive romantic mythology that abounds with Alacarn, she is also a patron of lovers (particularly female ones).

**The Elder Seraphs**

While patently untrue, the Temples of the Twelve teach that the Celestials are servants of the Gods. This has resulted in many coming to revere Celestials as gods themselves. Particularly revered are the Four Great Seraphs. These are Sarrington the Lord of Light, Fionalle the Lady of Love, Lauranna the Lady of War, and Pyriel the Lord of Purity.

The Four Elders are literally the patrons of the Death Whisperers, commanding that organization directly. Ironically, they do not impersonate gods but are revered as such anyway.

**The Divine Emperor**

The Divine Emperor of Turlon is less a divinity and a monarch than an oracle. After all, it doesn't require much faith to believe in a twenty-foot-tall immortal being. Nor does he do much ruling. However, countless figures in Turlon come to pay him homage and a few desperate souls invoke his name for final justice.

The Divine Emperor is seemingly omniscient. When he is inclined to answer, which is rare, his word is considered final even in decadent Turlon. Ruling regents have fallen on his prophecies and kingdoms razed. The Divine Emperor's priesthood is composed, primarily, of Witches of the Fallen World. The witches view him with more reverence than they do their own order's leaders.

**Household Gods**

A substantial number of Alacarn's citizens practice ancestor worship to some limited degree or another. After the death of a particularly close relation or revered ancestor, many families commission a wax mask of their face to be made from their corpse or a small clay idol. The descendents of these individuals then pray for their ancestors to watch over them from Kaalon's realm and provide limited aid in times of great peril.

This practice is celebrated in small amounts but rarely carries over for more than two or three generations. Unless a family has a particularly famous ancestor, it is more likely that they will pray to their parents or grand parents and no further. Aristocratic families may have entire rooms dedicated to their ancestor's idols, however.

**The Hooded One**

A unofficial god that exists on the streets of nearly every major city, the Hooded One is secretly hailed as the God of Thieves. Believed by some to be a son of Vaasti by Veethor, the God of Thieves is not recognized by the official Temple of either deity but is widely believed in by the masses as a whole.

His legend has become so popularized, many are unaware he's not an actual deity as far as the recognized Alacarn canon goes. The Hooded One is said to aid those who make their living in dishonest trades. A portion of their earnings must be 'tithed' to him by spending it on vice (which most thieves are all too willing to do).

While usually referred to as a man, The Hood One's sex also varies by telling. Some suggest he might be both at the same time or able to shift between them.

**The Shadow King**

The Shadow King is chiefly revered as the God-King of Martok. Hated as an evil undead wizard tyrant in the rest of the world, very few individuals consider his cult to be anything but a heresy against the gods. His agents proclaim that he is the child of Filanti and Vaasti. According to their mythology, the Shadow King is destined to eventually overthrow the world and rule it as an eternal despot.

Most citizens of Alacarn do not particularly take the cult all that seriously and find those who join it willingly to be quite mad. The Shadow King is treated as something to scare children at bedtime, not a deity that has any value in being worshiped. Many convert to the faith out of hopes of winning economic aid from the Crimson Oath.

Few could suspect that the Shadow King is the major god of the Barrier Wastes and the religion will likely become a terrible force in the near future.

**Tiamate**

Often masquerading as sects devoted to Demae, Tiamate's faithful believe in the total destruction of the civilized world. The faithful of Tiamate are fanatics that pass their religion down along bloodlines and to children that they kidnap. The Obsidian Circle is just the largest of the sects devoted to the Leviathan Queen.

Tiamate's faithful tend to inhabit the wilderness and have found ample followings amongst the Valken who despise their traditional lifestyle being annihilated by human greed. The Lilin, curiously enough, tend to view Tiamate with disdain rather than affection and only a small few devote themselves to the Dark Mother.

**Drelthor the Corruptor**

Drelthor is an Undying One summoned by foolish mages attempting to discern the secrets of the ancient past. Corrupting and destroying the mad enchanter, Drelthor proceeded to enslave the local villagers. It has demanded the sacrifice of two of their children every year to satisfy his desire for human perversities.

The contact with the other-dimensional entity has warped the surrounding environment and caused the people to become dull and slavish. The creature's banishment or final destruction would be a boon to the world.

## Other Major Faiths

While the Lesser Gods above have their devotees, there are a few faiths that have achieved a prominence well above them. Most of the deities that are not part of the Twelve Great Gods are treated as subordinate to them. This is not the case for several other figures that have followings almost as large as the Great Twelve (or in the case of the Supreme Throne, even larger).

In general, these religions have been declared irreconcilable with the Twelve Great Gods. Whether because their theology is utterly offensive or due to the fact that the majority of the world considers them to be stark raving mad, these religions are the outright enemy of the Twelve Great Gods. That doesn't prevent them from being worshiped by wide numbers of people, however.

Given freedom of religion is not a particularly popular concept in Alacarn, being a member of one of these faiths is outright dangerous in many quarters. Simultaneously, not being a member of the faith can get you killed in the places that they have ascendancy.

**The Church of Liberty**

*The Divinity of Mankind, The Defenders of the Grand Uprising, The Faith of Pure Thought, The Protectors of the People*

Calling the Church of Liberty a religion is stretching the definition. Indeed, one might argue that it is actually an anti-religion designed to steer the people of Amania over towards the path of non-belief. So far, it has not worked out very well. Amania's people secretly maintain their belief in the Old Gods while the Church of Liberty grows ever more corrupt. If the Free Republic is ever overthrown, The Church of Liberty is likely to be one of the first bodies to be cleansed by the new rulers.

The Church of Liberty was created by the Free Council of Amania as a way to depower the clergy of the old kingdom. Claiming to believe in the 'Divine Spirit of Mankind' as a way to counter the aristocracy's statement that they ruled in the name of the gods, the Church of Liberty was made the official religion of the Free Repulic. Adopting the trappings of a religion, the Church of Liberty then took over most of the abandoned now temples in the kingdom. They then proceeded to outlaw the practice of other faiths.

The Church of Liberty was originally made of former clergymen who chose to switch their allegiances after the fall of the Amanian nobility. Since that time, it has become a haven for individuals who could not actually

succeed in the Free Republic's bureaucracy on their own merits. The corruption, cronyism, and nepotism in the Church of Liberty is appalling to most citizens.

The Church of Liberty is a primarily the propaganda arm for the Free Republic. Every Alacarnday, the people of Amania are required to attend three hour services where the Clerics rail against the decadence of the outside world. The Church of Liberty does its best to vilify outsiders while boosting morale. They claim that the situation within the Free Republic will get better (without giving specifics as to how or why).

In addition to its role in defending the Free Republic from criticism and rousing the masses, the Church of Liberty also is a nest of spies. Every Cleric of the faith is expected to keep tabs on its flock of worshipers and report any subversive activity. The Inquisitors carry out the interrogation and torture of those that they believe threaten the public good. Disgustingly, quotas are occasionally imposed to make sure that they are doing their job.

Temples to the Church of Liberty are sparsely decorated. Instead, they are often little more than an altar and pews in a wooden building. Temples that were created in the era of the Old Kingdom often contain echoes of more ambitious architecture but they were stripped of everything that might remind the populous of the Old Gods.

The Church of Liberty does not practice magic since the Alchemical Mages have authority over all sorcery in the Free Republic.

**Clergy:** Clergy of the Church of Liberty wear plain black robes that are unadorned. High ranking officials have brass medallions covered with the flag of Amania on them. Inquisitors wear Amanian military uniforms with a specialized rank insignia that gives them authority roughly equivalent to a Knight Captain.

The Church of Liberty's ranks are divided into Clerics, High Clerics, and Inquisitors. All of them answer to the Grand Cleric who is also the Grand Inquisitor of the faith.

**Dogma:** Humanity is a divine being and its potential is the only thing worth worshiping in the world. All gods are the creations of charlatans or idols built by deranged charlatans. Obedience to the Free Republic is the highest good that any citizen can do to reach his full divine potential. Only through selfless service can one truly be free.

### Malaxas

*The Crimson King, Lord of Flesh, The Ecstatic Master, The God of Blissful Suffering, The Master of Pain and Pleasure*

The Immaculate Doom is a secretive and wide-spread cult worshiping the imprisoned Celestial, Malaxas. The cult is outlawed by civilized societies due to the 'twisted' and 'unnatural' things that they perform in the pursuit of enlightenment or pleasure. In truth, this outlawing only increases the cult's attractiveness to the jaded. The earliest levels of the cult is merely the kind of pleasure that they might seek for themselves were they bored of common sensual enjoyments. The later levels are truly sadistic. Others are lured by the promise of hidden knowledge that might be revealed by Malaxas' servants.

As initiates are inducted into ever greater levels of the Immaculate Doom, they are subjected to increasing mixtures of pain and pleasure. Each initiate's induction is unique and catered to their own particular whims and desires. In general, the Immaculate Doom believes that those who seek their wisdom are motivated by a need for knowledge, pleasure, power, or punishment. These are called the Four Eternal Keys.

The highest levels of the cult are controlled from the Netherdeep itself. Composed of Daemon Lords, Malaxas' Celestial followers, and twisted wizards that can no longer conceivably be called human; collectively, they are called the Nephilim. Those who distinguish themselves are rewarded with immortality in the Netherdeep where they undergo an eternity of blissful torment. The allure of immortality, and the lack of specific about what this will entail, has lead many individuals to their damnation.

The Immaculate Doom is a cell-based structure. Individual temples have almost no contact with one another after establishment. The Nephilim are seemingly able to identify worshipers of the Immaculate Doom at will. They find them whenever they need mortal minions. Many cults are self-founded. The literature of the cult is

propagated by the Nephilim and left in public places to tantalize the unwary.

Destruction and madness is an eventual fate for many of the Immaculate Doom's temples. The horrifying experiments and sacrifices that the dogma demands eventually brings down the destructive power of the law upon their heads. Others are broken by the truths that they discover in the Netherdeep and destroy themselves in some grand attempt to achieve transcendence.

Powerful Immaculate Doom temples are often served by twisted creatures they created with their sorcery and beings summoned from the Netherdeep. They are particularly talented in flesh-crafting and other transformative effects.

**Clergy:** Priests of the Immaculate Doom are drawn from all ranks of society. There is a tendency for them to be beautiful or paradoxically, willing to mortify their flesh. The Immaculate Doom's members prefer not to initiate their children until they approach adulthood.

The vestments for the Immaculate Doom are made of hooks and tanned leather. They are usually quite painful to wear. Many have extensive piercing and tattoos with a few having completely abandoned the human form.

**Dogma:** The followers of Malaxas believe in expanding the limits of human experience. Enlightenment, knowledge, pleasure, and pain are simply different facets of the same existence. All of them seek to grow closer to the perfection that Malaxas is close to achieving. Science is an important tool for the achievement of this goal as is sorcery. Studying these arts and the workings of life are ways of achieving ultimate truth.

### The Supreme Throne

*The Emperor of the Cosmos, The One God, The Light Giver, The Presence*

The Supreme Throne is the god of the Divine Order. As such, he is the only tolerated god on the continent of Saiya. The Supreme Throne's symbol is a ribbon with two loops, representing the infinity of the cosmos and its power.

The Supreme Throne not a typical god of Teth-Ammon. For one, it is non-anthropomorphic. The Supreme Throne has no gender, physical features, or portfolio. According to the Divine Order, all things belong to the Supreme Throne and he is absolute master of everything in the universe.

In the teachings of the Divine Order, The Supreme Throne is also the only god in the cosmos. The Supreme Throne is atypical in that he demands his followers behave in a specific manner as opposed to simply demanding worship. The code of behavior is called the Eternal Way.

Oddly, the Supreme Throne does not revere the Celestials as enlightened beings like most faithful on Teth-Ammon. Instead, the Supreme Throne lumps the beings in with the Lilin and followers of Malaxas as embodiments of evil. The Supreme Throne teaches that mysterious monstrous creatures called the Drakkath, which they claim are embodiments of human evil, are attempting to lead humans away from the one true path.

Converts to the Supreme Throne are reassured that they are given a place in the glorious paradise that their god has laid out for their faithful. They are also told to go forth and evangelize, a quality that is largely absent from the other religions of Teth-Ammon. The Supreme Throne is not coy about their belief that all who do not convert to their religion are damned to eternal torment in the Netherdeep. Guilt and self-mortification play a powerful role in the religion.

Almost all priests of the Supreme Throne are born in Saiya. The strict demand that they become eunuchs or theyis (half-women) prevents most from contemplating such. Instead, the first generation of Alacarn born priests will likely be taken in as children. This is much the same way as they are created in Saiya, making the Supreme Throne's priesthood an almost impenetrable body.

The Supreme Throne is strongly disliked by many people in Alacarn. Its followers are unabashedly derided as weak-minded fools. The followers of Kaalon, however, bear a special anthipathy for them. As if they are staring into a cracked mirror of themselves. It is not helped by the fact that the Supreme Throne agents have been linked to numerous murders and riots over the years.

Furthermore, a great number of aristocrats are (rightly) suspicious that the priests of the new god are merely spies for a foreign nation. The Divine Order sees no difference between religious and secular authority and their ultimate goal will be to bring the nations of Alacarn under the sway of their religion. The Divine Order is not shy about allying with certain nobles if they feel it will gain them converts. According to their religion, those converted by force are still saved and it is preferable to leaving them in the darkness of ignorance.

Supreme Throne magicians are practiced in all forms of sorcery. In general, they prefer to avoid flesh-crafting and necromantic effects. These magics are viewed as unnatural.

**Clergy:** Holy men and women of the Supreme Throne are celibate in the most extremist manner. They undergo surgery to remove their sex organs at a young age. Most have an androgynous and aloof appearance.

They wear totally white robes that are decorated in gold the higher that one rises in the faith. Many of them bear lash marks or signs of abuse from their ritual beatings. The priesthood is strictly hierarchal with Priests, High Priests, Grand Priests, Divine Messengers, and the Supreme Steward.

At present, all members of the Supreme Throne's priesthood are loyal to the Divine Order. A country that does not tolerate any dissent from their dogma. The punishment for any divergence from doctrine is death by torture.

**Dogma:** The Supreme Throne teaches that the physical world was shattered by the evil of Mankind, who were once immortal and perfect according to the faith. Humans are innately corrupt and the physical world is totally evil. Only through constant prayer, obedience to the Divine Order, and self-recrimination can one receive the forgiveness of the Supreme Throne after death.

The Supreme Throne demands the conversion or destruction of all those who profane his holy truths by suggesting there are other gods (or that the world is beautiful). Suicide is considered an acceptable end for a priest who has achieved the highest wisdom of the faith.

# Cultural Attitudes

Alacarn is a land that has its own set of values and ideas. Once, the entire continent was united under its namesake Empress. To that end, much of the land's peoples were forced into a single cultural identity. While individual countries may vary in their interpretations of the following items, for the most part they hold true for the continent's populous.

## Class

Class is one of the most important determining factors for relationships in Alacarn. It is something that coats all interactions and troubles even otherwise tolerant individuals with its violation. Movement between the classes is certainly possible, but it is usually done through force rather than anything as gentle as social acceptance.

The *Aristocracy* of the *Winterweir* setting is entirely composed of the Old Alacarn Empire's nobility's descendents. They are a decadent and self-indulgent lot with most feeling some sense of entitlement due to their ancestry. So far, massive in-breeding has been avoided due to the tendency to legitimize the heirs from common born lovers. Yet, the attitude of the nobility usually ranges from condescending to self-deifying.

A secondary noble class exists underneath the Alacarn blue bloods in terms of *Ennobled Commoners*. Despite the belief of the noble born class that they rule through inherited right, it is actually through military force. No noble who does not keep some level of hired soldiery lasts particularly long. Those who are proven in their ability to kill and lead are often elevated to the peerage. Some ennobled commoners have even slaughtered their way to Kingship, legitimizing their descendents through intermarriage with more illustrious pedigrees.

Beneath Ennobled Commoners are the *Merchant Lords* of Alacarn. Wealth is a major driving force in Alacarn, just like in other worlds. The Merchant Lords often live lives of luxury that many nobles would envy. Quite a few also plot to enter into the upper-ranks of the aristocracy through selling their children as concubines or secondary spouses.

Many an ambitious Merchant Lord has pressed too hard on an aristocracy only to have himself hung and his fortunes confiscated. Usually, without any attempt to justify it. Danger is the price of doing business in *Winterweir*.

*Freeborn* citizens make up the majority of Alacarn's populous. They enjoy lives of varying stability. The majority of freeborn citizens concern themselves less with social climbing than just trying to survive. Freeborn citizens, whether city-born or rural, must become used to the fact that their lives mean almost nothing to the classes above them.

Strangely, occupying a place above and below *Freeborn* are *Slaves*. While their lives exist at the whim of their masters, slaves are valuable property on Alacarn. Killing one often initiates more investigation and retribution than the murder of a Freeborn. After all, the death of a slave has deprived someone wealthy of valuable property.

Unlike Freeborn, slaves never have to worry about death by exposure or starvation. It should be noted that slavery does not exist in the Free Republic of Amania or the nation of Winterweir.

## Economics

The culture of Alacarn has a surprisingly developed system of economics. While the common people rely on gilded coinage stamped in the various nations (all supposedly matched in silver by their nation's treasuries), more wealthy individuals rely on notes from the Church of Veethor.

Secular banking systems exist but they must compete with Veethor's church and most don't try to bother. Veethor's church distributes paper notes very similar to modern currency and keeps extremely precise records. Despite the efforts of Veethor's temples to guard this wealth, many nobles refuse to trust their banks and keep their wealth in personal treasuries. This leads to the kind of murder and robbery that one expects.

Merchant cartels are one of the great powers on Alacarn, wielding power that rivals and occasionally even dwarfs that of the local aristocracy. Trade determines where and when nations will go to war. Even the mighty Turlon Empire is helpless before the need to keep its

wealthiest citizen's happy. The high rate of literacy amongst merchants has helped contribute to the creation of centuries old guilds and secret societies. Groups that will outlast their original founders' lineages.

Despite the Alacarn love of written contracts, blood inheritance is still a major issue of concern and a source of countless honor feuds. The easiest and least controversial inheritance laws are handled through the matrilineal line. It is impossible for a mother's child to be a bastard of her line. There will almost certainly be some claim on the mother's property.

Determining paternal parentage is a difficult matter of trust in more decadent cultures. It is usually handled by the process of formal recognition. This occurs when a boy or girl comes of age. This rite is called the Silver Binding and is sometimes sealed with a formal documenting of the event signed in blood. In general, the lion's share of all estate goes to the first born children. Property can only be given to tertiary children via formal contract.

Alacarn economics is unsurprisingly brutal to the poor. Only the Free Republic of Amania has any form of Dole to relieve the suffering of the poor. Charity is an only vaguely understood concept for most citizens. Crime is a preferred option for many when set against starvation.

## Education

Education in the world of Teth-Ammon is not exactly something to write home about. Unlike other fantasy settings where education and the written word are presumed for everyone who is not a barbarian, it's considerably rarer in *Winterweir*. While literacy is an option available for those who can afford it and almost guaranteed for the clergy, it is an absent luxury for the majority of commoners living in Alacarn. Indeed, many aristocrats and ennobled commoners never make the effort to learn to read or write. It is considered less important than knowing proper etiquette and how to ride a horse.

This should not be taken as to mean that people in Teth-Ammon are stupid by any stretch of the imagination. They are as intelligent as the people on Earth, only their source of knowledge is different. The artisans of Alacarn are highly skilled professionals and undertake tasks that require years of training. Even the average farmer could probably tell you a host of lore about his job that an educated man would find bewildering. The difference between the histories recorded in libraries and those passed down via oral tradition are not even that different.

Practicality is the chief master in *Winterweir*. What literacy exists is largely learned as a matter of necessity. Merchant lords and their children are far more likely to learn accurate accounting and how to negotiate before they learn to read. Then, more likely, they'll learn the intricacies of contracts before they start reading up on history and storytelling. Criers and theatre is more likely to tell a person about current events than books. Lower class individuals depend on scriveners (or scribes), people who read and write for a living, if they find it necessary to send or read a letter.

Strangely enough, a fairly vast amount of philosophical and scientific information exists in Alacarn's many libraries. The Bathas, Children of the Divine Spark, and the Priests of Heton have preserved information recovered from Draconic archives and their own studies which actually exceeds knowledge about the universe on some highly advanced technological worlds.

It is perhaps best that some of this information is forgotten or mislabeled as works of sorcery. A lot lot of it would be judged against present religious doctrine. Nevertheless, for a small fee, an enterprising seeker of knowledge can study the lore contained in these libraries. He could spend decades within and never finish even a tenth of the books contained within.

## Family and Marriage

Alacarn is a world of gender equality and almost total freedom for individuals of divergent lifestyles to pursue what sort of relationships they wish. This has certainly had an effect on the traditional family structure. The basic concept of marriage remains as a financial contract between two people or their families. Marriage in the setting of *Winterweir* is a secular contract rather than a religious one.

The blessings of the gods are often sought out by couples that are optimistic about their future (or who wish to make sure that divine wrath is brought down upon a violator of their contract). When one seeks the

gods' blessings on a union, divorce must be handled via a series of religious rites rather than through secular court.

Not unexpectedly, the vast majority of pairings on Teth-Ammon are between a man and a woman. Marriage between two men or two women is less common but also sealed as a financial contract. The gods of Alacarn have better things to do with their time than worry about the sexual inclinations of their worshipers. Thus, there is no problem in getting the blessings of priests upon same-sex unions. Homosexual unions are treated much the same as unions between partners of different sexes.

Polygamy is not unknown on Teth-Ammon but it is the province of the very rich. Few individuals can afford to split their property multiple ways should one of their partners choose to leave. More common is the practice of concubinage where the extraordinarily wealthy keep male and/or female sexual slaves to amuse themselves. In the Free Republic of Amania and Winterweir, where slavery is outlawed, illicit relationships between unannounced lovers is more common.

Child-rearing is the province of one parent or the other. Much like in modern society, it falls to the family in question to deduce if there will be a primary caregiver or not. Herbal and pharmaceutical medicine is more advanced on Alacarn than it was in the Middle Ages and unwanted pregnancies are fairly rare.

Children are considered under the authority of their parents until the age of fourteen, when they are recognized as *Telan* or half-adults. At the age of sixteen, they are named *Zebrul* or full-adults with all the attendant rights of a citizen.

## Gender

Culture has developed differently on Alacarn due to a variety of factors. Not the least change is the fact that the paternalist attitude towards women absent amongst the people of Teth-Ammon. A man doting on a woman above all others is going to come off as attempting to impress them for romantic purposes or just being condescending.

For the most part, gender is not a consideration for the people of Alacarn when it comes to what sort of jobs or position one might pursue. Power is equally distributed along both sexes at all levels of society. There is slightly larger number of women in positions of government and a more significant majority of men in positions of hard labor. Neither group's majority is large enough that it would be strange to find members of the alternate gender at work in them, though.

Gender roles exist to a certain degree, but they exist in a far larger variety than they do on the world of Earth. Almost every class and position has its own notions of how best to express femininity and masculinity. The social pressure to live up to the ideal is more an expression of class than sexism, however.

Those who feel deeply out of comfort with their own gender and strongly identify with the other, whether to the point of changing it or not, are also present in *Winterweir*. Culturally, cross-dressing and transgender views are considered unusual but not shocking. Sub-cultures have begun in the more populated cities of Alacarn. Those who desire to become another gender are rarely able to afford the alchemical treatments or magic necessary to work such a transformation, however.

Misanthropy and misogyny are purely personal attitudes in the *Winterweir* setting. Usually, they erupt as a reaction to one's own frustrations or insecurities in relation to the opposite sex. Such views are not supported by any civilized society and is merely a matter of individual opinion.

## Heroism

What heroism means in Alacarn is slightly different than what it means in other fantasy campaign settings. Heroes, for the most part, are those individuals who achieve great deeds. The morality of these great deeds is immaterial.

A person who slays a dragon will be hailed as a conquering champion, regardless of whether he did it to save a person's life or simply to loot the dragon's accumulated treasure. Heroes can do freely things that would get them otherwise condemned by society. Many heroes are murderers and thieves but their fame forms a sort of strange protective aura around them.

This is not to say that altruism and universal brotherhood do not exist in the world of Teth-Ammon. It's just the individuals whose deeds are motivated by such are extraordinarily rare. Indeed, ironically, many selfless heroes can and do fight one another. There is no 'righteous radar' for paladins on Teth-Ammon. Two upstanding champions of the realm might kill one another because their nationalism overcomes their ethical sense.

Some of the most well-remembered heroes in Alacarn are individuals that might have been labeled villains in another time. The Empress Alacarn led a massive crusade that had no other purpose than to conquer all the peoples of the Great Kingdoms. Yet, Alacarn is now remembered as an ascended goddess.

In practical terms, player characters will find society's opinion to be a poor judge of their actions. A noble religious knight might achieve less fame than his scoundrel like companion in the city's lower wards while the reverse occurs amongst those who share his religion. Neither of them may be spoken of with the same respect as the Dread Archwizard Drommu, who lives in a tower surrounded by a host of spell-bound slaves. Fear and respect are two sides of the coin in the setting of *Winterweir*.

## Law and Justice

The ultimate law of the *Winterweir* setting is, unfortunately, "Be able to get away with it." Teth-Ammon is a harsh world and there's no real concrete rule of law in places where it can't be backed up with force of arms. In a feudal society, the aristocracy has broad authority to interpret the Law of Alacarn as they see fit or simply ignore it. Superstitions and traditions are more a guide than established legal precedent. Instead, it would be wise to view the lawsof Alacarn as something more akin to suggestions rather than absolute rules.

The Law of Alacarn, roughly speaking, gives a Lady or Lord broad discretion to handle the affairs of their province as they see fit. Theoretically, they are to enforce the peace and protect the people under their care from abuses. In practice, it is virtually impossible for a commoner to appeal to the liege above their master if they are being abused. Slaves don't even have that right under the Law of Alacarn and simply must endure.

This doesn't mean that the Freeborn are entirely without means of protecting themselves. The wandering priests of Tyros often enforce law and justice with the blessing of their land's monarch. They are even capable of over-ruling a local lord in some instances (though they cannot remove a noble by themselves). Freeborn and slaves both well know that there's value in a good lynch mob. Should a noble's estate be put to the torch, the response might as just as often be to simply appoint a new one rather than attempt to punish the people who did so. After all, a noble who cannot keep his charges in line enough to avoid such an event is a noble likely better replaced anyway, in the eyes of his superiors.

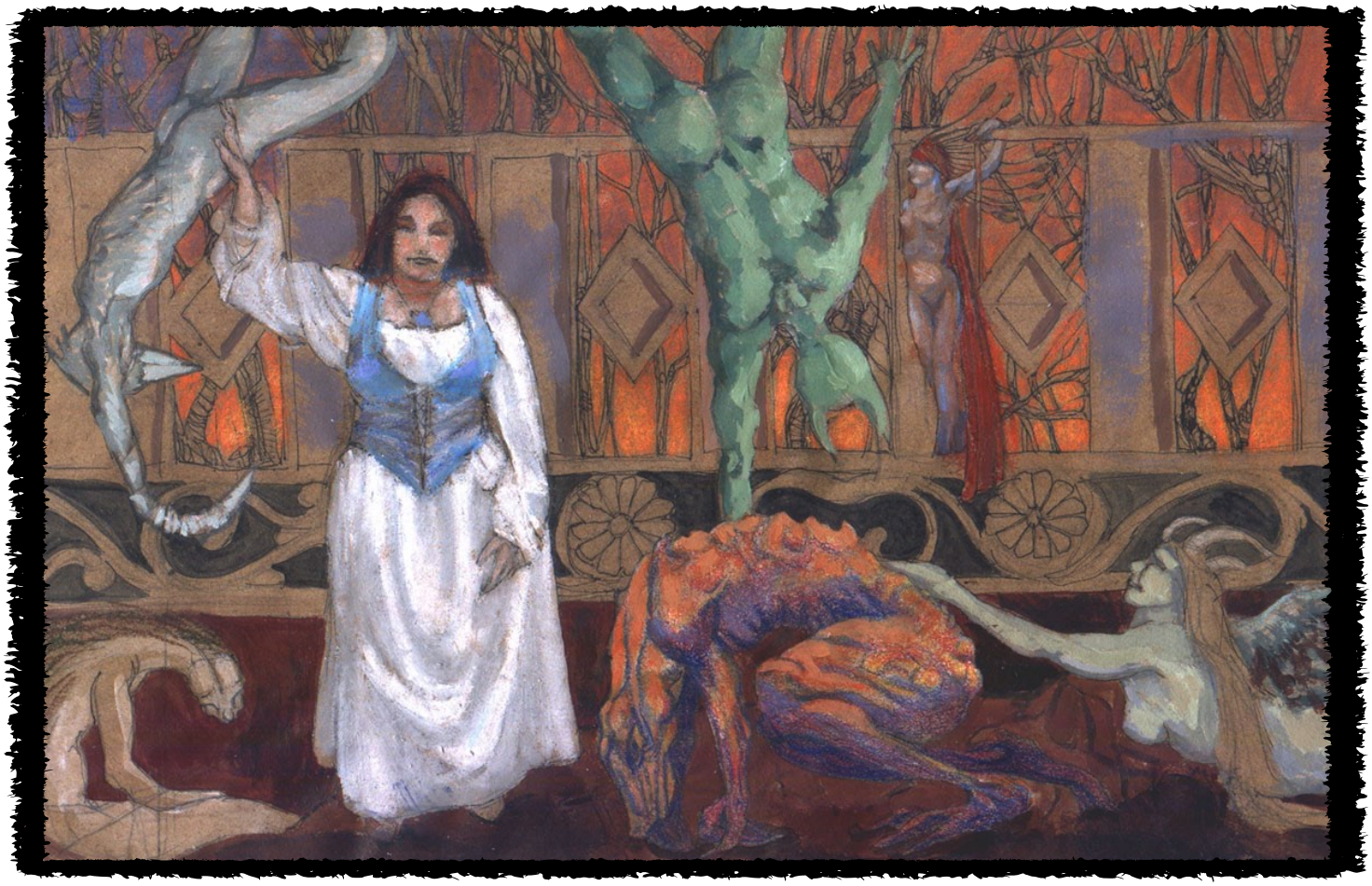
Force is still the ultimate decider of justice in Alacarn. Few individuals have the resources to pursue bandits or murderers across the borders of their properties, let alone across the face of the Great Kingdoms. Heroes and mercenaries are often needed in communities to defend them against people who have weapons and arms. The average farmer is effectively helpless against a group of men and women trained in the art of killing.

Those accused of crimes by the Aristocracy or their agents are often not awarded the dignity of a trial. The right to appeal to the Church of Tyros is an option reserved only for those in the nobility or supported by a member. Indeed, the only option other than escape and flight is to request trial by combat. While such a right is often refused, tradition holds that it is to be respected. Many talented killers have gotten away with murder by relying on it.

## Race and Nation

Partially due to its odd origins, the setting of *Winterweir* is a place where the vast majority of people have no particular ethnic identity. The colors and facial features of most human beings run a tremendous variety. Identities like Asian, Black, and White simply don't exist.

Having grown up with this, most individuals are more concerned with trying to ascertain a person's country of origin and their species rather than their color. Given there's no real indication of where a person is from by their physical appearance, this has resulted in a stronger attention being paid to how a person talks. Secondary signs like the way a person acts and dresses help in this examination.



Rather than embrace their shared heritage, people of Alacarn simply have redoubled their nationalist fervor. What nation a person hails from and where they were raised is a major deciding factor in how a person is treated. Prejudices run extremely high in less tolerant places towards those who hail from foreign nations. Only those with livelihoods dependent on foreign trade tend to be even remotely friendly to outsiders. There are plenty of cities that have become dependent on such for those who wish to travel and it is easy enough to pass oneself off as a local if one takes simple precautions.

This is, of course, only true for human beings. It is quite a different matter for non-humans that compose roughly half of the continent's population. While all of Alacarn's species share a common origin in the Terra'ssar's experiments, this has not lead to any real sense of community.

A sharp tension exists between humans and nonhumans that often spills over into outright racism. Humans, as a general rule, are the dominant species on the continent and have very few rivals. While they tend to get along better with races that appear close to their own form, the tension with truly alien appearing beings is severe. Most non-humans feel a sense of resentment towards *Homo sapiens*. They are fiercely protective of their own and often shoot first and ask questions later when existing in isolation.

In cities, humans tend to employ nonhumans as a source of cheap labor. This has not endeared either side to the other.

## Sexuality

The people of Alacarn have decidedly different sexual values than those on Earth. Their culture has developed of its own accord over many millenia. It has been guided by different circumstances and different religions.

While their habits are certainly more libertine than most people on Earth are comfortable with, it has not brought them much in the way of happiness. Much like on Earth, nothing good seems to come to mortals without it becoming something to fight over.

Both sexes tend towards sexual promiscuity in the world of Teth-Ammon. While both government and religious forces have attempted to highlight the value of monogamous and settled relationships, popular culture has always exalted the values of *Chay* (for women) and *Kalo* (for men) that roughly corresponds to the idea of machismo. Competition for sexual partners and the humiliation of rivals for them is the subject of countless citizens' free time.

Personal tastes towards how many sexual partnerships one wishes to maintain are obviously going to vary. In general, there's significantly less jealousy over a partner maintaining multiple relationships than one might expect. When jealousy rears its ugly head, usually it is the result of some personal social humiliation that has occurred. A lover having an additional sexual partner is a small matter. Combined with the Alacarn attitudes towards violence, this leads to many crimes of passion.

Homosexuality and the controversy thereof, is simply a non-issue on Alacarn. While it is no more prevalent than on the planet Earth, homosexuality is simply an acknowledged part of sexual preference on Alacarn. Those whose sexual tastes run to both genders suffer no social recriminations for such.

This has not eliminated the fact that feudalism decrees that aristocrats are expected to bear or sire children, whether they wish to do so or not. Thus far, no one has found a way to get around the economic requirement that satisfies all parties and unwilling nobles cope in various ways.

Prostitution is practiced legally in Alacarn as are other sexuality-based trades. Both men and women indulge this trade almost equally both in consumption and practice. Alacarn brothels vary tremendously in quality and service with most maintaining a semi-illicit sense around them. They tend to be, in addition to places of sex, also centers for intrigue and private meeting. Criminal activity tends to be fairly often practiced at these places as well, leading to their isolation from the rest of society. Courtesans serve as high class members of the aristocracy, often raised from youth by the Temple of Sybus.

Despite or perhaps because of their libertine habits, sexual crime is severely punished on Teth-Ammon. Rape is a capital crime that is punished by death in almost all the nations of Alacarn. Exempting the forced marriages of adolescents in the Free Republic during the worst years of its social revolution, the age of consent is commonly accepted as sixteen.

Taboos exist between partners of varying class, country, race, and species depending on the nation that one hails from.

## Religion

The gods are not particularly loved in the setting of *Winterweir*. The idea of a personal and loving deity is a largely unknown one (followed mostly by small sects that are judged heretical by the more orthodox faiths). Instead, the majority of the populous simply try to placate what they believe to be distant and judgmental entities. Offerings to the Twelve Great Gods are mostly meant to bring good fortune and ward off their wrath.

The gods in Alacarn are, for the most part, intangible and improvable beings. While an individual may have a vision of Paalok commanding him to conquer the world, it's always a valid interpretation to dismiss the man as a lunatic. Any 'true' miracles that occur are so subtle that they might as well be a coincidence or natural phenomenon. The people of the *Winterweir* setting are rather superstitious and quick to jump on strokes of good fortune or ill tiding as the movement of the gods.

This does not stop certain powerful beings from setting themselves up as deities. Celestials, Dragons, Half-Celestials, Lilin, and powerful magic users have all used their abilities to declare themselves to be deities. Some might argue that their power is enough to make them such by the commonly held standards of the Free Folk. These religions can often take on a life of their own and continue well after their founder has departed or been destroyed.

Piety is not a wholly absent concept from the people of Alacarn. Many individuals seek some higher truths

about the universe and hope to achieve some special kind of rapport with the divinities they revere. These especially reverent individuals are not given any extra respect by society. Unless they are part of the clergy and one might offend the gods by insulting them, many people look at such folk with disdain.

While atheism is the official creed for the Free Republic of Amania, it is not treated as a valid world view on Alacarn. In fact, most people tend to view it as actively dangerous. In a world as risky as Teth-Ammon, nonbelievers are considered threats to the community. This is not because of it is feared their views will spread but the belief they will literally bring down the retribution of the gods. The fact that entire nations of heretics (by whatever definition of "heretic" you choose) exist doesn't quell the fear that the gods might start smiting anytime now, and start here.

## Violence

Shocking to most people of modern Earth, the people of Alacarn have no real taboos against violence. Indeed, several of the religions celebrate it as something nearly as essential to life as sex. Numerous cultures on Alacarn take pride in the martial traditions and encourage their citizens to take up arms.

This doesn't mean that the citizens of Alacarn go mercilessly marauding around society, murdering and slaughtering at will (unless they're devout worshipers of Paalok). Such individuals would be labeled bandits and hung like any other kind of criminal.

Instead, most Alacarn citizens tend to exalt violence as the most permanent solution to one's problems and romanticize it extensively. In this respect, they are like a less hypocritical version of modern Earth society.

Only the Turlon have institutionalized gladiator fights to the death, violence as entertainment coats the society but animal fights, boxing, recreational brawling, martial arts, and wrestling are all forms of entertainment. The vast majority of all ballads and plays contain at least some form of violence as a means of exciting the masses.

In Alacarn, dueling is considered to be a perfectly valid means of resolving disputes even if only the upper class tend to engage in it regularly. All nations have legal codes governing duels and it is perfectly legal to kill a man in such a contest if the subject has agreed to risk his own life willingly. Many people have been forced into duels with superior opponents because the social pressure to not refuse a challenge is tremendous.

Both men and women are equally violent in Alacarn. Both serve in a roughly equal capacity in the various armies of the continent. Basic biology has decreed that there are different areas that they excel at, however. Men in Alacarn tend to take up positions of infantrymen and armored combat. Women hold a majority in the ranks of archers and officers core. Neither gender is forbidden from participating in the other's favored area if they can handle it.

To not put too fine a point on it, life is also cheap on Alacarn. Law is ill-enforced in most rural areas and corruption in rampant in many civilized areas. Most members of society are prepared for death, violent or otherwise, to come at any given time.

# History of the Winterweir Setting

*Winterweir* is a setting whose origin goes back literally millions of years. Indeed, its origins stretch back past the early days of the cosmos into a period before the universe began.

Remnants and ruins from its various bygone eras dot the surface of the world. The sense of decay from the landscape is ever present. There are immortal beings and monstrosities from ancient bygone eras that still live out their lives in the forgotten places of Teth-Ammon.

Below is just a small fragment of the setting's events. It would be impossible to fit the entirety of an ancient world's history into a small portion of a single book. However, it covers the general highlights of many important events. It should give readers an excellent start to understanding the setting.

While the majority of Alacarn's inhabitants have little interest in the past, knowledge of history could be vitally important to saving the world from utter destruction. At least, for a little while longer.

## The Primordial Epoch

In the darkest and earliest eras of the cosmos, before the actual physical creation of the universe, the laws of physics were not quite as fixed as they are now. Life existed, after a fashion. Yet it was totally distinct from anything that might presently occupy the universe.

Indeed, these multi-dimensional entities that existed during this time could not possibly exist in the present universe. The experiments of the Terra'ssar gave a name to these alien things as the Drakkath or The Elder Ones.

The laws of reality changed drastically with the advent of the universe and these beings were banished from physical reality. This process uncounted billions of years and the interaction of the Drakkath resulted in countless species developing. Developing in a manner wholly distinct from any presently existing life-form. The Drakkath were not evil or destructive, but their existence was irreconcilable to the life that evolved in the universe after them.

The Drakkath were immortal and nearly omnipotent beings that could not be eliminated by the mere altering of the universe's physics. Instead, the entities retreated to different layers of the cosmos in order to rest themselves. The beings that they fostered either joined them or were extinguished. The pitiful shreds of these ancient and monstrous hybrids are called the Undying Ones.

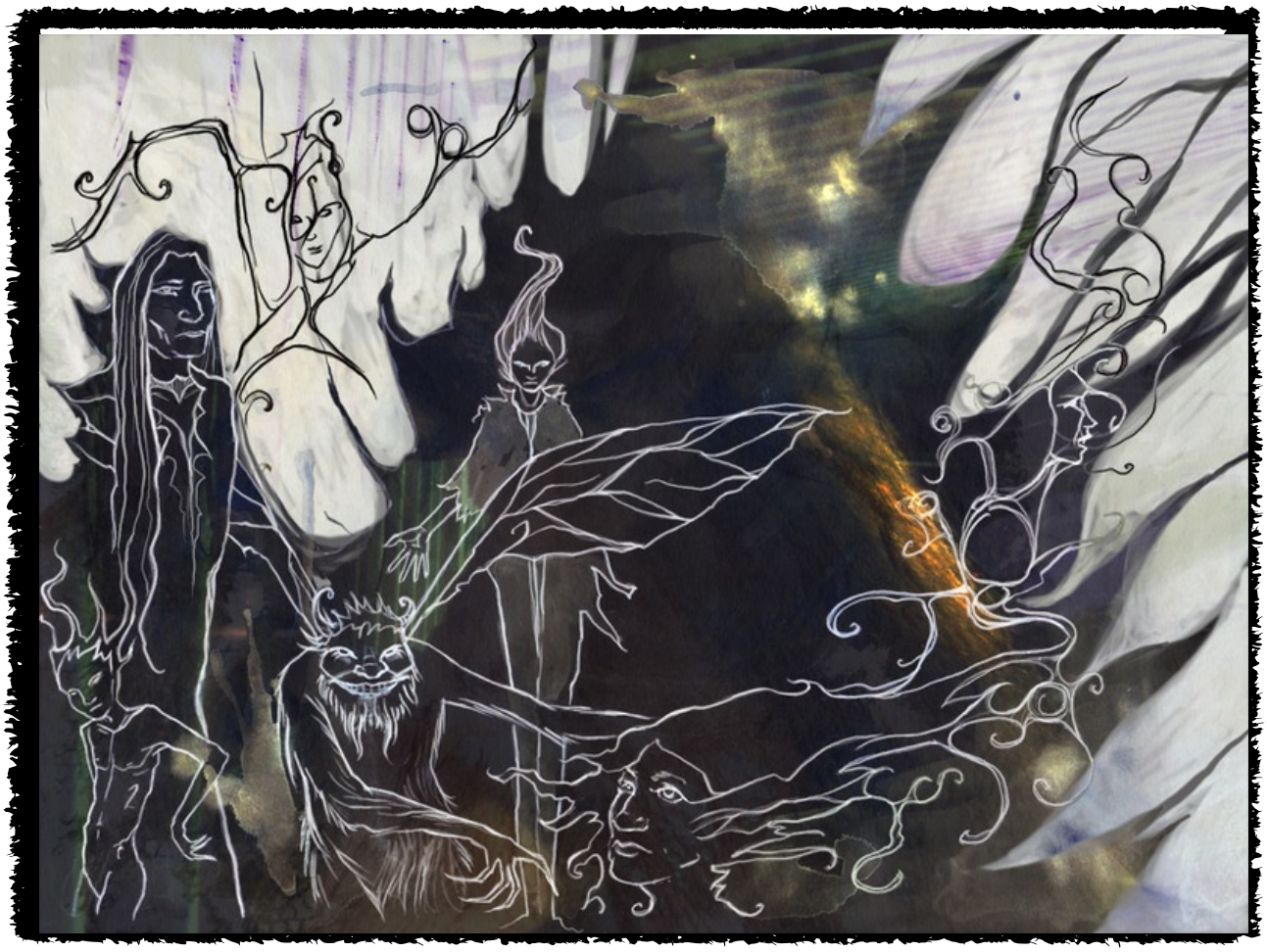
Attempts to contact the Drakkath have resulted in madness or the utter annihilation for all those whom have attempted such. A few have walked away with unfathomable insights into the nature of the cosmos. Because of this, some individuals still attempt to plumb the secrets of this long distant time period.

It is said by certain physicists that the current state of reality is but a brief pause and eventually it shall return to a form that is more fitting the Drakkath's former environment. Indeed, the Drakkath wait for this to occur. Some have suggested that magic-use is actively contributing to the slow decay of the dimensional barriers that keep the Drakkath away.

## The Home World

Significantly later, in an otherwise unremarkable galaxy, was a small blue planet orbiting a bright star. A combination of cosmic rays mixed with a steaming watery environment was enough to give birth to life without the touch of the Drakkath. Over time, single celled organisms evolved into various forms of life that were divided into animal and vegetable forms.

The first dominant species to emerge with intelligence on this world was the Terra'ssar. They were a race of gigantic, lumbering and scaled creatures that could not fly but maintained vestigial wings. The Terra'ssar were, despite this, extraordinarily civilized. They constructed vast cities and buildings as they developed technology far in advance of the world's later species.



Eventually, the Terra'ssar were dealt a blow they could not deal with. An asteroid of incredible size, struck the planet and slaughtered the majority of their race in an instant. Some suggest that they might have been able to prevent this cataclysm if not for circumstances whose specifics are now lost. The survivors of the civilization poured their resources into constructing a series of spaceships that would carry them through their experimental warp gate producing devices to a new world.

In hopes of preventing future generations from attempting to return to the world out of a misguided sense of homesickness, the Terra'ssar made it a point to eliminate their civilization behind them. They dispatched a nano-technological plague that devoured everything remaining of their civilization. Thus, in an instant, the Terra'ssar's entire existence seemed to be swept away.

No one would even know that they had ever existed on their home world.

## The Rise of the Terra'ssar Empire

Technology continued to develop on the Terra'ssar's spatial journey. They examined numerous worlds in the hopes of finding one suitable for colonization, often leaving seeds that they hoped would eventually sprout into the beginnings of a planet suitable for their kind.

In the end, the Terra'ssar armada eventually reached the world that they dubbed Teth-Ammon. The planet was only dimly suitable for their needs but the gigantic saurian species used their advanced genetic engineering to alter its surface to more properly suit their needs. Whatever life might have evolved on Teth-Ammon was exterminated to be replaced with the life-forms preserved in the sauropods' genetic records.

The Terra'ssar were a hardy species and swiftly spread across the planet's surface. Thanks to experiments upon themselves, the race was now effectively immortal and

intelligent in ways that few mammals could ever hope to match. Soon, the planet of Teth-Ammon was covered in their alien and beautiful cities.

From this world, the Terra'ssar expanded into space and soon became head of a vast interstellar empire. An empire that consisted not only of themselves but the species they'd accidentally or intentionally created along their voyage.

The Terra'ssar civilization entered a golden age that lasted for untold millions of years. It was a state that could not last forever.

## The Twilight of the Terra'ssar Empire

The end of the Terra'ssar Empire came not at the hands of a foreign conqueror but from the growing lethargy and greed of its ruling class.

The Terra'ssar, effectively immortal except for accident or violence, were a people that grew defensive in their old age. Younger members of their race, let alone species that were nearly as old as their masters, bitterly resented that they were kept from the halls of power. Only through conspiracy or incredible accomplishment was it possible to distinguish oneself enough to join the elite.

The Terra'ssar increasingly began to withdraw from their territories as their servants grew more violent in their opposition to their master's rule. The ancient saurians, so used to having their way, retaliated with their awesome powers. What once was an alliance built upon trust became an empire built upon slavery. Entire races were wiped out while others were genetically transformed into mindless drones. The Terra'ssar's subjects began to call them by a different name than their own, instead they claimed they were monsters. The Terra'ssar became known as Dragons.

The younger Terra'ssar did not abate in their lust for power. Desiring a way to overthrow their elders, they began probings into their very fabric of the universe. Studying the ancient reality-bending powers of the multi-dimensional Drakkath and their slave species, these beings worked experiments to see how these abilities could be replicated. Using lesser races as test subjects, they learned great secrets about the cosmos. Billions suffered and horribly died in the experiments necessary to generate the psychic powers they desired. Thus the Terra'ssar's slave races gained the Power of the Mind. Other races simply called it magic.

The resulting war was won by the younger dragons. The younger dragon's own children would eventually turn against them. Each generation of Terra'ssar would wait less time before attempting to overthrow their elders. The Terra'ssar Empire collapsed into feuding fiefdoms with Teth-Ammon becoming a single self-sufficient world. There, the Dragons ruled over a menagerie of slaves. It was an existence devoted to dreaming of a glorious past.

## The Dawn of the High Races

The decayed shadow of the Terra'ssar Empire continued on for centuries after. The dragons, now motivated by a desire to capture their lost glory, turned towards ever more esoteric experiments. Unfortunately, their own scientific expertise was little more than a pale shadow of those that came before. The elder Terra'ssar were beings with little desire to help their debased descendants.

Using warp technology not terribly more advanced than the kind used to originally propel them through space, the Dragons opened gateways to many of the worlds they'd seeded. There, they kidnapped wholesale numbers of peoples to continue serving as their slaves. The Terra'ssar continued their grizzly genetic experiments in hopes of pressing forward the Power of the Mind's limits. They did this in order to discover the secret of achieving a transcendental existence like the Drakkath.

The first product of these crude and dangerous experiments were the Proto-Men. The results were a semi-living embodiment of other dimensional matter. An undead creature that eternally burned in its own half-existence. The Proto-Men required the draining of mental energy from living beings to survive and swiftly turned against their masters.

The Dragons eventually crushed the Proto-Men but did not destroy them. The survivors were eventually renamed Formorians by the people of Teth-Ammon. The individual Proto-Men were never given names, instead later species gave them titles like the Shadow King or the Lord of Torments. Some still survive to this day, being entities of awesome power that few modern day magicians can match.

The Dragons, rather than abandon their experiments, continued to attempts to develop magic that would allow them to become like the Drakkath. This resulted in the creation of the Celestials and the Lilin from the human race. The first race successfully transcended physical existence to a limited degree while the Lilin were merely of an unprecedented mystical potential. Despite the precautions of the Dragons, they failed to control their creations and both joined forces in the War of Flame and Darkness.

The Dragons' reign was finally shattered. The Terra'ssar were hunted nearly to extinction across the four corners of the world.

## The Age of the Lilin

The leader of the Lilin named herself Tiamate. The descendent of human beings enslaved from a far distant world, Tiamate was a charismatic figure that was obsessed with the belief that the Dragons had grievously erred against the natural order by turning away from the planet.

Despite the brilliant and educated nature of the two races, Tiamate formed a religion around the belief that they should abandon the ways of the Terra'ssar. Using the last of their advanced technology, she dispatched probes into space containing a plague to finish off the last of the Dragon people and their races.

Then, assuming the position of the Obsidian Empress, Tiamate ordered the destruction of all traces of the Dragon's mighty empire. Thousands of cities were pulled down. Countless libraries, both electronic and physical, were annihilated. Tiamate's own magic caused vast forests to grow almost instantaneously. Tiamate sealed away all traces of the Dragon civilization.

The Celestials, disgusted by Tiamate's choices, retreated to their own set of floating cities and preserved as much of the Dragon's rare lore as they could. With the Celestials abandoning the world, Tiamate had no opposition to try and forge her own world around a naturalistic lifestyle.

Tiamate took countless lovers during this time, both male and female. Using her magic, she bore children from all. The Obsidian Empiress' liberation of the various Terra'ssar slave races resulted in countless deaths but many turned to her worship as a goddess. Others reviled her as a monster. The Lilin grew feared as demons and tricksters.

Ultimately, Tiamate's own children turned against her. The traitors bound her away in a sub-dimension with the Dragon's forbidden technology. They then promptly turned upon one another. Those embracing the more estoertic arts of magic became the ancestors of the Fair Folk and fled through space/time rifts into the Other Realm. Those who chose to continue their causal exploitation of lesser races became the Daemon Host and fled to the edges of civilization until later enslaved by Malaxas.

The majority of the less powerful members of the Lilin remained on Alacarn. These last remained as they were and are the ancestors of modern day Lilin.

## The Era of the Dragon Kings

The collapse of the Obsidian Empire was not something went unnoticed amongst who had long chafed against the belief that knowledge was an enemy. Those who had fled from Tiamate's wrath emerging from their places of hiding and began to rebuild and conquer.

Lyrandra A'Turlon rose up in the wake of the North and led the Cleansing War that slaughtered the vast majority of the Lilin. Hundreds of thousands of the beings were put to the sword as she then unexpectedly wed a non-human Valken named Aelfric the Wanderer. Most of the remaining nobility took similar consorts and the immortal race set themselves up as rulers of the capital named in her honor. Thus, the Turlon Empire was born.

Shockingly, not long after the Empire was founded, a strange metal armored figure emerged from the borders of the land. Calling itself the Divine Emperor, the descendants of Lyrandra Turlon gave up their crown to the mysterious being and relied on its immense wisdom and power to guide them. Under its reign, the land prospered but became reliant on the creature and decadent. It would eventually give up its place as ruler and the Great Houses would instead follow Ruling Regents.

To the south of Turlon, the Prophetess Kelee A'Tressym believed that she had a vision from the goddess Sybus. Instructed that her descendents would have the role of guiding the world, she took three husbands from the

greatest Kings in the land with her magic and set herself up as ruler of the newly formed D'Henna empire. Her daughters would take up the way of the seer and become the Witches of the Fallen World.

The Bathas, the slave-masters and record keepers of the Dragons, had long been hunted to near extinction by Tiamate. Preserving what little remained of the Dragon's lore in their heavily fortified and isolated cities, they took human captives and bred them. Treating their slaves with chemicals to grow them strong and unnaturally powerful, the Jotun race was created. Through the power of their warriors, the Bathas founded the nation of Belkor.

But the era would take its name from the Dragons rather than these mighty founders. Surviving in isolated caves or on islands, the Dragons would strike back after Tiamate's fall. The newly created cities would go alight with flame and their enslaved human minions before they divided much of the continent between them. Only the Great Empires above would be able to resist them.

The mightiest of these beings would be termed Abryss, Dranax, Galax, Talthor, Turroc, Wemac, and Zull. Even thousands of years after their fall, the nations under their rule would keep these names abominated as embodiments of evil.

## The Revolt of Alacarn the Uniter

Abryss the Dragon King of the South would be slain by the Knight Tira A'Telas. Galax the Dragon King of the West would have his food poisoned by the siblings Emeras D'Aman and Emara A'Aman, a pair that would become the first King and Queen of Amania. Zull would simply vanish one day as if simply finding his rule no longer interested him. The reign of the Dragon Lords was slowly coming undone.

A hundred year war called the War of Weeping Vines would be fought between Turlon and D'Henna. Queen Elexas A'Tressym would begin it by capturing the Prince of Turlon and keeping him prisoner as a pleasure slave until she finally murdered him.

The war would finally end when Prince Xoan D'Turlon drove his blade, Ebonheart, into the newly undead Queen's heart. The Witches of the Fallen World would be scattered as the Tressym Dynasty was slain to the tiniest babe. No relation, no how distant, was spared. Xoan sought to pacify the kingdom by naming a low ranking noble of the kingdom, Alacarn A'Bretai as its Queen. This would be his downfall.

Incensed by the almost extermination of her kingdom's nobility, Alacarn A'Bretai and her wife Lady Kaleena A'Bretai plotted to revenge themselves upon Turlon. Feigning loyalty at the start, Alacarn would eventually lead the Winter Revolt when the Emperor died and there was a secession dispute.

Through her military genius and Lady Kaleena's magic, Alacarn swiftly moved on the capital and found herself as ruler of all Turlon in addition to D'Henna. Prince Xoan was dragged before her and Alacarn would allow him a sword to duel with her. Alacarn slew Xoan and cemented her hold as Empress of nearly half the continent.

Empowered by her belief that the continent had no further use of Dragon monarchs, Alacarn named Krytek D'Stayzi as her Marshal. Krytek had long learned to befriend the mutated Dragon descendants called Wyverns. Taming them as mounts, Krytek lead a massive host of them to attack each of the remaining Dragon Kings in turn. Largely welcomed as a liberator, Alacarn destroyed whatever community did not acknowledge her as Empress.

Alacarn would die at the age of sixty-one. She was slain by members of the Obsidian Circle. The Tiamate worshipers waylaid her on a hunting party before overwhelming her with sheer numbers. Alacarn would be elevated to the status of goddess by her niece, the future Empress Kalinka A'Alacarn. So upset was she about her wife's death, Lady Kaleena retired to become a celibate of the Suffering God (a now forgotten god later absorbed into the worship of Kaalon).

## The Age of the Alacarn Empire

Empress Kalinka proved to be a stabilizing influence on the whole of the continent. Kalinka renamed the continent, previous called Ezul, after her Aunt. Kalinka also declared the Twilight of the Idols and combined the twelve most popular gods into a single pantheon. Imperial scribes work feverishly to develop a consistent mythology that reveals most remaining deities are merely an aspect of the Twelve Great Gods.

Empress Kalinka ruled for an astonishingly seventy-five years and commissioned many public works. The results of her efforts included the Imperial Highway, the Grand Arcanum, and the Pretax Academy.

Kalinka was a brutal but generous ruler, exterminating vast swaths of independent nobility while encouraging her many heirs to marry multiple partners and foster children by them. It is said that by the time she died, she had more than a hundred grand-children.

Her great-grandson, Emperor Davios D'Alacarn would become almost as famous as the previous two Imperial leaders. Known as the Dragon King, Davios would be more famous for his martial exploits against the lingering independent minded individuals of Alacarn than he would be for his skill as a ruler. He would be also infamous for a harem consisting of nearly a hundred men and women.

The following Emperors of Alacarn would be a mixture of good and bad. A massive bureaucracy, instituted by Emperor Davios in interests of allowing him time to fight, would continue affairs of state even when civil war wracked the country. The prolific nature of the Alacarn Dynasty would also mean that most nobles who assumed power would choose to do so in its name.

The Empire would endure relatively progressively for over a thousand years.

## The Founding of the Divine Order

While the Alacarn Empire prospered, the lands below the continent faired poorer. A young pauper cursed with epilepsy and visions claimed to have received a divine message from a being called the Supreme Throne. Declaring that all other gods were merely demons in disguise or nonexistent, the boy was swiftly slain for blasphemy. Even his name was lost to the mists of time and he became known as the First Martyr.

A group of monks calling themselves the Divine Covenant latched upon the boy's teachings and pooled their resources to hire a mercenary army. Converting the populous by sword, the religion developed a surprisingly faithful following. Imposing a brutal theocracy, the Divine Covenant began slowly swallowing up the nations around it on the continent of Saiya. No one seemed capable of standing against the oppressive religion for very long. In time, it would come to rule the entirety of the continent below Alacarn's Empire.

The rise of the Divine Covenant would be almost unimportant by comparison to what would occur next.

## The Revolt of Malaxas

In the floating cities of the Celestials, one of their kind who argued that mortals required the guiding hand of their race. He argued that they should explore their full potential by encouraging them through adversity. The propagator of these ideals was known as Malaxas.

Malaxas would lead his followers in open revolt. As a result, countless Celestial cities fell from the sky. The remaining traditionalist Celestials retreated to dimensions slightly higher in the universal spectrum. Thus was the Silver Eternity created. Upon their victory, Malaxas' followers swiftly divided into feuding camps as their leader revealed his ideals to be far more radical than even his closest advisors had ever guessed. Malaxas intended to sculpt the very shape of mortal flesh to become something transcendentally different.

The Empire of Alacarn was utterly unprepared for the near-godlike beings that appeared amongst them. The Malaxas-worshiping Celestials transformed countless beings into horrific parodies of their original forms. In what is still spoken of with supernatural awe, the War of Shadow and Flame was fought for over a century. Stories of epic heroism and struggle fill this time, but the actual effect of mortals in this conflict was minimal. Malaxas' power was such that thousands of his perverted creatures being destroyed was merely an annoyance.

Renegade Celestials from Malaxas' forces aided the Grand Arcanum in developing a means of defeating his armies. This rift lead to a reality bordering those dimensions inhabited by the Drakkath. The results exceeded their wildest dreams and worst nightmares.

The resulting Dread Cataclysm occurred in the span of a single hour. It wiped cities clean of life, tore mountains from their roots, and sucked the majority of Malaxas' followers into another reality. The monstrous being was itself fused with this pocket dimension and left to suffer perpetual torment. Thus was born the Netherdeep. Following this, the Grim Fastness occurred. Disease and famine ravaged the land for a decade.

It is suggested by some scholars that more than half of Alacarn's populous died in this terrible time of horror.

## The Collapse of the Alacarn Empire

The devastation wrought by Malaxas' Revolt resulted in the Alacarn Empire becoming little more than a string of alliances united by tradition. Many Empresses and Emperors had perished in the century-long conflict against the Fallen Celestials. Others had done the unthinkable and kept their kingship by sacrificing wholesale legions of their citizens to Malaxas' experiments.

The final straw occurred when the last of the existing Imperial Royal House was slain by a host of Wyverns. Wyverns commanded by the Slythin wizard Keraptus. The founder of the Crimson Oath, a sect devoted to the Shadow King, he broke the control of the Imperial Household over their Draconic armies. The creatures ran wild and became an ongoing menace to the people of Alacarn for centuries to come.

During this time, twin girls were born to the Emperor of Turlon. The elder by minutes became Tamon the Conqueror, a woman whom immediately began a steady campaign of brutal dominance over the country's neighbors. The younger of the two sisters was Venetia the Just.

A sincere follower of Tyros, Venetia did not hold the amoral and soulless temper of most Turlon Aristocrats. Raising a vast host of loyal followers, she fought a brief war against her murderous sister and was eventually driven from Turlon.

Venetial would seize much of Northern Alacarn and then make peace with the wild Valken there. Countless refugees from the Revolt of Malaxas had set themselves up inhabiting the wild regions and she would soon convert them to her faith. From these humble roots was created the Kingdom of Winterweir.

Also worthy of mention during this time was the Shadow King's return. TThe hidden leader of the Crimson Oath, the Shadow King ruled over a small army of adoring servants and wizard apprentices from the island of Martok. After a failed attempt to conquer the West Coast of Alacarn, called the War of the Eight Fingered Hand, the Shadow King made peace with the rest of the continent. This was a ruse to allow his forces time to build up their strength. His servants would continue enslaving, raiding, and ravaging across the coast despite the treaties he signed. Even now, the Shadow King is known as a figure synonymous with evil

Tamon the Conqueror would die soon after, slain by the secret organization known as the Death Whisperers. It was, until that point, an organization that had operated in total secrecy. It owed its ultimate allegiance to those Celestials that had rebelled against Malaxas. Now, it existed to defeat any evil that endangered the greater good of Alacarn.

From that day forward, the age of Great Empires had passed. Forever after, the continent was locked in a series of never-ending petty wars.

## The Modern Era

The last four hundred years of Alacarn's history have been ones littered with conflict and destruction. Countless minor rebellions and skirmishes have shifted the border back and forth between the major nations. Hundreds of countries have risen and fallen alongside the transient borders of the land.

D'Henna suffered another serious setback when Princess Carmeera A'Trayan chose to follow her distant relation's path and transform herself into a vampire. Sealing off the majority of the mountain region of Volkelstein from the rest of the nation, D'Henna has chosen to recognize the kingdom of the undead. It is official border policy to turn away all refugees who attempt to seek shelter from the monstrous immortals that now rule Volkelstein.

The nation of Winterweir's conflict with the Kingdom of Amania took a bizarre turn after a brutal conflict called the War of Iron. Turning back an invasion force of Amanian soldiers, the Winterweir then counter-attacked. Burning much of Amania to the ground, they looted almost the entirety of their foes' treasury. King Hrothbert of Winterweir then forced Amania to sign a humiliating treaty that guaranteed decades of suffering for the masses.

Rather than continue to accept the depredations of the nobility after this humiliation, a peasants' revolt occurred of unprecedented size. Called the Grand Uprising, it rocked the whole of Amania. Shockingly, the nobility failed to put it down and nearly the entirety of the

aristocracy was put to death. The Kingdom of Amania was transformed into the Free Republic of Amania and became the enemy of all nations that were still lead by aristocrats.

Tythan has also fallen into chaos with the War of the Blue Rose. The late King, Crayus D'Sterak, discovered that his children were the product of his wife's lover rather than himself. Rather than allow him to name new heirs, the Queen assassinated him in his bath. For the past thirty years, the brother and sister Queen Yinthala and King Yetar have fought a civil war against the late King's relations. The siblings are loathed and hated for carrying an unnatural sexual relationship that has produced several children.

Recently, the Divine Covenant finally finished conquering the last of Saiya. Having converted the majority of the population to their faith, it has begun setting its sights on the northern continent above it. D'Henna is now fighting a brutal war against the theocracy's seemingly endless troops, unaware that they are facing just a small fraction of the repressive society's forces.

## Timeline

The years are given in Before Ascension (B.A.) and After Ascension (A.A) in the Alacarn Empire Calendar.

**???** The Drakkath exists in the chaos before time.

**Circa 13,000,000,000 B.A**- The modern universe is created by the Big Bang.

**Circa 1,000,000,000 B.A.**- The last of the Drakkath retreat from physical reality.

**Circa 100,000,000 B.A.** The Undying Ones start to depart from physical reality as well or go into hibernation.

**Circa 66,000,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar evolve on the Home world.

**Circa 65,500,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar are nearly destroyed by a meteor strike. They flee their Home world and destroy what they leave behind.

**Circa 60,000,000 B.A** The Terra'ssar discover Teth-Ammon and terra-form it.

**Circa 58,800,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar are masters of the Known Universe.

**Circa 10,000,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar Civil War begins.

**Circa 9,800,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar Civil War ends inconclusively. Teth-Ammon is withdrawn from the rest of the universe.

**Circa 1,000,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar begin regressing technologically.

**Circa 20,000 B.A.** The Terra'ssar create the Proto-Men. A brutal insurrection occurs that takes ten years to crush.

**Circa 18,000 B.A.** The Celestials and the Lilin are created by the Terra'ssar.

**Circa 17,000 B.A.**- The Celestials and Lilin finally destroy the Terra'ssar Empire.

**Circa 16,800 B.A.** The Obsidian Empire is founded by Tiamate.

**Circa 10,000 B.A.** The Obsidian Empress is overthrown by her children.

**Circa 9,990 B.A.** The Civil War between the Lilin results in them divided into two races.

**Circa 9,800 B.A.** The Fey Lords retreat into the Dreamlands.

**9,700 B.A.** Lyrandra A'Turlon begins the Cleansing Wars out of disgust for the half-blooded Lilin.

**8,683 B.A.** The Turlon Empire is born.

**8,670 B.A.** Kelee A'Tressym founds D'Henna.

**8,664 B.A.** The Witches of the Fallen World are created.

**8,500 B.A.** The Bathas found the nation of Belkor.

**8,100 B.A.** The Divine Emperor finds the crumbling Turlon Empire and assumes command. He rules benevolently but sternly for eight thousand years before withdrawing into isolation.

**4,473 B.A.** The Dragon Kings form an alliance to reclaim a portion of their ancestral glory.

**3,320 B.A.** Abryss the Dragon King is slain by the Holy Champion of Tyros, Tira A'Telas.

**2,301 B.A.** Galax the Dragon King is poisoned by Emeras and Emara A'Aman. They become rulers of Amania.

**120 B.A.** The Divine Emperor withdraws into himself. Prince Xoan of House Paalok is made Ruling Regent.

**104 B.A.** Queen Elexas A'Tressym kidnaps and rapes Prince Xavier of Turlon.

**101 B.A.** After abusing Xavier horribly and failing to gain an heir by him, Elexas strangles him to death.

**100 B.A.** The War of Weeping Vines begins.

**40 B.A.** Queen Elexas A'Tressym infuses herself with energy from the Shadow King and becomes the first Vampire. She then slaughters her own children.

**8 B.A.** Lady Alacarn A'Bretai rescues Lady Kaleena A'Bretai from the clutches of a group of Jotun Pirates. They swiftly become lovers and agree to marry against their parents wishes.

**4 B.A.** Prince Xoan slays Queen Elexas with Ebonheart.

**2 B.A.** Alacarn A'Bretai is named Queen of D'Henna.

**1 B.A.** Alacarn A'Bretai leads the Winter Revolt and conquers Turlon.

**0** The conquest of Turlon by Alacarn. The beginning of the After Alacarn Calendar.

**4 A.A.** Alacarn declares war on the Dragon Kingdoms.

**6 A.A.** Alacarn gains the service of the Wyvern Isles' Dragon Riders.

**20 A.A.** Alacarn forces the last of the Dragon Kingdoms to surrender to her. She works to consolidate her rule over the majority of the continent.

**31 A.A.** Alacarn is cowardly murdered by worshipers of Tiamate.

**32 A.A.** Kalinka A'Alacarn is named second Empress of Alacarn.

**33 A.A.** Empress Kalinka declares Alacarn to be a goddess and that she should be worshiped throughout the land.

**107 A.A.** Empress Kalinka finally dies of natural causes. Her great grandson Davios is named the third Emperor of the dynasty.

**108 A.A.** Davios D'Alacarn commissions a High Bureaucracy that will handle much of the Kingdom's running so that he can pursue military adventures.

**110 A.A.** Davios D'Alacarn wages a sneak attack against those quasi-independent nations within the Empire. More than a dozen petty kingdoms are annihilated as he works to tear down the personal armies of the traditional nobility.

**350 A.A.** The Alacarn dynasty wages a ten year war called the War of Bloody Tears. Wizards are used extensively to make sure that their enemies are totally destroyed.

**450 A.A.** The Second War of Bloody Tears is fought. A branch family of the Alacarn dynasty totally destroys the main family and becomes the new Imperial Household.

**1,070 A.A.** The First Martyr is stoned to death by angry villagers.

**1,075 A.A.** The Divine Covenant converts to the First Martyr's faith.

**1,078 A.A.** The Divine Covenant seizes control of the port capital of Herui and puts all non-believers to death.

**1,081 A.A.** The Revolt of Malaxas begins.

**1,093 A.A.** Malaxas drives most of the Celestials from Creation.

**1,110 A.A.** Malaxas brings his vast host to Alacarn and creates his own kingdom by causally annihilating all those whom oppose him.

**1,145 A.A.** The Third War of Bloody Tears is fought. Emperor Erasmus D'Alacarn the Betrayer is slaughtered along with almost all of his heirs by the Grand Arcanum. His six year old grand-niece is made a figurehead for the war against Malaxas.

**1,200 A.A.** The Dread Cataclysm destroys much of Alacarn. The Netherdeep is created. The Grim Fastness begins.

**1,213 A.A.** The Grim Fastness ends as the tattered survivors of the various nations achieve near-self sufficiency. A series of revolts begin almost at once against the lingering remnants of Imperial power in D'Henna.

**1,220 A.A.** The Kingdom of Amania achieves independence from the Alacarn Empire.

**1,224 A.A.** The Kingdom of Tythan achieves independence from the Alacarn Empire.

**1,228 A.A.** The Wyvern Isles achieve independence from the Alacarn Empire.

**1,230 A.A.** Revolts along the coast of D'Henna result in most of the city states achieving independence.

**1231 A.A.** The Alacarn Dynasty loses the fealty of the Turlon Empire. The Alacarn Empire effectively ceases to exist.

**1250 A.A** Keraptus makes a deal with the Shadow King and a host of evil Dragons to found the Crimson Oath.

**1275 A.A.** Tamon the Conqueror and Venetia the Just fight a civil war over who will be Empress. Tamon emerges victorious.

**1285 A.A.** Winterweir is founded by refugees from the Turlon Empire. The existing inhabitants of the North are brought into the new government by force.

**1286 A.A.** The Shadow King announces himself via vast illusions to the majority of the world's peoples.

The War of the Eight Fingered Hand leads a vast host of mercenaries, nonhumans, and undead against the human populous.

**1299 A.A.** The Shadow King is defeated by a group of heroes called the Seven Champions. He is believed destroyed and his undead armies turn upon his living forces.

**1300 A.A.** The Shadow King is revealed to be alive and makes peace with the peoples of the world.

**1302 A.A.** Tamon the Conqueror is slain by the Death Whisperers. They begin offering their services to the majority of the world's nobles.

**1313 A.A.** Princess Carmeera transforms herself into a Vampire. She becomes Queen of Volkelstein.

**1703 A.A.** The War of Iron is fought between Winterweir and Amania.

**1708 A.A.** The Winterweir defeat the Amanians and nearly destroy the nation.

**1710 A.A.** The nobility of Amania is overthrown in the Grand Uprising. The Free Republic of Amania is created.

**1730 A.A.** Tythan's King is assassinated. The War of Blue Roses begins.

**1750 A.A** The Divine Covenant finishes their conquest of Saiya. They set their sights on D'Henna.

**1760 A.A.** The Present.

# Antagonists in Winterweir

A hero is only as good as his enemies. *Winterweir* is a setting that lacks the fundamental cosmic embodiments of Good vs. Evil that you'll find in other games. Certainly, morals exist and it would be wrong to say that it is a world of grey. Rather, it is a place very similiar to our own world where such ideas as ethics and values change drastically depending on time or place.

Thankfully, for the sake of interesting adventures, there's no end of truly vile individuals that players can feel no guilt at sinking an ax into. Still, the difference between something of an utterly alien mindset and something that is evil is a fine one. Teth-Ammon is a world where heroes are also expected to hold strong beliefs. If other people are willing to kill for their beliefs, then certainly player characters should feel little hesitation in returning the favor.

This chapter will provide a listing of various villainous types that might be used by the Narrator. It will also provide examples that are considered to be canonical for the setting. Finally, it will discuss some common problems with villains that Game Masters might encounter and some suggested solutions.

## Archvillains

Archvillains are the masterminds of Teth-Ammon. They are individuals who possess the intelligence, will, and raw power to be able to be the enemy of not just one adventure but a whole series of them. Adventurers will rarely see an Archvillain, let alone defeat him, when they finish a single story. Instead, the best of them are lurking presences that are known by their reputations well before they are actually encountered.

Archvillains in *Winterweir* are rarely individuals who plan small. The difference between a regular mastermind and an Archvillain is largely one of scale. A solo villain may have a small group of henchmen at their command. A true Archvillain has a legion of soldiers at his disposable and nearly unlimited resources.

It is entirely possible to build entire campaigns around the defeat of a single Archvillain.

### Malaxas

*"I shall make the universe into my image. Perfection."*

**Appearance:** Malaxas is still stunningly beautiful. In the form that he is currently trapped, he appears as an impossibly beautiful three hundred foot-tall Celestial. Whereas once there would be great wings stretching from his back, they have been burned and left a charred remnant. His skin is constantly covered in soot and he is bound by blackened iron chains. His eyes are blood red and reflect the look of anyone who gazes upon him.

Those with the ability of a diviner who look upon Malaxas must make a Madness Test. His exterior is but an illusion and the truth of his appearance is impossibly horrifying. Some have even clawed their own eyes out.

**Personality**: Malaxas is a being that is beyond human charisma. He is capable of seeing any weakness in an argument or vice in a person's heart. His every word drips with hidden desires and secret ambitions. Righteous men are destroyed by his speeches. Even the most holy are turned into terrifying worshipers of Malaxas. He portrays himself as the victim and a visionary rather than a monster.

If one were somehow rendered immune to his charms, they would find him a smug and condescending being. Malaxas has depraved and deviant views about what constitutes a satisfying life. Despite his lofty seeming nature; his beliefs are animalistic and crude. The Crimson King has a base desire to bring the entire universe down to his level.

**Background**: Malaxas is a figure whose history is drenched in blood. Born a Celestial, he was unlike most of their kind. Malaxas was a figure who found the Floating Cities to be wanting. His ideas were reactionary, but

found reception many of his kindred. Soon, he was elevated to the status of a High Seraph. Unknown to most, Malaxas probed the secrets of the Drakkath to a level that was unheard of amongst their kind.

Whatever powers that Malaxas found beyond the horizon of the dimensions were enough to corrupt him utterly. The powers that he displayed against his fellow Celestials were enough to defeat them and drive them from physical reality. It was in the mortal world that Malaxas waged his terrifying war against reality. For unknown reasons, it was this dimension that held his interest above all others.

Malaxas' domination was built on a house of cards, though. His army was assembled around his personal charisma mixed with countless lies and promises that were never intended to be kept. This hampered his ability to wage war against mankind. It is possible that his power might been enough to conquer all of reality by itself. But he was somehow happened from making effective of it.

Malaxas' banishment from physical reality to the depths of the Netherdeep was one of the few moments that he was genuinely taken off-guard. Literally, the entire dimension is his prison. If Malaxas were ever to be released then the Netherdeep would be destroyed. While some might consider this to be a blessing, it is likely that Malaxas has grown even stronger in his imprisonment. No being in the cosmos could likely oppose him were he to return to physical reality.

Malaxas desires his freedom but not at the cost of the vast kingdom that he has built for himself. Still, if given a viable means of liberating himself, he might willingly sacrifice all of his pawns to once more exist in physical reality. Because he must work through pawns, Malaxas does not allude to this possibility when manipulating others to seek his freedom.

**Combat:** If directly confronted, Malaxas can wipe away even the strongest mortals as if they were smoke before the wind. The only way to destroy Malaxas would be a truly legendary weapon of which the universe has only seen a few of.

**Rank:** X

## The Shadow King

*"Now, we shall have a little chat about your recent rebel activities."*

**Appearance:** The Shadow King is a human shaped figure that eternally burns eternally in black flames. These flames produce a strange anti-light that consumes the illumination around him. The Shadow King covers himself in a set of wrought Daemon Steel armor that is deliberately designed to intimidate and frighten those

| Shadow King | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D12, Spirit D12, Strength D12+2, Vigor D12+2 | | | | | | | | |
| **Skills** | Fighting D12, Guts D12, Intimidation D12, Knowledge (Arcana) D12+2, Knowledge (History) D12, Knowledge (Tactics) D12, Notice D12, Persuasion D12, Riding D8, Taunt D8, Spell-casting D12+4 | | | | | | | | |
| **Charisma** | +4 | **Pace** | 6 | **Parry** | 8 | **Toughness** | 17 | | |
| **Edges** | Charismatic, Command, Fearsome, Followers, Fervor, Filthy Rich, Hold the Line, Holdings, Improved Frenzy, Inspire, Level Headed, Monarch, Natural Leader, Noble, Wizard | | | | | | | | |
| **Hindrances** | Code of Honor, Enemy (Malaxas), Habit (Knowledge) | | | | | | | | |
| **Special Abilities** | • **Arcane Background (Spells):** The Shadow King knows nearly every spell in the Winterweir setting and can create new ones on a whim. He has 100 Ether Points to draw from and regenerates them all overnight.<br>• **Darkvision:** The Shadow King is capable of seeing equally well in the dark as the light.<br>• **Death Touch:** The Shadow King is capable of leaching life from all his opponents. Every raise on his fighting roll automatically inflicts one wound on a target.<br>• **Immortal:** If slain, the followers of the Shadow King's worship of the individual will result in his resurrection within 1d20 days.<br>• **Necromancy:** The Shadow King can restore to life and full health any target that he wishes, instantly. He is also capable of raising them as any form of undead that he wishes. He is unlimited in his ability to do this and can instantly raise an entire battlefield as zombies. This is limited to sight but can be done through Scrying.<br>• **Shape Shift:** The Shadow King can assume any form he wishes between Small and Gargantuan. His toughness is adjusted appropriately.<br>• **Undead:** +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being shaken. No additional damage from called shots. Immune to disease and poison. | | | | | | | | |
| **Equipment** | Enhanced Daemon Steel Armor (+6), Ebon Soul (the Twin Sword of Ebon Heart: See page 36), Horror Helm, A variety of Magical Items | | | | | | | | |

around him.

The Shadow King has absolute control over his frame and is capable of shape-changing into any number of other, more pleasing forms. Sometimes, he uses his powers to become a twenty-foot tall damage while others occasions have him assuming a handsome human visage. His armor is capable of transforming with him or disappearing until he calls for it again.

**Personality:** The Shadow King is unlike most other beings in Teth-Ammon. He genuinely holds true to his word and believes it separates true men from beasts. He will honor the spirit of any agreement that he makes and hunt down any who violate a pact with him. The Shadow King values knowledge even above temporal power is willing to trade lavishly on his resources for a chance to know more.

After all, he'll be alive forever and while territory can be re-conquered, knowledge is forever. The Shadow King's morality is otherwise cold and ruthless with no concern to anything that stands in his way. The Shadow King desires to conquer all of Teth-Ammon and unite it under his brutal military reign. Few things have been

able to stand against him and his power has been steadily growing ever since the Fall of Malaxas.

**Background:** The Shadow King is one of the Formorians, the ancient beings that were created as part of the experimentation process to create the Celestials. Like most of them, the Shadow King was born deformed and possessed of uncontrollable powers. Taking part in their failed rebellion, he was one of the few survivors and managed only to escape by virtue of his growing powers. Over the centuries, he would modify his form and eventually leave Teth-Ammon entirely to explore other worlds and dimensions. By the time the Shadow King returned, he was as far from a Formorian as they were from baseline humans.

When next the Shadow King was seen, he had assumed the position of Malaxas' chief general. The vast armies of the Crimson King were his to command and it is unlikely that they would have progressed nearly so far without the ancient warlord's help. What reason the Shadow King had for helping the Fallen Celestial is unknown but it was far from a friendly relationship. Even the most hateful ballads against the Shadow King contrast the armored warlord's behavior against Malaxas' own.

Eventually, the dispute between the Shadow King and Malaxas grew too great to reconcile and the ancient Formorian betrayed him. The Shadow King gave the secrets necessary for banishing Malaxas to the Celestials. With that, the war against the Crimson King was ended and only the Shadow King's forces were spared from utter destruction. Few know of this deal to this day and instead view the Shadow King as having narrowly escaped his master's defeat.

Since that time, The Shadow King has probed the secrets of the cosmos in order to find a way to match Malaxas' power. He has also attempted to conquer all the territories of Teth-Ammon, despite the vast logistical problems that this presents. While life under the Shadow King is brutal and tyrannical, many of its citizens prefer it to the possibility of being unguarded against the forces of the Netherdeep.

Ultimately, the Shadow King's goals remain obscure and all beings fear his name.

**Combat:** The Shadow King rarely engages in personal combat. Only rarely does he feel that an opponent to be worthy of his time. When he actually does enter the battlefield, the Shadow King does not hesitate to use the vast magical resources at his disposal. Sometimes, he has been known to ride on the back of a black dragon named Devilscale.

The Shadow King has no fear of death due to the fact that his followers know rituals in order to restore him to life.

## The Silver Phoenix

*"One day, I will wear a crown and all these corpses will be justified."*

**Appearance:** The Silver Phoenix is a Half-Celestial of indeterminate age but incredible beauty. Blessed with platinum hair and grey eyes with perfect angular features, the Silver Phoenix looks more like a statue than a human being. This is not helped by his Crysteel armor and sword that makes him look less like a real soldier and more like a work of art. Only in actual battle, does his true terrifying power become a reality.

**Personality:** The Silver Phoenix, in actuality, is no more all knowing than any other well-informed General but he has learned the value of psyching-out enemies. He pretends to be a noble gallant and a daring commander but he cares for nothing for anyone but himself. It is merely good publicity to appear otherwise.

**Background:** The Silver Phoenix, real name Albrecht D'Krieger, is a peasant child of a Celestial. His "Virgin Birth" was considered to be a miracle of great portent. Taken in by the Church of Tyros and educated to the highest degree, he soon became convinced of his own divinity. Taking a moment to look at the rest of the world from his ivory tower, the Silver Phoenix soon concluded that the chief cause of suffering in Alacarn was the nobility.

Nominating himself to deal with this problem, The Silver Phoenix assembled the Phoenix Knights to become the new Emperor of Alacarn. It was his dream that he would use this position to consolidate power and remove the nobles from their unassailable perches. His early successeswere matched by an equal series of defeats. Sheer

| The Silver Phoenix | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | | Agility D8, Smarts D10, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D10 | | | | | | | |
| **Skills** | | Fighting D10, Guts D10, Intimidation D8, Knowledge (tactics) D12, Notice D6, Riding D10, Persuasion D8 | | | | | | | |
| **Charisma** | +6 | **Pace** | 6 | **Parry** | 10 | **Toughness** | 10 | | |
| **Edges** | | Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Extremely Attractive, Followers, Fervor, Filthy Rich, Hold the Line, Holdings, Improved Frenzy, Inspire, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Noble, Immortal | | | | | | | |
| **Hindrances** | | Power Mad, Quirk (Must Appear Perfect) | | | | | | | |
| **Special Abilities** | | None | | | | | | | |
| **Equipment** | | Shield (+1 to Parry), Lance (D8+D8), Long Sword (D8 + D8), Plate Mail (+2), War Horse | | | | | | | |

numbers of opponents eventually overcame what might have eventually beome a medium-sized kingdom.

The Silver Phoenix had an advantage that his opponents did not, however, in that he is immortal. Discovering he did not age past his mid-thirties, the Silver Phoenix has since used that time to start developing a network of contacts and sub-armies across the whole of Alacarn. It has only been two hundred years that he's lived, less time than a Valken's life span, but he's used that time well. He's learned a ridiculous about tactics and unconventional warfare.

To prevent his enemies from ganging up on him, the Silver Phoenix masquerades as a simply mercenary company leader who sells his army sized forces to anyone willing to pay the price. All the while, he plays the various factions against one another while slowly killing off those individual nobles that might be able to resist his eventual conquest. Many times, he's placed toadies in positions of importance while ostensibly working for them.

TThe Silver Phoenix has not had an unbroken string of successes but his number of soldiers grows daily. So does the ranks of those nobles indebted to or secrectly enslaved by him. Several times, he's been forced to start from scratch due to the need to fake his own death. Yet, he's managed to prepare for these to the point that few see any problem with a 'new' person taking up the mantle of the Silver Phoenix each time another falls.

**Combat:** The Silver Phoenix has spared no expense in training himself to being the best warrior possible. His skill is matched by his extensive experience on the battlefield. This does not translate to overconfidence. The Phoenix has no intention of dying on the battlefield for a useless cause. He is quite capable of flight when the deck is not stacked in his favor. More often, he'd prefer his minions to deal with genuinely difficult opponents.

## Hands

Every good Archvillain has a Hand. Hands are the chief lieutenants of the powerful. Rather than just muscle, Hands are usually capable of being long running villains themselves. They may not be as powerful, capable, or even as intelligent as their masters but they are certainly a cut above the rest of the organization. When a Game Master wishes to make the presence of an Archvillain felt but doesn't want them involved personally, sending a Hand is a good way of accomplishing the effect.

Hands do not necessarily have to be loyal. Some have been treacherously plotting against their masters for years. However, they do have to be superficially obedient to their leaders. Hands are usually in control of a portion of the Archvillain's assets and direct them in the place of their boss. A long running campaign might have several adventures dedicated to defeating the Hand of an Archvillain, let alone the Archvillain himself.

As a rule, Narrators should not fudge results when dealing with Hands. Unlike Archvillains, Hands are fundamentally disposable and there's always a new one to replace them when they fall.

### The White Marshal

| The White Marshal | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | | Agility D8, Smarts D10, Spirit D10, Strength D12, Vigor D10 | | | | | | | |
| **Skills** | | Fighting D10, Guts D12, Intimidation D10, Knowledge (Tactics) D10, Riding D10, Persuasion D10 | | | | | | | |
| **Charisma** | +2 | **Pace** | 6 | **Parry** | 9 | **Toughness** | 11 | | |
| **Edges** | | Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fearsome, Fervor, Followers, Hold the Line, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Inspire, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Noble | | | | | | | |
| **Hindrances** | | Code of Honor, Vow (Obey The Shadow King) | | | | | | | |
| **Special Abilities** | | • Curse: Anyone struck by a Hell Knight in battle may be subject to a Curse (GM's discretion) or suffer a -2 penalty for the rest of the combat.<br>• Immunity (Fire): Hell Knights are immune to damage from flame.<br>• Size: Hell Knights stand over 7' tall.<br>• Vulnerabilities: Hell Knights suffer +4 damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Hell Knights are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground. | | | | | | | |
| **Equipment** | | Daemon Steel Armor (+4), Daemon Steel Sword (D12 + D10), Daemon steel Lance (D12+D10), Demonic Winged Horse (Pace: 10, 12 [Fly]), Horror Helm | | | | | | | |

*"Your death will serve a greater purpose. Take comfort in that."*

**Appearance:** The White Marshal almost never is seen out of armor. Her Daemon steel armor is specially made to appear ivory white, giving her an almost surreal appearance among the dark hordes of the Shadow King's usual troops. To complete her visage, she wears a mask made to resemble a human skull, beneath which her intense eyes shine visibly. Shockingly, despite being a Demon Knight, the White Marshal appears to be a pretty dark haired woman underneath.

**Personality:** The White Marshal is a woman that is totally devoted to the Shadow King. This is, in no small part, due to the fact that he liberated her from the Hell of the Netherdeep. She is a callous, cold, and hyper-intelligent woman that goes to any lengths to see her orders carried out. Surprisingly, she has a soft spot and can be persuaded to mercy if it does not conflict with her master's wishes.

**Background:** The White Marshal's story is particularly tragic. Once a noble knight of Winterweir named Artesia A'Larrana, the White Marshal perished in battle against a summoned demon. Unfortunately, this was not enough to save her soul and her body was spirited away by the demonic forces of Malaxas. The tortures that she endured were tremendous but the most agonizing was the stripping away of her humanity to transform her into a Demon Knight.

The horrors that she perpetuated while under Malaxas' control were without count, but eventually she was captured by the Shadow King's minions. Believing herself to be destined for destruction, she was surprised when the Shadow King used his magic to undo the spells that bound her to the Crimson King's will. Unable to return to a life as a normal human being, the Shadow King restored a semblance of her appearance and offered her a chance to strike back at the Netherdeep. The price would be that she would ally with him in conquering Teth-Ammon.

The past two centuries have seen her rise to the height of the Shadow King's forces. Now known as the White Marshal, she has won nearly every battle that has been placed before her. Almost no foe that she faces is one that stays alive for very long and her success ratio is quite frightening. Unlike most of his minions, the Shadow King is quite forgiving of any failures that she does make. This is because he's aware that she has a quality that cannot be easily replaced; genuine loyalty.

The White Marshal is aware that the cause she serves is an evil one. However, she believes herself to be beyond redemption thanks to her status as a demon. The White

Marshal justifies what she does as for the greater good. In her mind, the Shadow King's rule would eliminate most of the chaos on Teth-Ammon and protect the world from further incursions by Malaxas.

**Combat:** The White Marshal tends to engage in single combat only when an opponent has overwhelmed her own forces. She is not stupid about fighting and indeed wins as much through tactics as skill. While she apes the appearance of an honorable warrior, in truth, she does anything to win.

## Forces of Corruption

The Forces of Corruption are those groups that do not necessarily have an Archvillain but are an organization that spreads evil throughout the whole of the world. While they might have a Boss, defeating him won't destroy the group (though it might severely weaken it). Instead, Forces of Corruption are so vile from top to bottom that they will simply select a new leader once the infighting is finished.

Forces of Corruption are excellent sources for recurring NPCs. When a Game Master introduces a wizard of the Crimson Oath then the player characters know that they're going to be faced with a bad guy. Their very membership in the organization is enough to guarantee that they're bad.

### The Black Sword Brotherhood

The Black Sword Brotherhood is an elite body of warriors that worships Paalok. Formed predominately of noble Valken, the Black Sword Brotherhood is fanatically devoted to improving their skills. Many join the Black Sword Brotherhood out of a desire to become the greatest swordsmen in Alacarn. Others join the Black Sword Brotherhood out of a desire to die honorably in combat.

Despite the name, the organization is gender equal. Female members are simply referred to as members of the Black Sword Sisterhood.

**History:** The Black Sword Brotherhood was founded by Prince Xoan during the final years of the Pre-Alacarn period. A fanatic devotee of the War God, Prince Xoan had discovered the mystical sword Ebonheart and placed it in the service of his deity. The number of mighty warriors and monsters that he slew was without count. To this day, the Black Sword Brotherhood believes that Alacarn slew him through treachery.

Outlawed for most of the Alacarn Empire's history, the Black Sword Brotherhood has always attracted a certain number of individuals that were eager to test themselves on the field of battle. For centuries, it served as an unofficial resistance to Alacarn's forces. Attempts to wipe it out only resulted in the slaughter and decimation of countless Imperial troops. During the war against Malaxas' forces, the Black Sword Brotherhood reluctantly allied with the Empire and combined their forces against the demons.

With the fall of the Alacarn Empire, the organization has returned to its original roots as a warrior brotherhood. Such is their infamy that the sight of a black sword wielding warrior is enough to fill onlookers with unease. They care for nothing but battle and are supremely arrogant in their abilities. Many innocent villagers have been cut down to test the strength of their blades and whole towns have been wiped out simply to develop their swinging skill. Sometimes the Black Sword Brotherhood helps a situation by slaying oppressors but this is more a side effect of their quest for martial perfection.

The Black Sword Brotherhood has recently started spreading beyond the borders of Turlon. The acceptance of Non-Valken in the order has created a split. In traditional fashion, the organization is resolving the issue by killing off the members that disagree with their viewpoint. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to wipe out the organization or even significantly weaken it.

**Current Activities:** Unlike other organizations, the actual cause is irrelevant. Members of the Brotherhood will work for anyone or anything, so long as the prospect of battle is good. Their only cause is to improve their skills and fight ever greater opponents in the honor of their god.

Individual members can support whatever cause they wish, but most care only about the kill. This has brought many into the service of various factions as assassins, bodyguards, or mercenaries. Employers must always be wary as the Black Sword Brotherhood recognizes the termination of a contract as whenever they no longer feel their skills are being improved.

**Headquarters:** The Black Sword Brotherhood has a number of training centers spread throughout the land but their headqaurters is undoubtedly the Mountain of War. A forbidding stronghold where new members are allowed to train against horrific beasts and slaves. It is also a great Temple to Paalok where a human is sacrificed every week and sometimes dozens at a time on holy days.

## The Crimson Oath

The Crimson Oath is a society that the Great Nations view more as an annoyance than anything else. Everyone "knows" that the Crimson Oath is an evil secret society bent on controlling the world. Most individuals believe they're little more than a bunch of pirates and traders that are too obviously evil to accomplish anything. Unfortunately, the truth is far worse. Their open villainy is a disguise for their much more subtle plots to bring about the domination of Teth-Ammon.

**History:** The Archwizard Keraptus was an individual who wielded unfathomable powers but hated the Alacarn Empire that he had been a slave to for most of his life. Freed by the Shadow King's agents, Keraptus swore a terrible oath by his own blood that he would forever serve the fiend's purposes. He then proved his power by finishing off the last remnants of the royal household. The magician then set about recruiting a large number of wizards to the Shadow King's service. With this newfound power, the Crimson Oath colonized the Isle of Martok and subjugated numerous communities along the western coastline.

The Crimson Oath has since expanded over the centuries to become one of the most influential organizations in the world. The society's members contain its original core of wizards, but now also include a vast network of mercenaries, merchants, pirates, and slavers. Few people like doing business with the Crimson Oath but most individuals respect their power.

The organization's history is one long series of plots and counterplots with many sudden reversals. It is impossible to read the history of the organization without wondering how many of their defeats were actually planned and how many of their victories were propaganda. In truth, the masterful cunning of the Shadow King and his lieutenants has made only a few of their failures to be especially grievous ones. Conquering the world is a long-term job and they are well on their way.

Some believe that something like a tenth of all reigning nobles are under the influence of the society (whether directly or indirectly). This may just be paranoia, or it might not be. In any case, the Crimson Oath's biggest advantage may be their greatest weakness. With such a scheming nest of vipers, one wonders how the organization doesn't self destruct at any time. In fact, only the Shadow King's will keeps it intact.

In any case, despite all of its myriad weaknesses and its distasteful reputation, the organization never lacks for recruits. In a world of poverty and powerlessness, the Crimson Oath rewards lavishly its servants. That may be its only saving grace, that it does share the spoils of war with its minions.

**Current Activities:** The Crimson Oath is always at the center of a hundred myriad plots across Alacarn. If they do not instigate a plot, you can be sure that conspirators will be interested in taking part. Ironically, its persistent untrustworthiness has made the organization protected to a certain degree.

The Crimson Oath often launches numerous obvious plots that they allow to be foiled so that a dozen more subtle ones can succeed. Many believe the organization to be something of a joke thanks to the comic book theatricality of its diplomats. Others who have felt the slaver's whip or the bite of their steel are far less dismssive.

**Headquarters:** The Crimson Oath has near-absolute power over the Isle of Martok. Rivaled only by the Immaculate Doom sect that worships the Shadow King. The Crimson Oath trains most of its magicians here and its members tend to keep permanent homes on the island. This is by no means their only headquarters, though. Hundreds of safe houses and legal enclaves exist in every one of the Great Kingdoms. A number of petty kingdoms pay open homage to the Shadow King and are ruled by Crimson Oath puppets. These lands are the Crimson Oath's bases for preparing their latest plots. These lands are their bases for preparing their latest plots.

## The Imperial Society of the Crown

The Imperial Society of the Crown is an organization that most consider to be nothing more than a gentleman's club for the wealthy and powerful. Supposedly, they honor the memory of the Alacarn Empire and attempt to keep alive the ideals of the Imperial Dynasty. In actuality, they actively attempt to subvert the independent governments nation in order to bring about a restoration of the Old Alacarn Empire. Their desire for a unified continent has lead to countless pointless wars and acts of military adventurism.

**History:** The Imperial Society of the Crown, or "the Imperialists" for short, was originally the Judicial System of the Old Empire. Choosing its members from the most intelligent and ambitious of society, it actually survived the Empire's fall. Its members portrayed themselves as a society devoted to maintaining civilization and order despite the chaos. The early members were idealists. They managed to preserve structure and authority it otherwise would have faded into anarchy.

This changed with the rise of the Twelve Black Judges. The Twelve Black Judges were armored figures who decided to coordinate the efforts of the various independent Imperialists across the world. They used blackmail, bribery, murder, and torture to unite the society into a single unified group. Their identities were protected in bizarre ways. They only communicated through magic while wearing full plate armor. Armor that repelled against all divination attempts.

The Council of Twelve has since devoted itself to the recreation of the Alacarn Empire. The organization has been involved in countless acts of treason since then, but has rarely ever been prosecuted as a whole. Most believe that it is individual members that are involved in intrigue rather than the organization as a whole. The organization is simply too influential and many people find their activities to be as helpful as they are harmful. Most simply believe that individual members are involved intrigue, rather than the organization as a whole.

The Imperial Society of the Crown has managed to successfully ingratiate itself into nearly every government in Alacarn. They are nowhere near uniting the Twelve Great Kingdoms. However, they have the power to be able to cause the Great Twelve Kingdoms to start consolidating their authority. They hope to eventually provoke full-scale wars of conquest between them.

**Current Activities:** The Imperialists make a habit of working to replace rulers that are strongly in favor of local independence. They are utterly ruthless against peasant revolts and attempt to rigidly enforce the aristocracy's seperation from the rest of Alacarn's people. The Imperialists also favor military solutions to nearly every problem that might face a monarch. They are not without any redeeming qualities, however. The Imperialists believe very strongly in being good managers. Incompetent and foolish aristocrats often are 'dealt with' in order for more talented ones to take their place.

**Headquarters:** The Imperial Society of the Crown has no central headquarters. The strongest of their bases is the Citadel of Judgment in D'Henna but each of the twelve Great Kingdoms has an individual Judge who rules over the territory. These Judges are nominally part of a Council that rules jointly but mostly are left to their own devices. Assassination is not an unheard of way to advance to the highest ranks of the society.

In addition to these headquarters, almost every major city in the continent has a chapter house of the Imperial Society of the Crown. These are little more than the gentlemans' clubs that they appear to be. They provide a place for actual members of the society to meet.

## The Obsidian Circle

The Obsidian Circle is an order of druids and rangers that worships the memory of the Obsidian Empiress, Tiamate. The organization exalts her teaching that civilization is evil and the ideal existence for human beings is just barely above agrarian life. Some are so radical that anything above the level of animals is blasphemous. The Obsidian Circle is considered to be a poor joke by city-dwellers. Few realize how much influence they wield in a countryside that despises the urban centers around them.

**History:** The Obsidian Circle is one of the oldest secret societies in Teth-Ammon. It stretches back in an unbroken form to the days of the Obsidian Empress. The teachings themselves have altered and decayed over the millennia but the fundamentals have remained the same:

A hatred for anything beyond their narrow definition of the natural world and a willingness to use violence to bring it about.

Amusingly, The Obsidian Circle has rarely accomplished anything great over its countless years of history. The very nature of their Luddite views means that they disdain education and engineering that would allow them to make more than limited attacks on the world around them. This doesn't make them less dangerous. Their mastery of disease and magic is considerable. It's just that only a few terrifying figures have imperiled anything more than a small city. This is a small comfort for small cities that have been sacked by barbarians or plague.

Recently, the Obsidian Circle may be becoming more dangerous. The persecution that many Far Folk have endured has started to cause them to blame the tools that humans wield rather than the hatred. TThe idea that they lead a "holier" life than humans that crowd themselves in cities is appealing to many. The Obsidian Circle has little care for race and many Near-Folk and Far Folk members have started preaching to the disenfranchised in hopes of striking against the whole of civilization at once.

If this plot should succeed in creating a massive non-human uprising then it would not likely destroy all of the Great Kingdoms. It might, however, annihilate a few of them and set the rest back a few centuries.

**Current Activities:** The Obsidian Circle spends most of its time administering to the spiritual needs of its followers, like any good religious organization. They go to elaborate lengths to indoctrinate the locals into being sympathetic to their cause. This includes taking on the extra children of a community as followers in their society. The Obsidian Circle is well trained in showing good will towards others as a means of getting local cooperation. They keep their vilest rituals and human sacrifice secret (or at least restricted to acceptable targets such as outsiders that are from groups hated by the local majority).

Most Obsidian Circle Druids do little more than murder local travelers as part of their efforts. Others are more ambitious and form bandit gangs or terrorist groups that carry out assaults on 'civilized' communities. Some deliberately work to impede progress at mines and lumber mills. A few actively plot the destruction of cities but these are the most ambitious and powerful of the Obsidian Circle.

Obsidian Circle Druids often worship the Great Twelve in addition to Tiamate.

**Headquarters:** The Obsidian Circle is a decentralized organization. There is no central headquarters to the society and members are rarely aware of more than a few other cells. Some legends tell that there is a central "Grand Druid" to the organization. This mythical figure is able to influence the thoughts and dreams of all members of the society. If such a figure exists, he's never been seen by modern Obsidian Circle members.

## The Shadow Network ("The Khatai")

Amongst the many cities of Teth-Ammon, there is an organization that slowly worms its way through the cracks of society and spreads its pestilence. The Khatai families are brotherhoods of criminals that are linked through blood and oaths. Far from disorganized bands of killers and thugs, the Shadow Network has vast supply lines of contraband and ties stretching across the Great Kingdoms. The clans routinely feud for territory and power but form an invisible web of power that even Kings must occasionally bow to.

**History:** The original Khatai were exiled members of the Lartan Warrior Caste. Dishonored for various crimes and political intrigue, they used their skills to set themselves up as assassins and vice lords. Over time, their natural tendancy towards military organization was enough for them to overwhelm the disorganized criminals in their territory. Many developed their own traditions and became clans with an unrecognized but real code of honor.

The Khatai moved beyond the Isle of Lartan when individual members immigrated to the various trade states along the Coast. With them came their traditions and practices. The Shadow Network truly came into being when the Khatai families began to take foreigners into their ranks and annexed local criminal organizations. The Khatai never became a singular organization but a series of powerful families that agreed to cooperate in the interest of mutual profit. Such has been the case ever since.

The Shadow Network doesn't control all crime in Alacarn, such is an impossible dream even for them. They do not even control half of it. Yet, the Khatai families are definitely a powerful force in most major cities. They can even make their influence felt on a national level. Part of

their effort has been towards making them more mysterious seeming than they really are.

Countless rumors surround the Khatai and only a fraction of them are true. Most Shadow Network families are just organized gangs, but they have a long reach that leaves many loathe to anger them. It is because of this that they have adopted a black octopus as their symbol.

**Current Activities:** Despite being a criminal society, the Shadow Network's businesses are predominately legal. The majority of the organization's wealth is made from seedy but accepted practices like gambling, usury, prostitution, slavery, and Soyoma dens. Most also engage in at least some level of protection rackets in their territories. Assassination, fencing, smuggling, and theft are also engaged in but to a considerably less degree (The Khatai prefer to *employ* those who take actual risks rather than use their own people).

Most commoners resent being taxed 'twice' but few believe the nobility cares about their suffering. This is mostly correct. As long as the Shadow Network keeps its killings restricted to the lower classes and is ready to assist the nobility at times that it is called upon, most are left alone by the authorities. Thankfully, the authorities also rarely raise a hand when lone knights or vigilantes choose to strike back at the murderous thieves.

Individual Khatai families may dream of rulership or nobility but most are simply content to make lavish amounts of money through their corrupt businesses. Powerful clans may rise in power or fall to nothingness but the organization as a whole will likely endure. Even rooting out one Shadow Network family completely is more than most law enforcement want to try bothering with.

**Headquarters:** The Shadow Network Families are independently based all across Alacarn. However, almost all of them respect a mysterious figure called the "Great Beast" that dwells somewhere in Lartan. Whatever this individual or individuals is, the Great Beast seems to command more authority and influence than all other Shadow Network families combined. Entire clans have been wholly wiped out overnight. The nature of the Great Beast is unknown but few clans will disobey an order that comes from one of its messengers.

## Henchmen and Mooks

*Savage Worlds* strongly emphasizes that player characters should be allowed to tear through hordes of Extras in the service of their enemies. The same is true in the *Winterweir* setting. A single Wild Card hero should be able to use his broadsword to cut through huge masses of the enemy. Death comes very easily in the world of Teth-Ammon and a person who slays a hundred soldiers isn't viewed as a psychopath, so much as someone who is to be admired for his warrior prowess.

One thing that Game Masters should consider is that Extras do not have to be painfully generic either. Giving Extras character and personality only makes them more memorable opponents.

### Knights of the Phoenix

*"The Phoenix shall feast on your bones!"*

**Appearance:** Knights of the Phoenix are very easy to identify. The Silver Phoenix insists that their armor be covered in a special reflective plating that's emblazoned with his seal. Their fairy tale like appearance often results in them being singled out during battle. While their causalties are higher due to this, it also allows their commander to control the progress of battle and win most of the glory for himself. Most Knights of the Phoenix never realize that they are so expendable to their leader. Instead, they believe they wear such armor to show off their glory.

**Personality:** The Knights of the Phoenix are almost uniformly individuals attempting to live up to the exalted standards set forth by their leader. Thus, they tend to act in an exaggerated formal manner and always within the bounds of chivalric behavior. For the best of them, this is a well concealed deception.

**Background:** The Knights of the Phoenix, also known as the Phoenix Guard, were founded as a mercenary organization under the command of the Silver Phoenix. Realizing that he needed credibility to make the transition from mercenary leader to warlord, the Silver Phoenix selected the best warriors from his organization and proceeded to have them outfitted as knights. Believing image to be more important than reality, he also had them trained in proper manner and etiquette to appear to be well-born.

| Knights of The Pheonix | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D10, Vigor D8 | | | | | |
| **Skills** | | Fighting D10, Guts D8, Intimidation D6, Knowledge (Tactics) D6, Notice D6, Riding D8 | | | | | |
| **Charisma** | +2 | **Pace** | 6 | **Parry** | 7 | **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | | Command | | | | | |
| **Hindrances** | | Quirk (Treacherous), Vow (Obey the Silver Phoenix) | | | | | |
| **Special Abilities** | | None | | | | | |
| **Equipment** | | Helmet, Shield (+1 to Parry), Lance (D8+D8), Long Sword (D8 + D8), Plate Mail (+2), War Horse | | | | | |

While there were numerous stumbles along the way, the Phoenix Guard has since evolved into an organization with a tremendous reputation for valor across Alacarn. They are believed to be the greatest knights in Teth-Ammon and only the Knights of Winterweir rival them for honor.

Indeed, many believe the Knights of Winterweir are a poor substitute for the Phoenix Guard when a crisis occurs. The fact that the Silver Phoenix's men are almost uniformly cynical and venal has not prevented them from taking credit for other people's work and slandering the reputations of good knights. They are capable of great deeds but much prefer to take low risk assignments that they are almost guaranteed to succeed at. This cowardice has not yet backfired upon them and they have played on the exaggerated stories of their prowess well.

They are little more than the Silver Phoenix's agents for spreading his rule across Alacarn and will go to any lengths to see it achieved.

**Combat:** The Knights of the Phoenix have no honor and know no boundaries to the methods they will use to win a battle. They do, however, use their considerable resources to hush up their most ruthless atrocities. When acting individually, they will use non-Phoenix Guard members as cannon fodder. Opponents fighting them in single combat should expect things like poisoned blades or crossbowmen hidden in the bushes.

## Friendly Rivals

Friendly Rivals are characters that are antagonists that the player characters don't necessarily want to kill. It is possible that they are merely misguided or simply are working at slightly cross purpose with the party's aims. The player characters may be forced to eventually kill their rival but it shouldn't be something they rejoice in or do as a first choice. Under different circumstances, a Friendly Rival might even be an ally.

### Lord Knight Aleyssa

*"The law is unchanging and eternal."*

**Appearance:** Lord Knight Aleyssa A'Turran is an attractive, in a severe sort of way, woman in her late twenties. Her hair is stark white from a Valken poison attack during her early career. Alyessa dresses in a conservative manner with her armor polished, except in the middle of campaigning, and her attire befitting a knight of rank. She eschews anything that shows the least hint of sexual forwardness in order to avoid attracting suitors.

**Personality:** Lord Knight Alyssa is a strong-willed woman whom is painfully methodical in her pursuit of her knightly duties. A great deal of this stems from insecurity that she is not good enough to be a Holy Knight of Tyros. Thus, she overcompensates by fanatically pursuing enemies that she believes to be evil and not giving them any quarter. She has destroyed many horrible evils but also those whose own situations were a great deal more complicated than Aleyssa gave them credit for.

**Background:** Lord Knight Aleyssa was born the unrecognized daughter of a hateful noblewoman in Winterweir. Hated by her family, she was supported by associates into becoming a Knight of Winterweir. Finding salvation in the Tyros faith, she was still troubled by her own inner feelings of worthlessness. To compensate for them, she became fanatically devoted to the letter of the law and stuck to it ever more fiercely whenever a situation beyond her skill came up.

| Lord Knight Aleyssa | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D10 | | | | | | | |
| **Skills** | | Faith D8, Fighting D8, Guts D10, Healing D8, Intimidation D8, Notice D8, Persuasion D8, Riding D8 | | | | | | | |
| **Charisma** | +2 | **Pace** | 6 | **Parry** | 7 | **Toughness** | 10 | | |
| **Edges** | | Command, Holy Warrior, Noble | | | | | | | |
| **Hindrances** | | Code of Honor, Quirk (Low Self-Esteem), Vow (Serve Tyros) | | | | | | | |
| **Special Abilities** | | • Arcane Background (Faith): Armor, Deflection, Healing, Speak Language. She has 15 Ether Points. | | | | | | | |
| **Equipment** | | Shield (+1 to Parry), Lance (D8+D8), Long Sword (D8 + D8), Plate Mail (+2), War Horse | | | | | | | |

Unfortunately for Aleyssa, her attitude did not win her many friends. The Knights of Winterweir were a loosely knit organization to begin with, one that depended on flexibility to fulfill their mandate. Aleyssa found herself gaining enemies the higher that her, technically flawless, performance got her promoted. In the end, she was soon assigned increasingly further away from Winterweir proper.

Aleyssa knows that she's somehow upset her superiors and is determined to prove herself by bringing justice to the various lawless regions of Alacarn. Unfortunately, Aleyssa almost invariably ends up supporting the establishment even when it is against the spirit of Tyros. Aleyssa believes that this is better in the long run but she's made several grievous errors in the pursuit of her duties.

It would not take much for a party of adventurers to get on her bad side. Once made an enemy of, Aleyssa will pursue her opponents to the best of her abilities (even beyond what common sense would dictate as prudent).

**Combat:** Lord Knight Aleyssa is a woman who behaves in a decidedly honorable fashion. She also tends to associate with only those of the most sterling reputations as warriors. This impedes her effectiveness but her own innate skill in battle is usually enough to compensate for her desire to win only 'clean' victories.

## Solo Villains

Solo Villains are something that every campaign needs. Defeating a villain and knowing that he's not part of a grand conspiracy or going to come back is something that provides an immediate sense of satisfaction. Solo Villains may operate with Henchmen but are more often individuals who threaten the surroundings through their singular evil.

An adventure based around hunting a Solo villain will usually be a hunt of some kind. Perhaps the Solo Villain is toying with the player characters or maybe they're attempting to uncover the enemy's hidden location. Either way, defeating a Solo Villain is usually the focus of a single adventure.

### Whisper

*"Prepare to die for Kaalon's glory."*

**Appearance:** Whisper is a beautiful Lartan descent woman in her, apparent, mid-twenties. Her long dark hair is kept in a pony-tail during missions and she has a fondness for the Death Whisperer Night Suit (despite the fact that she is no longer a member of that organization). Whisper is fully capable of adopting a shy and coquettish (or otherwise completely fake personality), if the situation demands it. Whisper's only memorable feature is her distinct purple eyes, a gift from her distant Celestial ancestry.

**Personality:** Whisper is an arrogant, sensual, and striking woman when allowed to show her true personality. Whisper is still faithful to (her decidedly heretical) interpretation of Kaalon despite her break with the Death Whisperers. She often peppers her speech with references to him. She is fully capable of adopting a shy and coquettish or otherwise completely false personality if the situation demands it. Her acting skills are amongst her strongest assets.

| Whisper | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attributes** | | Agility D12, Smarts D8, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D8 | | | | | |
| **Skills** | | Climbing D8, Fighting D12, Guts D10, Intimidation D8, Lock picking D8, Persuasion D12, Notice D10, Riding D8, Shooting D8, Stealth D12, Streetwise D8, Throwing D10 | | | | | |
| **Charisma** | +6 | **Pace** | 6 | **Parry** | 10 | **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | | Acrobat, Alertness, Assassin, Block, Charismatic, Dodge, Extremely Attractive, First Strike, Level Headed, No Mercy, Quick Draw, Seductive, Steady Hands | | | | | |
| **Hindrances** | | None | | | | | |
| **Special Abilities** | | • Sneak Attack: If Whisper gets the drop on an enemy then she may inflict an extra D6 of damage on an opponent. | | | | | |
| **Equipment** | | Crossbow (2d6), Dagger (D6+D4), Disguise, Elaborate Outfits, Poison | | | | | |

**Background:** Whisper, like most of the Death Whisperers, was born to a family that cared little for her. Sold to the enigmatic cult as a baby, she was raised in their traditions and soon developed into a tremendously successful killer. The organization's leaders, the Celestials then detected that there was something *wrong* within her heart. There was a dark place that no light reached and which enjoyed the terrible evils that were done for 'the greater good.'

Whisper felt betrayed when, after a particularly successful mission, she was targeted by her own organization for death. Dispatching her attacker, Whisper used the very skills that she'd learned from her masters in order to disappear into the masses of humanity. Whisper became one of the rare Rogue Death Whisperers, beings who would accept any commission for a price.

To separate her from common assassins, Whisper specializes in particularly hard to kill targets. She especially enjoys wiping out whole groups of armed and capable warriors. This prepares her for the day that she feels she must go to war with her former employers. Until then, she keeps constantly on the movie, only barely taking any time to enjoy the fruits of her evil deeds.

**Combat:** Whisper is an assassin rather than a warrior, though she's a terribly skilled fighter. She prefers to strike from unseen locations and with traps rather than directly confront her prey. On favored tactic that she employs is getting up close to her opponents. She's often allowed herself to become a love interest in order to be given easy access to their belongings. Sometimes, though this is rare, Whisper becomes fond of her prey and refuses to kill them.

## *Tips for Running Villains in Winterweir*

*Winterweir* is atypical of your average fantasy setting. The Free Republic of Amania may be a brutal totalitarian dictatorship but its government at least bothers to care for the peasantry and guarantees them some basic rights. Martok is no vile hellhole but a prosperous tropical paradise that owes its success to its Dark Lord. Likewise, the Trow may be a primitive race of brutes but its people are no better or worse than humans. It is a setting where most of the assumptions about good and evil that hold true in high fantasy are simple fallacies.

With this in mind, it is a good idea for Narrators to keep a number of things in mind for his adventures. This is to take maximujm advantage of the subtelties underlying the setting.

### Establish a Good Motivation

*Winterweir* has its 'easy' villains. The forces of the Far Chaos and Netherdeep are infinitely hostile to the world for reasons that are beyond human understanding. The Crimson Oath wishes to take over the world and is willing to use any methods to do so. Narrators can use these groups to provide opponents that player characters should have no difficulty slaying outright.

However, for the most part, most antagonists in the setting should have motivations beyond causing trouble for human beings. These reasons do not necessarily have to be especially deep. The real world is filled with individuals who are willing to kill for nothing more than personal gain, but it helps for Narrators to keep in mind an antagonist's driving goals.

A vampire that is hunting the player characters for amusement is much more likely to play with them versus one that is just attempting to eliminate a threat. You know you're doing a good job if the players are able to anticipate the actions of a villain based on what they know of his motives.

Alacarn is also a very cynical land. Antagonists may well decide to cut their losses and slink off rather than continue fighting to the bitter end. Player characters might have to choose between pursuing their foes to destruction or simply deciding that enough suffering has resulted from their efforts.

## Don't be afraid to get grey

*"The farmers have won. We have lost."*
*-Kambei Shimada, Seven Samurai*

Part of Winterweir's fun is that it isn't a place where easy answers can be found. Narrators shouldn't hesitate to make use of the drama to be found in hard choices. Player characters may be able to do heroic deeds, but not necessarily to everyone's benefit. It may be simply a case of establishing that, though they've destroyed the Evil Overlord, the damage that he's done to the surrounding area won't be recovered from for generations. Another idea may be the player characters realize that they've destroyed a large number of enemy soldiers that were simply following orders.

This kind of attitude can certainly spoil a player's enjoyment if handled poorly. However, it is often quite effective if it is not sprung upon the players at once. Foreshadowing that there are no 'right answers' and that the game will not necessarily end on a high note is something that will usually forestall any ill feelings. Narrators should be careful that player characters do accomplish something. The importance of grey storytelling is that both sides have a point, not that the heroes of the game are in the wrong.

Grey storytelling can add weight and realism to players' assumptions that everything will end up alright in the end. Consequences for their actions and choices make the role-playing all the sweeter. In a world with as much selfishness and destructive behavior as Teth-Ammon, it's nice to know that they may have prevented an all out war by stopping the Crimson Oath but the two sides may still hate one another.

Good choices for underlying themes to grey storytelling are nationalism, the social injustice inherent in the feudal system, and xenophobia between humans and nonhumans. The player characters may save individual lives but redeeming the entire world is probably beyond even the greatest heroes.

## Not every battle has to be over the world's fate

A major problem that many fantasy games suffer from is 'Chosen One'-itis. Game Masters are determined to make their games memorable, so they increasingly up the ante until the player characters are the last bulwark against civilization's collapse. While this has lead to many interesting and fantastic stories over the years, it has a tendnancy to backfire. It restricts player characters to only acting out the plot due to the consequences being so dire. There is no time for character development.

Teth-Ammon maximizes the freedom available to heroes. It is suggested that world-spanning plots do exist, they should be composed of much smaller adventures leading up to their climax. Ratcheting up the tension is fine, but *Winterweir* is a game world that might function better with Game Masters focusing on more local stories with strong characterization.

Part of the reason for this is the fact that there's no real civilization to be the bulwark for. Depressing as it may sound, if a Dark Lord were to threaten the whole of Teth-Ammon then the various factions of the world would almost certainly prefer to burn seperately than unite against him. The divisions are simply too deep for the world to heal overnight. Not even the threat of annihilation would help them overcome their differences.

With smaller threats against individuals rather than nations, a Game Master is freer to let the player characters potentially fail and deal with the consequences. The destruction of Winterweir is a lasting consequence that many Narrators may not want to deal with. But the death of Queen Alusan and the installment of a brutal tyrant is just as threatening yet will allow the setting to to go on.

Strong characterization and NPCs that the players care about are the keys to making such games a success.

**Let the player characters do something great**

Seemingly against the above two points is the fact that Narrators should also make sure that player characters have moments to shine in *Winterweir*. For such a dark setting, heroism shines all the more brighter. Being a hero in Alacarn isn't easy by any stretch of the imagination but it is all the more rewarding for the lives that it does touch.

For this reason, Narrators should never completely wreck a player character's accomplishments. Even at their darkest, players should feel that their characters are making a *difference* in the world (even if only on an individual level). Saving the entire world has a tendency to be impersonal while in Teth-Ammon, players should be told of the grateful faces that meet them when they rescue a group of citizens from slavery.

The Honor/Integrity System is to represent that the citizens of Alacarn remember heroic actions. Player characters may find the stories of their heroism distorted or the populous still a bunch of selfish slobs, but doing the right thing is something that invariably comes back to you. It's strange that in a world so dark, this is the truth but its part of the setting's design. The honorable may not be appreciated immediately but their actions serve as an inspiration.

This should be all the reward that many player character's need. Gold is also appreciated.

# Storytelling in Winterweir

*Winterweir* is a more complex setting than many other fantasy game *worlds*. To that end, there's a good number of facts that Game Masters might want to keep in mind for crafting their stories. This chapter will discuss some storytelling concepts for storytellers to think over, relations between the races that inhabit the world, and some other miscellaneous facts about the setting.

We cannot tell Narrators how to run their games and the *Winterweir* setting is one that is specifically designed to allow a wide variety of campaign styles. This information contained within this chapter will hopefully help provide a context for adventures that players might wish to play.

## Mood of the Campaign World

Despite its fantasy/science fiction roots, the world of Teth-Ammon is merely a backdrop for the human drama.

The mood of the campaign world is built upon the **Alienness** and **Personal Struggle** of the world. The people of the *Winterweir* setting are ones motivated by the same desires and lusts as he ones on the Earth. But they have formed a decidedly different value set than modern Western society on Earth. Some of their values are quite progressive while they are callous and cruel in other places.

Rather than focus on exterior struggles of Good vs. Evil, the world of Teth-Ammon, instead we suggest that Game Masters focus on what is important to the player characters. In a world with no value judgments (or at least very few), there's nothing stopping them from becoming conquerors or pursuing a path of naked self-indulgence. Yet the brightness of heroism might well be even greater in a world that does not particularly revere the selfless.

## Themes of the Campaign World

There is no shining Kingdom of Light or Realm of Good to restore in Alacarn. A traditional fantasy hero might save lives but the chaos and violence of Alacarn is born in the heart of its citizens. The gods give no guidance on who is evil and needs to be killed. With civilization being nearly as dangerous as the wilds, the players are essentially left with their own beliefs to guide them

**Alienation** is a major concern in the world of Teth-Ammon. The disgust and loathing between the various species inhabiting the continent is tremendous. The hatred between countries and unthinking nationalism that individuals display is enough to drive many citizens to feel isolated from the rest of the world. Are the player characters above this sort of thinking? And if so, can they find any solace surrounded by those who don't understand their views?

**Ancient Secrets** abound in Alacarn. Unimaginable scientific knowledge lies in the ruins of the Dragons' former cities, enough to transform the entire world if one is willing to go that far. Magical secrets are another option for explorers. Many people crave the answers to the gods and the universe and that might lie only in sorcery's power.

**Existentialism** is certainly one theme to pursue. There's no proof that the gods of the *Winterweir* setting exist. Yet, people still die and kill for them and their creeds. No philosophy is objectively right. The people are as divided on morality in Alacarn as they are in our world. The search for meaning is a major goal for players to potentially pursue.

**Hedonism** is another potential theme to explore in the world of Teth-Ammon. The quest for pleasure and luxury is a driving goal for many of Teth-Ammon's citizens. It is highly unlikely they may change the world by themselves, but they might enjoy themselves while they pursue smaller goals (or accept the world as it is). However, some of the most grotesque and monstrous beings on Alacarn are those given over totally to their vices.

**Nationalism** is a major underlying stress in the campaign. Generations of men and women are eager to kill or die for their homelands. They willingly march out with little to no prodding from their leadership. While some do so for the promise of plunder or to escape starvation, many feel nothing but blind devotion to their realms. Exploring this kind of mindset, especially in wartime, might be an interesting source of conflict.

**The Quest for Power** is a final underlying theme. If the players do want to change the horrible nature of life in Teth-Ammon then they require power. If they achieve it, they will be hailed as heroes regardless of their deeds in the process. It falls down to the player characters to determine to what lengths they are willing to stoop to in order gain the power they need.

## Races of Winterweir

Winterweir is a setting with literally hundreds of various species and races. The Terra'ssar's interstellar empire imported thousands of species to the planet and engineered thousands more. Some of these have gone extinct over the ensuing millennium while others have grown to vast numbers.

## Intelligent Races of Winterweir

The Terra'ssar were a race obsessed with the idea of enhancing their physical bodies. To this end, they utilized 'lesser beings' as test beds for their most audacious enhancements. Later, during the twilight years of their empire, the ancient sauropods utilized their genetic engineering techniques to craft slave races that were ideally suited to carry out specific tasks.

The majority of modern species are the descendents of these initial experiments. While only a few magicians and scientists forward the idea that the Terra'ssar created most modern species, they are still known as the Creator Race in academic circles. Shockingly, a few alchemists and transmuters have managed to recover some portion of the Dragon's ancient knowledge. These twisted individuals have created their own inhuman servants and minions.

## Near-Humans ("Kinfolk")

For whatever reason, the human race has always been one of the favorite test subjects of the Terra'ssar. Uncountable humans have gone into Terra'ssar alchemical tanks. Others were altered by grafts, injections, and surgeries while keeping their bloodlines relatively pure. The after-effects of their experiments echo through the modern human race to this day.

Near-Humans are fundamentally identical in most respects to human beings. Able to produce viable offspring, the only differences are usually in exterior appearance. Near Humans might have blue skin, extra-eyes, fur, gills, pointed ears, horns, tusks, or even wings. Some of these are purely cosmetic and have no real effect on the body. Others have expanded life-spans or incredible strength, depending on what the Terra'ssar were intending to achieve with their debased research.

Near-Humans tend not to recognize their common ancestry but are largely at peace across the continent of Alacarn. Taxonomists have made erroneous groupings of these various bloodlines into races. Indeed, the commonality of certain defining features has actually made this true to some extent.

Leftover words from humans brought from other worlds and rough translations have named these species Alfar, Boggans, Dwarves, Jotuns, Oni, Sidhe, Sith, Tengu and similarly outlandish titles. Indeed, many are simply mislabeled members of the Lilin or Jotun races.

Their large numbers and roughly similar appearance have prevented the Kinfolk from being utterly dominated by the human majority. Indeed, the Empire of Turlon's Valken aristocracy tends to treat its human citizenry as cattle for their amusement at best and vermin at worst.

In general, Kinfolk can live amongst human communities and vice versa with only a minimum amount of racial tension. Humans and Kinfolk are often the first to come to blows whenever crop failures occur or there is a need for someone to blame.

## Far-Folk ("Monsters")

Less common than humans and kinfolk but still a substantial portion of Alacarn's population, Far-Folk are those beings that are intelligent but are not really related to the human species. Some are distantly related to them but they've become so mutated they cannot be considered remotely human. The title of monster reflects the hatred and loathing that many humans hold for the Far-Folk.

The most powerful of all Far-Folk are the Dragons and Formorians. Wielding unimaginable power, both races are considered to be embodiments of evil amongst the people of *Winterweir*. The history of conquest and slavery by both races have left unimaginable cultural scars in the minds of even powerful nobles. They are considered less Far-Folk, though, and more like evil gods.

Conversely, the Celestials are considered to be divine beings despite being embodiments of energy that could not be more removed from human biology. This is a sign of how certain racial tensions can vary between the various species.

Most of the Far-Folk are significantly less powerful than the above races. Instead, they are little stronger than the average human and indeed many are actually weaker than that race. Worse, even those that are physically powerful are vastly outnumbered by humans. Though they may lose many men doing it, conflicts tend to be resolved by numbers rather than skill in Alacarn.

The Far-Folk are a divided people. Few consider anything different from their sub-type to be any more kin than humans. Most of them dwell in groups no larger than a good sized clan. Land is a heavily fought over resource and the Far-Folk are often wary of expanding too far from their carefully guarded communities.

This keeps their numbers relatively small and few would know where to find their fellow Far-Folk even if they sought them out. Some monsters are the only members of their race in existence and immortal. As expected, humans and Far-Folk are not cross-fertile. A couple that mated would find themselves looked on in abject horror by both their races.

An eternal simmering tension exists between most Far-Folk, Human, and Kinfolk communities. Few Far-Folk make treaties with human beings or recognize the borders that they proclaim. Few aristocrats feel inclined to make treaties with monsters or honor them if they do. Were anyone to attempt to unite the various tribes of nonhumans in any given nation, they might well have an unstoppable army.

## Ethics of Non-Humans

Though some might think this would go without saying, some clarification on the ethics of non-humans should be brought up. There is nothing about any of Alacarn's many myriad species that inclines any of them towards ethical superiority or villainy. Good and evil are subjective enough in the setting, one does not need to add race to the issue.

This does not mean that certain races do not predominantly belong to one culture or another. It simply means that any values or morals they may possess are the result of the way they were raised by their environment. Nature has a role to play in moral development but it takes only a look at humanity to give an indication of how much a single species can vary.

One should not mistake being of ethical variety for friendliness, however. A community of Slythin might have all the diversity of a human town but most of them would put aside their differences in the face of a human threat. IIn Alacarn, human warriors tend to worry less about why a group of Jotuns are attacking them than how to drive them off.

## Relationship between the Free Peoples of Alacarn

Unenlightened or not, most species side with their own. This does not mean that all the various peoples of Winterweir are at each other's throat all the time. As easy as this statement might be to justify, it's not really true. The people of Alacarn are a suspicious lot who resort to violence to resolve their problems. However, as high as species tensions may be in some places, almost all of them simply want to survive to the next winter.

Oddly, it's easier for a lone armed Far-Folk to travel around the continent than it is for a large mass of human mercenaries. The former is just a curiosity while the later is a threat to the public order.

Aside from a few suspicious looks, few people will pay unusual travelers much mind. Few individuals actively go around courting trouble and those that do tend to be motivated by something more material than how a species looks. It's only when there's a long history of conflict between two groups that it tends to explode over.

## Calendar of Alacarn

Teth-Ammon was partially chosen by the Dragons for its orbital similarity to their home world. There are 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, 4 weeks a month, and twelve months in a year. In fact, this method of time keeping is slightly off from the true passage of time as recorded by the planet's orbit. Solar years are closer to 368 days in a year rather than 365. Since the calendar inherited by the human peoples of Teth-Ammon from their formal world ends at 365 days, the three additional days are generally seen as an excuse for celebration, and are the traditional time for market festivals.

The calendar of the Alacarn Empire is still used by most nations that exist in the continent. This is more due to habit than any real reverence for the Old Empire. An empire that has long since passed into story and legend. Some governments like the Free Republic of Amania have tried to make their own separate calendar based from their founding or have tried to add days in order to immortalize themselves. So far, the people have rejected these moves and continue to use the Imperial Calendar.

The continent of Saiya, of course, uses its own calendar that is entirely distinct from the Imperial calendar. However, that goes beyond the scope of this setting supplement.

## Holidays of Alacarn

Every large nation of Alacarn has its own set of feast days and holidays. There is an innate urge to celebrate in the human animal and they will take nearly any excuse to do so. Below are some of the holidays that are celebrated, in one variant or another, in most countries of Alacarn.

**Burn Light (Paalok 1st):** A feast to mark the arrive of springtime. Burn Light is a sacred holiday to the goddess Demae. While in some rural regions and areas in considerable distress still mark the occasion with human sacrifice, more often it's only effigies that are burned or birds that are cut apart. It is a time of merry making and young couples to exchange vows.

**Crown Day (Veethor 8th):** Crown Day celebrates the foundation of the Alacarn Empire, that it is still remembered fondly even after its fall. Crown Day has largely lost its Empire-specific influence outside of D'Henna and Turlon but is still celebrated as an occasion for aristocratic patriotism. It is tradition for all war to go into three day suspension so that tournaments can be held and treaties negotiated.

**God's Feast (Kaalon 27th):** God's Feast is a day devoted to the arrival of Summer and the collected worship of all Twelve Gods. It is a surprisingly rowdy holiday with athletic contests to Vulthoo, parties dedicated to Sybus, and giant mock battles in celebration to Paalok. God's Feast is the most important holiday of the Alacarn calendar and one eagerly looked forward to by most.

**Summer Rise (Sybus 20th):** The Summer Rise celebration is devoted to the arrival of the new season. Summer Rise is a stately affair where individuals gather their families together for formal gatherings and dinners. Solemn services in the veneration of Heton and Paalok are made. The monuments to the dead are visited with candles purchased from Kaalon's temples to be lit in veneration of the honored fallen. Weddings are often performed on Summer Rise, heralding a new era of prosperity.

**Shadow Dwell (Obaq 30th):** Shadow Dwell is a holiday rife with superstition and terror. A sacred day to Kaalon, it is one less for the veneration of the dead than to their warding away. Shadow Dwell is a holiday that has a wealth of legends about it. Legends that leave even stout hearts uneasy. Many wealthy individuals gather together in parties less because of amusement than a desire to be in large groups until sunrise. Criminals, Followers of Malaxas, Lilin, and worse consider this one of the best times to perform ill deeds.

**Winter Pass (Wynessa 21st):** Winters are never a cause for celebration in Alacarn. Surviving them is something that is always touch and go outside of urban areas (while even they often have to tighten their belts). Thus, Winter Pass is a holiday of reasonably good cheer and happiness. It is a time of praise to both Demae and Obaq along with minor feasting. One important tradition is the sacred bonfire that is often lit at the heart of a community in celebration.

**Year Mark (Wynessa 31st):** Year Mark is an occasion for marking the passage of years. Rather than celebrate the individual birth of children, whom may or may not make it past childhood, instead it is a place where all individuals are marked as a year older. Presents are exchanged on Year Mark and it is even more an occasion for optimism than Winter Pass.

| Table Two: Days of the Week | |
|---|---|
| Alacarnday | Sunday |
| Kalinday | Monday |
| Daviosday | Tuesday |
| Wellday | Wedsday |
| Feastday | Thursday |
| Stryfeday | Friday |
| Restday | Saturday |

| Table Three: Months of Alacarn | |
|---|---|
| Heton | January |
| Demae | February |
| Sybus | March |
| Kaalon | April |
| Paalok | May |
| Filanti | June |

| Table Three: Months of Alacarn | |
|---|---|
| Veethor | July |
| Vulthoo | August |
| Tyros | September |
| Obaq | October |
| Vaasti | November |
| Wynessa | December |

**Languages of the Realm**

There are a host of tongues spoken across the Barrier Wastes, the Great Kingdoms, and Saiya. Language is a living thing and encounters with new people result in tongues changing. The languages spoken in present-day Alacarn would be unrecognizable to the peoples of a thousand years past. The languages spoken in present day Alacarn would be unrecognizable and vice versa to the peoples of a thousand years past.

Travelers are almost required to be multi-lingual in Alacarn. It is not uncommon for them to speak three or four language. Those who live in less urban areas often only speak one language, though. Even they tend to be able to get through conversations in Alacarnish. Most modern day tongues are in fact descendents of the language that Empress Kalinka and her descendents attempted to enforce in order to better unify the Empire.

Table Twelve lists some of the more common languages spoken in the world of Teth-Ammon.

| Table Five: Languages of Teth-Ammon | |
|---|---|
| Alacarnish | All Great Kingdoms |
| Amath | Amania |
| Dreggoth | Belkor |
| Hennan | Calpian, D'Henna, Volkelstein |
| Hunnari | Thur |
| Jotunspeak | Barrier Wastes, Great Crossing, Winterweir |
| Martok | Barrier Wastes, Martok, Netherdeep |
| Orthos | Silver Eternity |
| Saiyannan | Divine Order |
| Slytan | Amania, Keldor |
| Turlish | Black Coast, Turlon, Pirate Isles, Wyvern Isles |
| Weirtalk | Winterweir |

**Travel and the Grand Highway**

The Barrier Wastes and the Twelve Great Kingdoms are roughly equivalent in size to North America. Amongst other things, this means that travel across the realm on foot is by no means practical. Even travel across the rivers of Alacarn is a fairly lengthy process that takes a number of weeks.

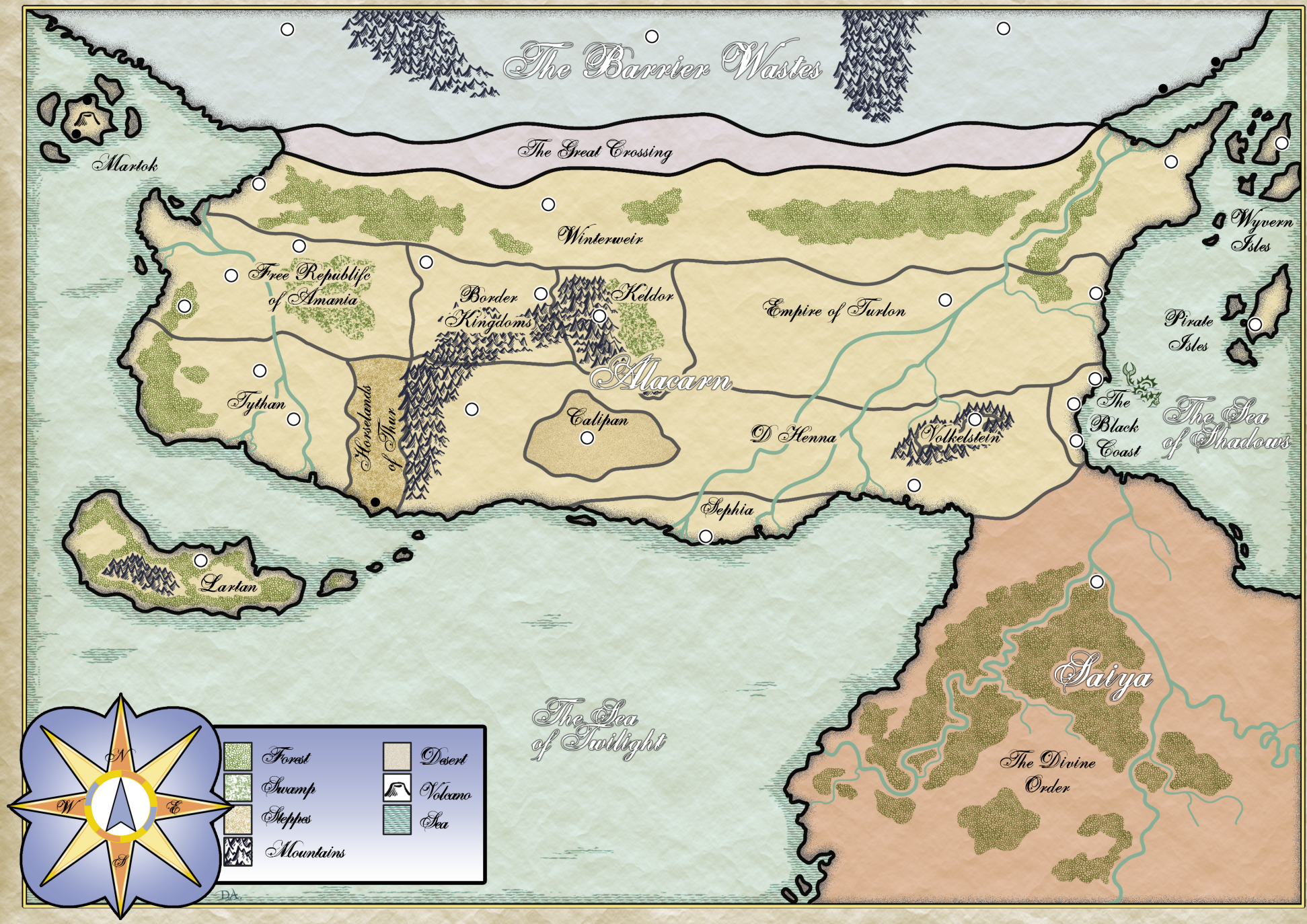
Thus, travel from one end of the continent to the other is a process that takes three or four months on horseback even if one barely stops. This is considered to be just part of the sacrifice that merchants must make in order to achieve their fortunes. Visiting distant lands is considered to be an adventure in itself.

Adventurers are hardly common people and there are several options for those who do not want to spend incredible amounts of downtime between adventures. Especially those adventures located across the myriad portions of the continent.

The first option is Game Master's taking advantage of the peculiar properties of the Grand Highway. Empress Kalinka, in addition to being a brilliant politician and a prolific lover of men, was also a minor occultist. The Grand Highway was specifically built along the deepest crevices of damage done to the dimensional barriers. This has the result of individuals traveling along it being occasionally scooped up by morning fog or living darkness before being deposited in other sections of the world.

This kind of 'Hand of the Gods' travel may not be to every gaming group's taste and runs the risk of disrupting the dark mood of the setting. It's a simple way of handling how adventurers can move from one location to another in a very short period of time. This kind of transport is also rare enough that no one really believes that the Grand Highway itself is at fault. More often, these sorts of tails are attributed to the Fae Lords or the gods themselves.

Other methods of shortening travel times might include player characters getting access to Riding Eagles, Flying Serpents, or Wyverns that will take them into the air. Very few stables can accommodate such creatures but once tamed, they can speed up travel by a factor of ten at the very least. Certain hyper-technology devices created by the Bathas or Dragons also transport individuals over long distances. Such a relic is something that Kings and Queens would kill for, however. Also, the Lartan have crude flying machines that also can traverse the whole of the continent.


The Barrier Wastes
The Great Crossing
Martok
Winterweir
Free Republic of Amanta
Border Kingdoms
Keldor
Empire of Turlon
Wyvern Isles
Pirate Isles
Alacarn
Tythan
Horselands of Thur
Calipan
D'Henna
Volkelstein
The Black Coast
The Sea of Shadows
Sephia
Lartan
Saiya
The Divine Order
The Sea of Twilight
N
W
E
S
Forest
Swamp
Steppes
Mountains
Desert
Volcano
Sea

# World of Winterweir

The world of Teth-Ammon is a relatively young one despite its seemingly ancient appearance. Rather than life evolving upon it naturally, it is the product of countless Draconic manipulations in the distant past. Everything from the ground to the atmosphere bears something of their taint. All designed to preserve an environment that is all too similiar to the Terra'ssar's own home world.

Unfortunately, all things eventually surrender to the mists of time. Despite the fact that the immortal dragons built their cities to last, most of them have crumbled to ruins. The eight continents of Teth-Ammon have very little contact with one another as the oceans are now an impassable barrier. The Dragons' engineered seafood and their own twisted descendants have enough power to destroy nearly any ship that attempts to cross them. Given mechanical flight is still an extremely risky venture, especially over miles of featureless ocean, it is unlikely that contact will be made with other lands any time soon.

Teth-Ammon is a wild and lawless place filled with uncountable life forms. While humans presently hold dominance on at least two of the continents, there's no guarantee that this will remain so for the far future. The events of the present may well dictate the ultimate destiny of Teth-Ammon's inhabitants.

## The Planet and Solar System

The world of Teth-Ammon inhabits the same universe as that of the planet Earth. Existing in a different corner of the cosmos, it should be subject to the same physical laws and scientific principles as the rest of reality. The insane science of a nearly extinct species has changed many of those rules on Teth-Ammon, however.

Teth-Ammon is not a natural world but the product of the Terra'ssar. They were an advanced dragon-like race that may have originally hailed from Earth's distant past. The Terra'ssar engineered Teth-Ammon to be the heart of their vast galaxy-spanning empire. As it crumbled under the weight of time, Teth-Ammon eventually became their retreat and then their tomb.

Teth-Ammon remains inhabited by numerous sapient species. They are the remains of the dragons' genetic tinkering with countless races that they had collected upon their travels. These people have survived the fall of Terra'ssar civilization and have carved their own quasi-Medieval society out from the remnants. A new culture exists amongst the gutted cities of a dozen failed since the dragons' fall.

While Teth-Ammon's people include humans and races distantly descended from them, the experiments with the fabric of reality and genetics have resulted in all of them having qualities far different from those found on the planet Earth.

A small percentage of the world's peoples are able to manipulate the quantum spectrum on Teth-Ammon. The barrier between dimensions has been worn thin by the constant breaches created by the dragons' ancient science. This is the basis for what the inhabitants of the world call *Sorcery*.

The people of Teth-Ammon are a physically hardy one that is capable of acts that might be impossible for a non-altered human. While they can die of battle, disease, and old age; they tend to endure far better than might otherwise be possible in a world of such little technological advancement. Indeed, it is because of this tinkering that the people are able to survive in an otherwise dying world.

The planet Teth-Ammon exists in a solar system with nine other planets, each named after one of Alacarn's gods. The star system's sun is named Heton. Teth-Ammon has two moons, named Dracos and Unicorn that represent the eyes of the moon goddess Sybus. The planetr itself is said to be the physical body of the goddess Demae but this is assumed to be metaphorical by even rural bumpkins.

## Alacarn

*"You sit on satin and guzzle wine the people sweat for, and talk of divine rights of sovereignty — bah! I climbed out of the abyss of naked barbarism to the throne and in that climb I spilt my blood as freely as I spilt that of others. If either of us has the right to rule men, by Crom, it is I!"*

*— Conan the Barbarian, "The Scarlet Citadel" by Robert E. Howard*

Alacarn is the center for the majority of detail in the *Winterweir* setting. United thousands of years ago by the Empress whose name now adorns the continent, it has since fallen to ruin thanks to time and the fallen Celestial Malaxas.

The current face of Alacarn is a land divided. While maps claim that there are twelve kingdoms on the main ontinent, the truth is that this is merely a fiction perpetuated by royally comissioned map makers.

Travel is extremely long across Alacarn and no monarch is capable of enforcing absolute control over anything but his most immediate vassals. While a system of oaths supposedly unite the kingdoms, these oaths must be taken by each new generation and many just outright ignore them when they're given. Individual Lords and Ladies rule more like Kings of small nations than they do parts of a larger political entity.

Indeed, quite a few noblemen do not even bother with the pretense of being loyal to the state above them. Instead, they declare that their territory is free and independent of the surrounding nation. These petty kingdoms gamble, often correctly, that the larger nations around them will not be able to waste troops attempting to enforce their domination. Some monarchs spend their entire reigns attempting to reign in the countless little realms that exist in their official territory.

Shocking as it may sound, it is likely that of the Great Kingdoms of Alacarn, most of them only control about 60-70% percent of the territory that they claim. Despite being called 'petty', some of these small kingdoms are actually quite large and powerful. It's just that they are dwarfed by their larger neighbors. Most are populated by humans, but a large percentage are non-human kingdoms. Lands content to ignore and be ignored by those nobles who have no interest in ruling the Far-Folk. There are, quite literally, thousands of these.

Almost all of Alacarn's citizenry live and die without ever going more than a few dozen miles from their home but a substantial trade exists across the continent's many myriad countries. Travelers can and often do visit all of the Great Kingdoms and share objects from the far corners of the realm. Alacarn is a living civilization and trade continues even in the hosts of full blown war. Very few of the nations are self-sufficient and smuggling continues even during the worst sieges.

The majority of trade amongst the greatest population centers occurs along the rivers and coasts of the continent. The Grand Highway of the Empire is thousands of years old but still serves the majority of regions, drastically increasing the speed and safety of most travel. While flying creatures like Wyverns and Vultan or bizarre zeppelin-like balloons of Lartan exist that can carry riders, these things are too rare for anyone to make regular trade use of.

Ruins and abandoned communities dot the continent. Famine, plague, and war are all capable of depopulating a small city in Alacarn. Other, less mundane, causes include monsters and creatures from other dimensions. The people of Alacarn believe very strongly in curses and ghost stories with some regions left alone because of the legends surrounding them, legends that often turn out to be true. Of course, even when a city is not inhabited by a Horror from Beyond, there's nothing preventing bandits or a small town of Trow marauders setting up shop.

Alacarn is a harsh and unforgiving land. Few care about the uncounted thousands who die every year and even heroes are often forgotten by the next year past their end. It is a land where heroes are needed (or at least a reasonable facsimile).

## Moving Borders

It's an important thing to realize that the borders listed on the maps here are largely only as they exist at a single frozen point in time. There are very few natural landmarks that truly separate the vast nations in Alacarn. More importantly, none of the Kings and Queens of the

Great Kingdoms particularly feels beholden to honor the borders as they presently exist.

The limits of all of the Great Kingdoms are not really set in stone. Every year, each kingdom gains or loses leagues of territory. A never-ending limited war is fought over the choicest bits. Few are able or willing to attempt a large-scale invasion but it is almost expected that each monarch will attempt to seize as much of his neighbor's demense as possible.

It would be very wrong to those nobles along the ever-shifting borders are particularly loyal to their liege lords. Bribery and treachery are expected of nobles living on the borderlands. While a nobleman who turns against one nation can expect to have his loyalty questioned by his new masters until proven otherwise, few are willing to turn down the advantages of a bloodless acquisition or new soldiers.

Because of the shifting nature of territory and the fact that soldiers are expected to be loyal to their commander above their monarch, the various lords of Alacarn often claim vast amounts of disputed territory. It is a source of considerable and frequent conflict.

## Petty Kingdoms

It has been mentioned above that there are uncounted petty lords and ladies that refuse to acknowledge the authority of the monarch above them. Indeed, that as much as a third of the territory of the Great Kingdoms may be under the dominion of these 'petty kingdoms.' One then has to wonder why the map is not drawn to reflect these much smaller principalities.

The honest answer is that the majority of these kingdoms do not last very long. The merchant lords and freeborn outside of these individual kingdoms tend to lump them altogether. Even when at open war with the Great Kingdoms around them, the rulers of Alacarn's largest nations often recognize a satellite nation only as a way of spiting their rivals. Because of this, most petty kingdoms rarely outlive the lifetimes of three monarchs.

The label of petty, however, is decidedly inaccurate. Many of these nations are as large as ones in Asia or Europe. They possess armies whose men number in the tens of thousands. The smallest petty kingdom may be nothing more than a tiny city surrounding its Lord's castle, independent and ignored, but the largest are rivals for the kingship of their land.

Civil insurrection is a constant threat in the Great Kingdoms. Charismatic Half-Celestials, close relatives of a previous monarch, rebellious Dukes, and the like are all individuals who can mount a healthy claim to the throne.

More often than not, these individuals manage to carve themselves a long stretch of territory until they die. Then it either falls apart or eventually joins with its parent nation due to intermariage with a royal house. Very few are the monarchs that ever manage to crush their opposition entirely and build a lasting kingdom. These are the source of legends.

Finally, there is the existence of the Kinfolk and Far-Folk territories. While the Kinfolk often make an effort to interact peacefully with the Great Kingdoms around them, even their monarchs tend to speak of their rulers are peers rather than lieges. The Far Folk rarely bother with that and are not bothered in return. Humans prefer to mark a forest as "Trow Territory" or "Here be Dragons" and sincerely hope that they stay there. Invariably, there is spill over as time passes but this is the way of Alacarn.

Petty Kingdoms exist for Game Masters to be able to be able to insert their own settings into the setting without having to feel that he or she is breaking canon. The continent is specifically designed to allow entire nations to be inserted without throwing the entirety of the game world's politics off.

# The Black Coast

| The Black Coast | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | None |
| **Population** | 12,928,281 (Humans 40%, 20% Others, Bathas 12% Half-Jotuns 8%, Lilin 10%, Slythin 10%) |
| **Exports** | Foodstuffs, Luxury Items, Metalwork, Slaves, Ships, Textiles, Trade goods, Weapons |
| **Imports** | Foodstuffs, Luxury Items, Metalwork, Slaves, Ships, Textiles, Trade goods, Weapons |

As D'Henna's prestige wavered, amongst the last realms to declare their independence were those that were its most prosperous. The Black Coast is dotted with ancient port cities that are wealthy beyond imagination. Each holds is governed by its own particular customs and rule of law.

D'Henna's former cities have prospered since the fall of the Old Empire. Each of them now has its own mercenaries armies and territories. Fortunes beyond belief and goods from all over Teth-Ammon's Western Hemisphere pass through each city-state on a daily basis. Some are centers for culture and learning while others are festering hellholes. Most are a mixture of both.

The Black Coast cities' prosperity has not won them any friends, however. Instead, they are the subject of envy and desire for countless other realms. Only a small handful of Alacarn's leaders would object to gaining control of one or more city-states.

The Black Coast is named for the fact that the majority of its beaches are jet-black in color. Simultaneously, the waters of the Sea of Shadows are unusually dark. Even during daytime, the ocean waves are often pitch black.

**History:** The Black Coast was colonized by the Alacarn Empire during the reign of Empress Kalinka. Realizing that there were a host of malcontents in the empire that her aunt had created by force, the "Benevolent Mother" came up with the unique solution of allowing many of them to avoid execution or being stripped of all of their wealth by voluntary exile.

This method of discouraging rebellion proved remarkably effective. The colonists proved more interested in fighting one another than in rebelling against the Empire's control. Many potential cities failed or were absorbed but a steady stream of discontents slowly transformed the region into a functioning port.

While this lead to other regions being stable, it also meant that the Black Coast was filled with discontent and a strong independent streak. It would be a rare decade that one city or another did not attempt to assert its independence or attempt some small form of rebellion. The proximity of the region to the heart of the Empire was a guarantee that all of these revolutions were short lived. Frequently, the Imperial Legions were called in to garrison the burgeoning city-states or teach them a lesson.

The fall of the Alacarn Empire was a guarantee that the Black Coast would finally be able to break away from D'Henna's control. Unfortunately, by that time, they were too weak to do anything but obey for centuries thereafter. Only the rise of the Archmage Tyth'gor (Male Slythin Legendary), a Slythin orphan taken in by the Grand Arcanum, allowed the Red Revolt in Paalok's Touch to succeed. From there, similiar revolutions occured in most of the other city-states. D'Henna was too hard pressed with its own internal squabbling to reclaim its lost port cities.

Despite the region maintaining its independence for centuries, the attempts by D'Henna to reclaim the area have never really ceased. Several times in the ensuing years, D'Henna has come close to conquering the entire territory only to lose it again. Because of this, there is a

deep enimity amongst Black Coast natives towards the nobility of D'Henna.

This does not mean that the Black Coast city-states are any friendlier to one another. Indeed, they will only cooperate under the most dire circumstances and frequently war with one another. It is merely that they fear D'Henna's power more than they do each other.

**Industries:** The Black Coast is a land of ports and shipping. The surrounding countryside grows massive amounts of wheat and other grain products, but they produce but a shadow of the wealth that the coastal cities provide. All manner of goods available through ocean-based trading are common within its cities.

The Black Coast is also, easily, one of the greatest concentrations of skilled laborers in all of Alacarn. The Guilds along the Black Coast are so large that some of them actually serve as universities. If there is a trade to be practiced, one can probably find an expert in one of the major cities.

**Life and Society:** Conditions vary along the Black Coast. Each of the city-states is a nation unto itself and often fiercely nationalistic. The highly religious society of Shadath, for example, couldn't be more removed from the festering cesspit of Paalok's Touch. One must take each of the city-states on its own and treat them as the separate countries that they are.

In general, the cities of the Black Coast tend towards being grand urban squalor surrounded by exceptionally rich Merchant Lords. Crime is rampant within the Black Coast cities and few individuals have any objections to making gains through less than legal methods. The city-states are strongly territorial and surprisingly insular from non-natives. It takes a few generations for foreign immigrants to become fully accepted.

**Government and Politics:** Each of the city-states has its own form of government. To describe them all would require an entire book. Suffice to say, each of the city-states is independent and recognizes no authority above their own. The towns and villages outside of the city-states are a different matter, often being conquered or traded in the occasional conflict between their larger cousins.

One interesting fact about the Black Coast is the White Sail Treaty. An alliance between the thirteen largest of the Black Coast cities, it has so far managed to protect the region from becoming part of D'Henna again or falling prey to Pirate Isle warlords.

**Power Groups**

**The Church of the Risen:** The Church of the Risen is a sect devoted to the worship of Kaalon that states that the Lord of Death frequently comes to the world in the shape of a man or woman. This sect, furthermore, goes to say that his incarnations live out mortal lives until they discover their true nature. Most people outside of Shadath find this philosophy to be insane to say the least. The church has a monopoly of power on Shadath and enforces a strict code of behavior. Furthermore, its members seek out those who do harm to others in order to destroy 'evil.' The church has a record of bravery, compassion, murder, and horror alike.

Great Mother Crystannya A'Kaalon (Female Half-Celestial Legendary) is one of the most powerful healers in all of Alacarn. She claims to be personally the daughter of Kaalon and few doubt it after two hundred years of life. She is largely beneficent but frequently prone to fits of religious mania.

**The Nine:** The Nine are the archwizards who rule Paalok's Touch. A collection of extremely powerful mages lead by the still living Tyth'gor, the Nine do little actual ruling over their port city. Instead, they merely use it as a base for their arcane designs that encompass the whole of Alacarn. All of the Nine are high ranking members of the Grand Arcanum and considered by some to be its leaders. In general, they are a fractious lot that agrees only on general broad strategies while pursuing their own hidden agendas.

**The Pirates' Alliance:** The Pirates' Alliance is a loose confederation of murderous cut-throats and thieves. Theoretically, the organization is meant to keep pirates from interfering with one another's business and prevent them from attacking one another. Instead, the Alliance devotes most of its efforts to extorting money from its members and destroying those who get in its way. It currently resides in the city of Paalok's Touch.

The current Pirate Alliance Council is composed of five brigands whose names live in infamy across the Black Coast. Skullath the Slaver (Female Slythin Veteran), Melyssa the Red (Female Human Veteran), The Faceless One (Male Lilin Veteran), Chubbath the Tormented (Male Bathas Veteran), and Mikael D'Hawkwing (Male Human Veteran). At least two of the Council are pawns of the Crimson Oath, which have infiltrated the crews of the other three.

**The Khatai:** The Shadow Network is especially powerful in the Black Coast. Few cities do not have a powerful guild of it and no town lacks a representative of the organization. A small blessing is that the Khatai's various branches are as fractious and territorial as the cities they inhabit. Gang wars amongst its various branches are frequent and often have body counts in the high dozens.

The Khatai of Solemnas are especially powerful. More than half of the ruling merchant clans are deeply immersed in the Shadow Network's doings.

**Religion:** The Black Coast city-states vary in religion more than most regions. Countless local cults and sects unrelated to the Great Twelve have managed to achieve popularity and long life in the region. Few citizens of the Black Coast have any problem believing there are countless gods and having the approval of one matters more than serving the 'right' one.

Unsurprisingly, the sects of Paalok and Vulthoo are especially prevalent in this region. Disturbingly, Malaxas worship is considered in fashion amongst many merchant families and their descendents.

**Major Settlements**

**Paalok's Touch (pop. 223,281)**: Paalok's Touch is quite possibly the vilest city in Alacarn, a sweltering hellhole of causal cruelty, robbery, and poverty. Ostensibly ruled by the Nine, the Grand Arcanum rarely leaves its portion of the city. Instead, the Pirates' Alliance has free reign over the harbor and almost all the businesses that exist there.

The populous of Paalok's Touch is a ruthless and jaded lot. Almost all of them are ready and willing to cater to the powerful's jaded whims for a few extra coins. Few do not earn their living from crime within a few degrees and those honest citizens must live in fear of their more corrupt neighbors. The city has actually inspired vigilantes due to the utter worthlessness of the city guard.

The one immutable law in the city is not to harm a wizard of the Grand Arcanum. Any who do are said to be struck dead within a day and enough evidence exists of this that the populous treat them with a fearful respect.

**Shadath (pop. 191,281):** Shadath is the 'City of the Righteous.' A D'Hennan culture influenced city, it is known for its cleanliness and opulence. The populous dresses far more conservatively than their home nation and there is a significantly larger number of guards throughout the city. The populace dresses far more conservatively than their home nation and there is a significantly larger number of guards than is usual in the Black Coast. Those unused to piety may be more than a little unnerved by the daily calls to prayer and abundant amount of religious imagery that pervades the city. Surprisingly, Shadath is not a theocracy but ruled by Queen Danyta the Pious (Female Human Novice) who has outlived two husbands and three wives. Instead, the nobility of the city lives hand-in-hand with the Church of the Risen.

Ironically, Shadath is still a nation with its dark underbelly. The Khatai functions quite powerfully in the city. The locals, while religious, have many vices that need to be fed. Shadath is in a continual state of conflict with Paalok's Touch and is often accused of being a D'Hennan mole.

**Solemnas (pop. 183,219):** Solemnas is a trader's paradise that is a welcome relief from the extremes of Paalok's Gate and Shadath. The populous of Solemnas are neither particularly good nor particularly evil. Instead, they are more interested in making money than anything else. The wealthy Merchant Lords of the city are the most powerful force in the city-state and they lord over the poor with unabashed glee.

The crime is as bad as any other Black Coast nation but the criminals operate under far tighter restrictions than in other lands. The Shadow Network has become deeply ingrained in the establishment and must move carefully not to lose their privileged position.

The city's most famous citizen is the Dragon, Tarax'nyl (Female Dragon Legendary). Living under the city in a

vast water filled cavern, a large number of citizens consult her regularly on matters of law.

**Important Sites**

**The Ivory Spire:** The Ivory Spire is the center for the Grand Arcanum in Paalok's Gate. A well-tended tower that rises over a hundred stories into the air, the place is the product of sciences that are now rare in the modern era. In addition to the palatial homes of the Nine, the Ivory Spire is home to close to five hundred other magicians and their servants.

The majority of the space in the Ivory Spire is devoted to housing the tremendous collection of books and laboratory space necessary to run the Grand Arcanum. It is said that only the kingdom of Belkor is larger in its accumulated lore.

The area around the Ivory Spire is remarkably clean and pristine. The citizens who cater to the wizards are of a decidedly higher class than most of Paalok's Gate's residents. The wizards' tastes are no different from other humans and thus there are magician-exclusive brothels and gambling parlors in addition to other locales.

**Adventuring in the Black Coast**

The Black Coast is a center for swashbuckling adventure and high seas daring-do. The Black Coast offers an excellent opportunity for player characters to encounter new ports every session and a widely different culture each time. It is an especially lawless region and perfect for the kinds of thieving heroes that so many gamers enjoy.

| Border Kingdoms | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | None (individual) |
| **Population** | 10,321,281 (50% Human, 50% Other) |
| **Exports** | Cattle, Food, Luxury Items, Metalwork, Slaves, Tribute |
| **Imports** | Luxury Items, Metal ore, Slaves |

There are some areas of Alacarn that are so chaotic that to actually attempt to classify them into a single kingdom is an exercise in futility. The Border Kingdoms are a land where rulership belongs to whatever petty lord that can carve out his own realm. Worse, the surrounding Great Kingdoms use it as an unofficial buffer zone. They promote their own petty warlords to take over the land for their own use.

The Border Kingdoms are a harsh and rocky environment, filled with bleak hills and endless grassy plains. During summers, it is a dry and barren territory that is prone to wildfires. During winters, it is a snow covered territory that is practically buried under masses of white. Many actually wonder what's worth fighting over in the tiny kingdoms. Perhaps most curious is all of the cities are a strange mixture of styles and its people blend customs of the surrounding lands seamlessly.

The Border Kingdoms are a place for individuals to disappear and for mercenaries to fight a never-ending proxy war. Perhaps someday a conqueror will forge a unified identity from the patchwork of kingdoms that it currently is.

**History:** The Border Kingdoms are a surprisingly recent phenomenon. While there has always been a series of kingdoms existing along the edges of royal power, the current state of utter chaos is only about fifty years old. Before then, there was little to separate the Border Kingdoms from the many petty kingdoms that existed in the shadow of Amania and the Turlon Empire.

The War of Iron between Amania and Winterweir resulted in the former kingdom sending a small army into the edges of its territory in order to secure the region. The cowardly King Kayless intended to move his government there in the event that his capital fell. Pathetically,

he didn't have the chance to do so but the region still fell under Amanian control. When the Grand Uprising occurred a few years later, large numbers of nobles fled to the region in order to escape the wrath of the peasantry.

Rather than pursue the fleeing nobles, the newly created Free Republic of Amania instead sent agitators into the Border Kingdoms. They hoped to create unrest amongst the refugees. The War of Pennants began between the various nobles as each attempted to assert authority over the other aristocrats. This war worked to the advantage of the Free Republic. The results made it impossible for any of the surviving nobles to attempt to retake the throne of Amania.

The importance of the Border Kingdoms to the Free Republic would increase drastically after the War of Pennants. Having offended most aristocrats with their revolt and republican ideals, the nobility of the Border Kingdoms became one of the few groups that were willing to trade with the Free Republic. They became an important middle man for traders who desired to avail themselves to the vast markets of Amania.

Twenty years ago, most of the Border Kingdoms were united under Queen Khalee A'Amania. A minor Baroness of Border Kingdoms, she used her relationship to an Amanian Duke in order to claim the title of Queen of Amania. Conquering the surrounding Border Kingdoms, she managed to hold title to the land for fifteen years. Unfortunately, the Alchemist Mages foresaw the danger the popular monarch represented and arranged for her overthrow.

The Border Kingdoms have since returned to their feuding and disunited state.

**Industries:** The Border Kingdoms are a society that produces little and must trade for much. The greatest source of their wealth comes from being a place where Amanian, Winterweir, Turlon Empire, and Tythan Goods can be traded freely.

Items made in the Border Kingdom are known to incorporate elements from all the surrounding nations of Alacarn. Such items are frequently either quite beautiful or rather bizarre to look upon. The Border Kingdoms are also known for being a place where hundreds of Bathas inventions are incorporated, often based on steam technology, but with little real idea about how they work.

**Life and Society:** The Border Kingdoms folk have a strong heritage of looking out only for themselves and their immediate relations. The near-lawless nature of the land encourages apathy, corruption, and crime. Few of the Border Kingdom's folk care anything for politics and accept whatever rulers they have with a sort of grim foreboding. They are swift to revolt but only when they are promised something in return. The cynicism of the Border King's people runs deep within their blood. Very few of them have any lingering repsect for either the nobility or the church.

Unsurprisingly for such a diverse land, the people of the Border Kingdoms are remarkably cosmopolitan. They have few superstitions about magic and lack any real reverent fear of it. Border Kingdom folk tend to treat any creature which passes them by as just another type of person. The Border Kingdoms people have an almost ingrained willingness to overlook anything so long as it is not actively hurting them. This has allowed crime and outlaw organizations to flourish in the region.

Partially because of the constant conflict, the gap between the rich and the poor in the Border Kingdoms is particularly wide. Some individuals live in absolute squalor while others have incredible estates that match the Empire's finest.

**Government and Politics:** The Border Kingdoms are divided into a dozen small feuding kingdoms. Each of these is controlled by an Amanian noble that can trace their lineage back to the Old Kingdom. These nobles are somewhat pathetic and are often interbred with merchant lords. Worse, many of them must work dearly to maintain the mercenary armies that keep them in power. Quite a few of the original nobles have gone bankrupt or degenerated into hedonism in order to distract themselves from their reduced state.

Governor Asmodel D'Satriss (Male Lilin Veteran) is the current ruler of Khalee. An Earl of Amania's second son, he is little more than a puppet for the Free Republic of Amania and rules almost half the country through mercenaries paid for by the Alchemist Mages. Governor Asmodel is aware he's bartered away his family pride and prestige

but he believes he might be allowed to become the King of Khalee if he shows his loyalty to the Free Republic.

The Fright Mistress (Female Human Veteran) is another powerful figure in the Border Kingdoms. A renegade Witch of the Fallen World, she intimidates the surrounding countryside and demands tribute in slaves to sacrifice to Malaxas. The legends about her are tremendous. Many believe she is the latest in a long line of evil witches.

**Power Groups**

**Alchemist Mages:** The secret police of Amania maintain a substantial presence in the Border Kingdoms. It is here that they create disguises for agents in order to send them off into other nations without suspicion. Despite the fact that they are mostly cowed, Amania's nobles in exile remain the subject of much interest to the Alchemist Mages.

The populous is aware that the Alchemist Mages have networks of spies littered throughout the land but few care much. The nobility is always interested in gaining some hidden advantage over their fellows and the citizens could care less whether a foreign power spies on their rulers. Amanian silver is also something that is always welcome. Thus, there is no end to the number of willing spies in the Border Kingdoms.

Freeman Admiral Rom D'Ramiryz (Human Male Veteran) is the head of the Secret Service in the Border Kingdoms and a genius at intrigue. In a typical stroke of Amanian bad luck, Rom is on the verge of fostering a treasonous overthrow of the reigning government to institute his own. The sixty year old human feels that his talents are being ignored by their placing in this unimportant backwater.

**The Grand Arcanum:** The Grand Arcanum is a curious group to have a large amount of influence in the region. However, the Grand Arcanum appreciates the relative neutrality of the region and has constructed an academy in the area (see the Twelve Towers below).

Hundreds of mages travel every year to the Border Kingdoms to drop off the students they find and trade in books or exotic items. The Border Kingdoms is one of the few places that the nationality of the magi in question doesn't matter and individuals can meet without politics getting in the way.

The large number of Alchemist Mages in the region threatens this tentative peace and the two organizations are trying to work out an amicable settlement between them. Unfortunately, fanatics on both sides are likely to ignite a full-scale war between the two wizard societies.

**The Khatai:** The Shadow Network is a powerful force in the Border Kingdoms. Arguably more powerful than the petty nobles who ostensibly rule the land, the Shadow Network makes a fortune in extorting money from merchants and catering to traveler's vices. Worse, the Khatai also is the secret master of most of the Border Kingdom's mercenaries. Few individuals who cross the city's individual lords manage to live long after it.

The "Rat King" (Male Bathas/Valken [Rat] Seasoned) is the self-styled Underlord of Khalee. A Half-Bathas, Half-Valken; the Rat King is a disgustingly twisted man with delusions of high society. He reportedly lives in the sewers with the rest of his clan and in a palace made of stolen wealth.

**Religion**

The Border Kingdoms officially worship the Great Twelve without any real preference amongst them. Various sects and cults of each god tend to rise in prominence before falling equally as quickly. There have been several attempts to create state religions but the puppet governments have only resulted in a populous that is rather cynical about religion.

In addition to the Great Twelve, the Border Kingdoms are also places that the most heinous cults in Alacarn flourish. Devotees to Malaxas and Tiamate both flee to this land as one where they can work their vile arts in secret.

**Major Settlements**

**Khalee (pop. 148,282):** The largest city of the Border Kingdoms is its unofficial capital. The former home of Queen Khalee, she renamed the city after her family. Despite having been overthrown, the name has stuck given she was a popular and beloved ruler. Khalee is the current home of an Amanian controlled puppet government

and the number of mercenaries from the Free Republic in the city is considerable. This doesn't discourage trade as most consider it one of the safest locations to conduct business.

Khalee is formerly part of the Turlon Empire and a substantial portion of the city is built in the Old Empire's style. Many of the ancient white stone buildings contrast sharply with the modern and ramshackle construction. The skies have become especially dark with the Amanian built factories that pour never-ending amounts of black soot into the air. The labor class lives a grim and unhappy life with most believing, correctly, that the merchants want as little to do with them as possible.

**Zamos (pop. 98,218):** Zamos is known as the City of Rogues and is a city ruled by the obese and perpetually drunk Duke Wryn D'Yin (Male Human Novice). The real power in the city belongs to the Shadow Network. The Khatai dominates all trade and military activity with a mixture of bribery and intimidation. The city itself is an unpleasant place and mostly only continues to exist because of its strategic location along trade routes. One could hardly find a less enthusiastic citizenry for their hometown.

Zamos is also famous for the reputed large population of vampires that are said to exist in the city. This rumor is actually true as a refugee from Volkelstein arrived and has started converting ex-Amanian nobles into his own personal court. The Shadow Network is so far unaware of this insidious plague moving through their city but it is only a matter of time until they fall under the undead's sway or go to war with them.

**Important Sites**

**The Twelve Towers:** A former mountain monastery of Kaalon that has since been retrofitted into a small palace. The Grand Arcanum educates close to a hundred students at a time in this location and brooks no interference from the surrounding countryside. They have, so far, mercilessly obliterated any force that attempts to shut their academy down.

Mistress Marlene A'Damya (Female Valken [Rabbit] Heroic) is the Master of the Twelve Towers. A hedonist and worshiper of Sybus, Marlene is a terrifying magician who has no problem in outright destroying anyone that disrupts her student's studies.

**Adventuring in the Border Kingdoms**

The Border Kingdom is a land of adventure and revolution. If the players want to carve their own kingdom or engage in activities over enemy lines then the Border Kingdoms are the perfect spot. It's near anarchic state also means that player characters interested in typical mercenary adventurers and violence can have their fill.

| Calipan | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Pharas |
| **Population** | 1,932,110 (60% Humans, 20% Valken, 10% Bathas, 10% Other) |
| **Exports** | Cattle, Gems, Metalwork |
| **Imports** | Cotton, Fruits, Grain, Vegetables, Wine |

The desert kingdom of Calipan was a part of D'Henna for thousands of years. With the collapse of the Alacarn Dynasty, the nation asserted its independence, depending on the vast wastes that surrounded it to protect it from reprisal. Few armies desire to brave the merciless heat of Calipan in order to seize control of its great cities.

The kingdom itself is not particularly varied in its terrain. The great dunes of the kingdom are only occasionally interrupted by oases and occasional rocky outcroppings. The sand colored cities are much more vivid, rising out of the sands like a mirage at times. A small collection of nomadic tribes also inhabit the land, primarily composed of Valken or other Kinfolk races.

Recently, Calipan has fallen under the control of a powerful Heton-worshiping theocracy. It is feared by

some in D'Henna that Calipan may soon become the ruling power in the region rather than them.

**History:** Calipan was founded in the chaos of Malaxas' Revolt. While there had always been nomads dwelling in the desert, the Golden Sands Valleys seemed to be a welcome refuge away from the armies of the Shadow King and his master. The first ruler of the region was Duke Kastule D'Pharas who led a mobile army in fierce resistance against Malaxas' monsters.

The Calipan managed to adapt quickly to the desert environment by adopting the ways of the Valken nomads and drawing up wells from the water springs far below the ground. Soon, the region became an unlikely but flourishing part of D'Henna. The people of the desert swiftly developed a culture far different from the crumbling remains of Alacarn's aristocracy.

The Calipan people swiftly found that they were unappreciated in peacetime. The hidden mineral wealth of D'Henna was harvested for the rest of the nation while leaving little to enrich the people who mined it. Worse, they were considered to be people who existed in the backwaters of the Empire. This disrespect made conflict between the D'Henna Empire and the "People of the Sands" inevitable.

The War of a Thousand Arrows was a relatively short conflict. The forces of D'Henna were easily defeated by the desert-dwelling Calipan and their superior mastery of archery. The climate prevented any easy retaking of the land despite dozens of expeditions to try and accomplish this. The descendants of Pharas were placed upon the throne and made the "Grand Protectors" as opposed to royalty.

The history of Calipan has not been peaceful. The desert nomads frequently waged war against the city of Pharas and its smaller colonies. The royal lineage of the Grand Protector has had its share of madmen and murderers as well as saints. Likewise, the desert has encouraged its share of mad prophets. One, called the Rising Storm, even founded a branch of Hetonism that came to drive out all other versions in the region.

Three Generations ago, The Divine Restoration occurred. The Priests of Heton had Grand Protector Fariyza A'Pharas murdered and her idiot brother placed on the throne in her place. Since then, the Grand Protectors have been little more than a series of puppets for the Temple of Heton.

**Industries:** Calipan is a nation that is sophisticated in its culture and lore. However, it is not a place that is overflowing in natural resources. Amongst the nomadic people, survival is a daily struggle and trade is mostly done in livestock. The cities of Calipan, on the other hand, survive by trading their crafts with D'Henna and the sale of gemstones taken from the few mountains in the region.

Calipan cannot survive without goods from D'Henna. Several times, the latter nation has tried to cut these off in order to recapture the Desert Kingdom. Unfortunately, human greed triumphs over the wishes of monarchs and none of these embargoes have ever lasted very long.

**Life and Society:** Calipan culture is a mixture of cold practicality and sophistication. Calipan believe very strongly in the power of Fate and man's helplessness before it. They are very aware of class differences and they are more difficult to cross than in other areas of Alacarn.

There is no such thing as ennobled commoners and the only way that an individual from the lower classes can enter the upper ranks is through the clergy. Calipan are expected to make peace with death being able to take the rich and poor at any time. Thus, they are especially reverent towards the dead but also remarkably callous about when it occurs.

The nomads of Calipan are insular towards outsiders and often insist on proof of one's good intentions before any peaceful interactions occur. Certain nomadic groups function as little better than bandits while others are amongst the most honorable in Alacarn.

**Government and Politics:** Calipan is a monarchy that is currently under the domination of the Heton faith. The current Grand Protector is a twelve year old boy named Ratayr D'Pharas (Male Human Novice) who is the third in line of the Heton backed monarchs. Ratayr has very little real power and this is a good thing. He is a spoiled and obnoxious young man that will probably grow up to a man who shouldn't be in charge of a soup kitchen, let alone a country. The Heton clergy handles most of the daily administration and does a far better job than most.

The most powerful individual in Calipan currently is the Avatar (Female Human Heroic), a powerful magician whom is said to be the vessel for Heton's own voice. It is unknown by the majority of the faithful that she is a Witch of the Fallen World.

**Power Groups**

**The Church of Heton:** The Church of Heton is the most powerful organization in Calipan. The Pharas branch of the faith is far more strict and moralizing than any other variant of the faith in Alacarn. Surprisingly, it attracts mostly compassionate and even-tempered individuals than the arrogant demagogues that it does in other lands. Other land's priests of Heton would be shocked by the fact that noble birth is no guarantee of a high place in the clergy's ranks.

The Church of Heton's greatest danger is from a radical branch of the faith lead by Yulthee A'Neryssa (Female Valken [Asp] Veteran). An insane fanatic who believes she is blessed with visions but is merely schizophrenic, Yulthee has developed a cult of personality around herself. She hopes to eventually overthrow the current Avatar and rule Calipan. Secular supporters of the Grand Protector are quietly financing her revolution, unaware of what a lunatic she is.

**The Second Rising Storm:** The original Rising Storm was a nomadic leader who believed that he had been blessed by Heton with a vision of how to reform the clergy in Calipan. Assembling an army of nomads, he defeated the Grand Protector's forces and had his theological reforms instituted. This was some two hundred years ago. Recently, one of his distant descendents has claimed to have received his own vision. Tylanthas D'Zulthan (Male Valken [Jackal] Heroic) is one of the greatest warriors in the desert and his skill has managed to win over many skeptical tribal leaders who are more interested in plunder than religion.

Tylanthas sincerely believes that he is destined to take over Calipan, overthrow the current Grand Protector, replace the Avatar, and then lead a grand war against D'Henna. It is his belief that Heton has blessed him as the founder of a new Empire. In the meantime, he is slowly building support by raiding Pharas' trade lanes until he can build a force to take the city outright. As a Valken, time favors his plan.

**Religion**

The Calipan worship the Twelve Great Gods but in a different manner from the rest of the continent. Sybus is treated as solely the goddess of Fate and her romantic elements are instead ascribed to Filanti. Heton is considered the god of justice while Tyros is instead treated as the the mere enforcer of his will. Paalok is conidered an evil demon that has no redeeming qualities whatsoever while Vulthoo is given the former's status as a giver of rain. Paalok is considered an evil demon that has no redeeming qualities whatsoever while Vulthoo is given the former's quality as a giver of water. Kaalon remains largely unchanged but he is venerated as a monotheistic god by certain sects in the region.

Religious piety is considered a virtue in Calipan with the truly pious encouraged to join the Church of Heton. Heton's faith rules over nearly all other religions in Calipan. Those serving other gods are treated as members of lesser orders than those who revere the God of the Sun. The Calipan believe strongly that the gods are interactive and benign, in sharp contrast to the more irreverent belief in them outside of their borders.

**Major Settlements**

**Pharas (pop. 930,221):** Pharas is a shining city of sand colored stone and bronze. Pharas rises out of the desert so unexpectedly that many travelers frequently mistake it for a mirage. It is a lovely city where there is little poverty and the Priests of Heton rule with a reasonably even hand.

The social atmosphere is more than mildly stifling, though. The theocracy controls all levels of society and punishment for what would be considered routine matters of vice is annoying, if not actually painful (fines have replaced whippings under the current avatar). This does not mean that crime is non-existent, it is merely better concealed.

The biggest dangers that Pharas faces are from the ever increasing raids on their shipments by bandits and a radical streak in the Heton clergy. Both the Avatar and Grand Protector exist in this city and should anyone ever manage to capture all three then the country would be theirs.

### Important Sites

**Golden Sands Valleys:** The Golden Sands Valleys were the initial place that Duke Pharas attempted to build his kingdom. Unfortunately, a horrible curse was placed on the land by a fallen Celestial named Madrus. Since that time, the location is nearly impossible to navigate with swirling sandstorms and weird time effects. Ghostly armies of the past come back to life to fight battles and terrifying monsters are seemingly created out of whole cloth.

The region would be just another wasteland to be avoided, if not for the fact that the original city of Pharas is said to be filled with great treasures of Alacarn. Year after year, adventurers from all over the continent come to try and recover the ancient wealth of Old Pharas. Mostly, they meet a horrible end in the bizarre place. Some small few have managed to return with enough wealth to encourage others.

**The Black Tomb:** An accursed palace inhabited by the Dark Avatar (Male Mummy Legendary). The Dark Avatar perverted the faith of Heton and its magic to attempt to live forever but only ended up in killing thousands needlessly. The Dark Avatar was mummified alive and his followers all put to death.

Some lingering evil then reanimated the fallen priest and allowed him to restore his people. Each year, the surrounding villages send a tithe of young folk to feed its insatiable appetites for life. It is considered preferable than allowing him to unleash his horrible armies unto the world.

### Adventuring in Calipan

The nation of Calipan is a land of banditry, beauty, and romance. The scorching desert heat can be as much an enemy as hostile nomads or religious fanatics. Worse, the deserts conceal many monstrous and mutated creatures that attack any enemy that has wandered off the most well-trodden paths. In desert storms, it is easy to get lost in their territory.

| D'Henna | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Dornya |
| **Population** | 7,281,181 (60% Humans, 10% Bathas, 10% Other, 5% Lilin, 5% Half-Jotuns) |
| **Exports** | Gold, Iron, Nickel, Olives, Stone, Tin, Wine |
| **Imports** | Metalwork, Trade goods, Silks, Slaves |

D'Henna is the former center for the Alacarn Empire. Once the heart of the world, it has faired better than the Turlon Empire in weathering the loss of its prestige but it is only a shadow of its former self. The current monarchs hopes to try and revive some of its glories but already fears it will soon become part of the Divine Order to the South.

D'Henna is a hot and arid land filled with plateaus. D'Henna is famous for its slave use. Massive mines, plantations, and quaries are worked constantly to serve the needs of priviledged aristocrats. The results are telling. D'Henna's cities rest high above the land and are second only to Turlon for their beauty and craftmanship.

While D'Henna is only likely to grow weaker as time passes, it is still a powerful force in Alacarn's economy and politics. Entire nations fear where the country will choose to intervene and thus send tribute to avoid its ire.

**History:** D'Henna's history is one of the most well-chronicled in all of Alacarn. The former heart of the Empire's legacy after the fall of Alacarn the Uniter's Empire is less detailed. This is partially by choice. The D'Henna have no desire to record their lengthy list of failures since then.

The post-Alacarn history of D'Henna has not been an e series of defeats and nothing else, however. The people of D'Henna cannot forget that they once ruled the whole of Alacarn. Anything less than a restoration of that state is of no real import.

The greatest of post-Alacarn rulers was undoubtedly King Usura the Usurper. A Half-Celestial unrecognized

offspring of the last legitimate Queen of Alacarn's house, King Usura used his natural charisma to rise to the status of general and performed a military coup. King Usura then proceeded to halt the erosion of D'Henna's territories and took back many of the kingdoms that had broken away in the chaos. Despite his title, King Usura is remembered fondly by modern nobles and many believe him to be a demigod.

Despite several attempts to imitate King Usura's' example, the biggest impediment to D'Henna's expansion has been the Turlon Empire. The decayed and rotted Great Houses to the North seem to bear an especially strong grudge against the descendents of Alacarn's Empire. A seemingly never-ending series of large-scale conflicts, called the Eternal War by the locals, are waged along the borders of the nations.

Rarely does the Eternal War ever flare up into a genuine attempt to exterminate the other nation but it drains the resources of both countries. Thanks to the never ending conflict, neither realm has been able to solidify their claims on the petty kingdoms within their borders. Unfortunately, for D'Henna, the Turlon Empire will not honor any agreement for a ceasefire. Indeed, the Turlon cares little for the thousands of lives that are lost every decade.

The most famous of recent events in Alacarn was the Revolt of Melyssa the Bandit Queen (Female Human Heroic). A former gladiator seeking to carve out her own nation, she managed to seize much of Southern D'Henna with the assistance of the Divine Order. The revolt was only barely put down by the unwillingness of the Divine Order to devote genuine troops to overthrowing D'Henna at the time. Only five years ago, nobles are still terrified of her resurgence and a substantial reward exists for her capture.

**Industries:** D'Henna is a source for vast resources, despite the fact that they are mostly played out now. Their ancient mines and stone quarries still function but they must dig deeper and deeper to continue providing the aristocrats with the materials they require to fund the nation's coffers. Almost all gold and silver in the land has been extracted with iron probably the next to go.

D'Henna is equally famous for its agricultural products. The greatest wines in Alacarn are produced in D'Henna. It is also the only source for olives and hot peppers, food that has come to symbolize opulence to the nobility. Fruits are an expected part of even the peasantry's meals and are an abundant feature of the kingdom's agrarian lands.

**Life and Society:** D'Henna is an ancient land with very set rules of society. The slaves of D'Henna are mostly the descendents of slaves that have existed since before the time of Alacarn. They have their own culture and tradition with servitude ingrained into their very being. The freeborn and merchants often look askance at the upwards mobility that can be found in other lands. So ingrained is concern over the quality of blood that the only people who stand a chance of being ennobled are disinherited or unacknowledged children of aristocrats.

The aristocracy of D'Henna is noted for its widespread practice of polygamy. Rich families are expected to take multiple spouses and concubines from the lesser children of the nobility. Thus the D'Henna aristocracy has developed a specific ethnic look that is famous for its blue eyes, dark skin, and great beauty.

Artistry, music, and sports are common practices for the middle classes of D'Henna with the entire country said to be amongst the most leisurely in Alacarn.

**Government and Politics:** D'Henna is ruled by the Empress Shidori A'Talyn (Female Human Seasoned) and her two lovers, Princess-Consort Maya A'Taxa (Female Human Seasoned) and Prince Cassius D'Rastar (Male Valken [Cat] Heroic).

In addition to being united by ties of love, the triad is also a potent power block that has established control over large portions of the D'Henna military. The trio has spent the last decade waging pitiless war against the petty kingdoms of D'Henna, attempting to unite them all.

Competing with the Empress is Duke Trent D'Zerach (Male Half-Jotun Heroic), who is the most popular general in all of D'Henna. Duke Railter desires to overthrow the Empress Shidori and replace her. He is extraordinarily popular with the common people and wishes to create a more egalitarian government. He also believes that war with the Divine Order is imminent.

**Power Groups**

**The Cult of Alacarn:** The Cult of Alacarn is an organized body of zealots devoted to the memory of the first Empress. In addition to being widely popular with the common folk, the church is also devoted to attempting to emulate her lifestyle. The Cult of Alacarn creates numerous adventurers and knights every year. Sponsored by the Temple, they attempt to go forth and perform great deeds. Many of these young men and women get killed in the process or cause trouble for local authorities. More often, they result in the resolution of incidents that the authorities can't take care of. Some have even raised small armies to conquer petty kingdoms for D'Henna. The Cult of Alacarn is secretly sponsored by the Imperial Society of the Crown (see below).

**The Divine Covenant:** The Divine Covenant's agents are spread throughout D'Henna. The majority of them have been given no further orders than to convert the populous to the worship of the Supreme Throne. The piety nand sense of martydom that Divine Covenant priests have is enough to compensate for the oddity of their faith in many D'Hennan minds. The priests are actually preparing the populous for accepting the theocracy when the Divine Order invades in a few years. Higher ranked agents are given the task of increasing the country's turmoil and making alliances with those nobles willing to sell out the country.

**The Empress' Eyes:** Empress Shidori is a woman whom favors subtle methods of winning victories rather than brute force. Thus, she has created the Empress' Eyes. The organization exists to subvert the enemies of D'Henna or eliminate them quietly rather than directly attacking them. They are rumored to employ spies in all the surrounding nations and most of the petty kingdoms. The Empress' Eyes even have contacts with the Death Whisperers. The organization is not perfect and has been infiltrated by the Imperial Society of the Crown but it is one of the most effective in Alacarn for furthering a monarch's interests.

**The Imperial Society of the Crown:** The Imperial Society of the Crown is at its strongest in the nation of D'Henna. Filled with fanatics who believe in the revitalized glory of Alacarn's Empire, they are ruthless individuals who care little about who is caught in the crossfire of their ambitions. Most of the Imperial Society's members in D'Henna also tend to equate the revitalization of Alacarn's Empire with the restoration of their own nation's power. There is presently a split within the order over whether Empress Shidori or Duke Trent is the best to support. At present, a majority favors bringing the Duke into their ranks.

The current leader of the Imperial Society in D'Henna is the Black Judge Telyn A'Tywin (Female Human Veteran). Telyn is a beautiful and frivolous noble in her public guise. In actuality, she is a cunning and brutal warrior that believes strongly in restoring the rule of law across D'Henna's territory.

**Religion**

D'Henna is the center for formalized worship of the Great Twelve. None of the Twelve are worshiped more than the any of the others, all of them being part of the state religion. Almost all priests and priestesses in D'Henna are nobles whom have chosen it as an alternate career. Freeborn are actually forbidden from pursuing it as a career, let alone slaves.

The Great Twelve are less revered than Alacarn herself. The cult of Alacarn is wildly popular in D'Henna and believed to be a genuine faith that can work miracles. Ancestor worship is equally popular with most families praying to their deceased relations before the Great Twelve.

D'Henna is home to an increasingly large number of Supreme Throne worshipers, as well. The aristocracy of the country are becoming worried about the number of immigrants from the south that they suspect (incorrectly) of being the vanguard of an invasion. It is the large number of Divine Order missionaries that spread the faith amongst natives that is the real announcement of imminent attack.

**Major Settlements**

**Dornya (pop. 1,382,181)** The city of Dornya is the heart of the D'Hennan Empire. Once a relatively minor city of the Alacarn Empire, it is one of the few that survived Malaxas' Revolt enough to be rebuilt. The city is remarkable among those of the continent for its green and vibrant nature. Countless small gardens are found inside city-blocks and hundreds of parks are located between

the various business districts. Beautiful hanging gardens are found on the most luxurious of mansions in the city.

The festive and party-like atmosphere of the city is year round phenomenon. Almost a quarter of the country's nobles choose to live in the city as opposed to on their estates. The idle luxury of the city is enough to shock many visitors. Almost as a game, the intrigue and politics going on in the city is constant.

**Important Sites**

**The Citadel of Judgment:** The Citadel of Judgment is the secret headquarters for the Imperial Society of the Crown in D'Henna. Disguised as a dual secular prison and religious center for the faith of Tyros, the Citadel of Judgment is actually a place where individuals are brought to disappear. Guilt and innocence matter little in the Citadel of Judgment with the Imperial Society members given broad discretion to eliminate even powerful nobles. Worse, experiments are conducted by renegade members of the Grand Arcanum to brainwash individuals into becoming agents of the society.

**The Tomb of Alacarn:** The Tomb of Alacarn is a site for countless pilgrims in the continent. While the authenticity of the First Empress' bones really existing in the elaborate stone tomb is debatable, few individuals seem to suspect this. The tomb is an elaborate construct from after the revolt of Malaxas and is centered around a fifty foot statue of Alacarn.

The tomb is noteworthy for being surrounded by valleys devoted to later heroes of D'Henna. These are subject to robbery attempts by those seeking the wealth buried with D'Henna's heroes. The clergy of Kaalon and magicians of the Grand Arcanum have both placed powerful wards along with monstrous alchemical creatures in the most important areas.

**Adventuring in D'Henna**

D'Henna is one of the most powerful countries in Alacarn. An Empire struggling to rebuild its former glory, it may serve as either an antagonist or patron role. The Empire may soon collapse though if it is forced to face the whole of the Divine Order without aid. Then, the continent of Alacarn may find itself wide open for conquest by the merciless theocracy to the South.

| The Free Republic of Amania | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | New Freedom |
| **Population** | 45,292,281 (40% Humans, 30% Slythin, 20% Other, 10% Bathas) |
| **Exports** | Armor, Industrial Goods, Textiles, Tools, Metalwork, Weapons |
| **Imports** | Foodstuffs |

The Free Republic of Amania is an infamous nation throughout Alacarn. The continent's aristocracy had never truly feared the uprising of commoners *en masse* before. However, the Free Republic of Amania desires nothing more than the destruction of the old system and all that it represents.

The Free Republic is not a pleasant nation. Amania could be accurately described as a collection of vast swamps, industrial plants, and struggling farmland. The devastating wars with its neighbors have left little to spare for creature comforts. With so many rebellious petty kingdoms existing on prime farmland, it is a constant struggle for the Free Republic to stave off famine.

The Free Republic is unlikely to continue in its current condition for very long. Either it will revert to the monarchy system supported by the surrounding nations or its advancements in science will allow it to dominate most of the continent. Perhaps both.

**History:** Amania has always been one of the most independent kingdoms of Alacarn. One of the oldest of nations in the land, its populous had such a deeply embedded sense of history that not even the millennium long rule of Alacarn's rulers was able to completely obliterate all traces of its original culture. After the fall of the

Empire, the Amanians returned to their original system of government.

In retrospect, the Grand Uprising of the peasantry was inevitable. Amania's climate has always been one where keeping the populous fed is a daily struggle for existence. Combined with freakish weather conditions and a surprising number of monstrous creatures, the lot of the Amanian peasant was a sad one. This was not helped by the fact that its nobles were trained to be especially brutal taskmasters. Keeping the freeborn down with weapons as opposed to meeting their demands was institutionalized at nearly every level.

The reign of King Turboys the Mad was the final straw for the populous. After an ill-concieved invasion of Winterweir resulted in the sacking of the capital, the nobility was severely weakened in the eyes of the public. Worse, the majority of Amania's aristocracts and their private armies were dead. Worse, the majority of Aristocrats and their private armies were dead. King Turboys then defaulted on the payments that he had promised to many Amanian mercenaries on his country's soil. It was the perfect ground for revolution.

Yuri D'Kolantov was the man who would take advantage of this. A brilliant orator, Yuri was also educated enough to speak in terms the peasantry could understand. Better still, he was willing to organize the starving mercenary armies of Amania into a true revolutionary force. The Grand Uprising was a brutal civil war that lasted four years but there were few places that nobles could hide from a farmer's pitch fork or dagger when in flight.

The past five decades have been a mixture of great successes and appalling failures. Yuri D'Kolantov did not survive the revolution but his successors in the Free Council (see below) brought about vast numbers of reforms. Amania now has the most educated and well-tended populous in Alacarn (outside of Belkor). Unfortunately, most of their grandiose plans for expansion have been miserable failures. It is a struggle to get the materials they require to make use of their newly acquired technology.

Amania must acquire a vast amount of new resources if it is to become the great nation it has the potential to be. To do that; they must either invade the Turlon Empire, Tythan, or Winterweir. The Turlon Empire can throw vast resources and magic at Amania and is somewhat distant, making it a poor first choice. Tythan is a kingdom that barely scrapes by itself, while Winterweir is the chief customer for Amanian weapons (negating most of their tech advantage). Which nation they finally invade will determine Amania's ultimate fate.

**Industries:** Amania is the most advanced nation in Alacarn in terms of industry. Having discovered the concepts of the assembly line and mass production, the amount of material it can produce is ridiculous. It is a center for metal-work and tools that is unrivalled across the Western Hemisphere.

Sadly, Amanian industry operates at a tiny fraction of what its output should be. Bureaucratic incompetence, lack of material resources, shortages, and unrest have prevented the Free Republic from becoming the major power that it always hoped to be.

Amania's greatest problem is that it suffers consistent shortages of food and must import large amounts from the Border Kingdoms and Tythan. This is a persistent drain on the country's wealth.

**Life and Society:** Amanian society is almost totally defined by the Great Uprising. The citizenry are almost always being watched by the Church of Liberty's spies and the military picks the smartest or strongest for their own use. Propaganda is dolled out daily onto the citizenry and the majority of goods are distributed through state-run shops.

Even before the Great Uprising, Amanians were described as grim and humorless. Since that time, they have come to be known for their fatalistic and submissive worldview. The humor in Amania is believed to be especially black and relies heavily on irony. Citizens of the Free Republic are especially cynical about government.

The State has managed to successfully instill a strong work ethic in the populous. Most Amanians believe that they must work together to succeed and are used to sharing in success. Individual achievement is considered to be almost impossible. One is far more likely to hear Amanian stories praising groups of heroes than individual ones.

The punishment for counter-revolutionary activity, murder, rape, sedition, and treason is to be sentenced to the guillotine-like Slicer.

**Government and Politics:** The Free Republic of Amania is ostensibly a democracy. This is an innovative enough concept on Alacarn. It's also something that is still being worked through. Unfortunately, Amanian democracy has caused almost as many problems as it's solved. Officials deciding which way a community votes and buying up large portions of the electorate with extra rations is fairly common.

The Legislaturate is the body that most officials are elected to. A two hundred-man body that theoretically holds the law-making power of the Free Republic. The Legislaturate actually only elects half of the Free Council. It is the military that is the true source of power in Amania.

The Free Council, derisively referred to as the Authority, is an eight-man body that is composed of highly placed officials. While half its members are elected, the rest are appointed by the military and other powerful bodies in the country. Thus, it is considered more of an oligarchy than an elected group.

The current Chairman of the Free Council is Steward General Haydith A'Turran (Female Human Veteran). A cruel and hard nosed woman, she is one of the few high ranking Bureaucrats who cares anything for the people.

**Power Groups**

**Alchemist Mages:** After the Free Council, the Alchemical Mages are the most powerful force in the country. Wielding almost unlimited authority to procure resources for their activities, they have so far been justified in their expenditures. The Alchemical Mages have made few friends in their tenure, however. Many suspect, correctly, they are consolidating their power while undermining that of their fellows.

The Alchemist General is Strauss D'Vork (Male Human Veteran). A corrupt and vile bald-headed man, Strauss fully intends to become leader of the Free Council. Already, he's made moves to dispose of its current Chairman.

**Crimson Oath:** The Crimson Oath has established diplomatic relations with the Free Republic. While there is significant tension over the fact that Martok is a slaving nation, the Crimson Oath's smuggling goods across other nation's borders is essential to keeping Amania functional. The Shadow King is so far being cautious with his insertion of agents but has found the Free Republic to be a ripe breeding ground for corruption. Their only problem is the atheistic and cynical atmosphere of Amania works against their usual methods of awing individuals into fervent devotion.

**Church of Liberty:** The Church of Liberty is an omnipresent entity within Amania. They are less a church than the government's propaganda administration. While its personal authority is less than the Alchemist Mages or the military, it exerts a much more broad influence on the average citizen. One would be hard pressed to find a community that did not have both a temple devoted to the Divinity of the Human Spirit or an agent monitoring the populous.

The Church of Liberty's most vexing problem is that they are resoundingly hated by the populous. It would not take much to incite the people to finally rise up against them. The government would probably only make a token effort to protect its propaganda arm.

**Watchmen:** The Watchmen are an important force in Amania. Running the resistance to the Free Republic, they are significantly more organized than most branches of that organization. A significant split in the group does exist. Some desire for a return of the old noble system while others want reform of the Free Republic.

The leader of the Watchmen in Amania is the mysterious Raven (Female Half-Celestial Heroic). One of the most powerful magicians in Alacarn, she believes her powers flow directly from Sybus (and may be correct). Her distaste for the Free Republic is motivated more by what she fears it will become rather than anything it is now.

**Religion**

Religion is, officially, illegal in the Free Republic of Amania. The only permitted faith is the Church of Liberty and that is little more than a mandatory attendance propaganda arm of the government. A sham that uses the trappings of a theological institution. According to the Free Republic's doctrine, religion is a tool used to promote class division and control the minds of the masses.

In practice, almost no one actually cares about enforcing this decree. While the churches and temples of the

Great Twelve have been forced underground, actual prosecution only occurs when they are suspected of engaging in subversive activities or spying for foreign governments. Indeed, some reformers on the Free Council have argued that creating a state-based religious institution might work more effectively than the almost universally hated Church of Liberty.

Amanians are cynical about formal religion but a substantial number are pious thanks to the persecution they've undergone.

**Major Settlements**

**Fortitude (pop. 11,921):** Fortitude is an example of the Free Republic's cruelty in action. Once a large city with nearly a hundred thousand citizens in number, they attempted to revolt and form their own nation. Being one of the richer cities in the country, it was confident of its ability to succeed or at least bargain with the Free Council.

Instead, the Free Republic launched a devastating attack on the city. The generals were given orders to show show no mercy to the citizeny. It is believed twenty thousand citizens were put to the sword and twice that number died from exposure when the Free Republic cut off all supplies to the ruins. Accepting the surrender only after more than half of the city had died, the Free Republic reduced Fortitude to a shadow of its former self.

Most of its populous has drifted away and the remainder is stubbornly attempting to rebuild the shattered ruins of a once grand metropolis. A Cult of Malaxas has taken root in the city, promising revenge and great glories in exchange for eternal loyalty.

**Liberty (pop. 82,281):** Liberty is the city bordering the edges of the Iron Wall (see below). Rightly accused by some of being a smuggling city, Liberty is just one of the many similarly sized 'Gate Towns' that exist all along the Amanian and Winterweir border.

The city itself is a ramshackle one built quickly by the Amanians to house their troops and supplies in case of Winterweir invasion. Since that time, better buildings and houses have been constructed but the majority of the city is still a gigantic slum. It is a center of greed and smuggling for both sides. Winterweir uses it to spy on the southern nation while agents for the Amanian government make a token effort to stop the sale of illicit goods to their northern neighbor.

Liberty is unusual for the massive number of Half-Jotuns that exist within it. Indeed, more than half the city is descended from Giants. This is due to several clans having chosen to ally with Amania against Winterweir during the last war and being forced from their lands as a result.

**New Freedom (pop. 2,382,821):** New Freedom is the capital of Amania and an embodiment of both the glories of the country as well as the failures. Formerly the city of High Amania, it was renamed in honor of the Free Republic's founding.

The heart of the city still contains many of the glorious palaces and temples that were the hallmarks of the once glorious Kingdom of Amania. Interesting, these are the buildings that house the engines of government for the Republic. Curiously, the Free Council is always on the move and never meets in the same building twice. Unfortunately, the rest of the city is marred by identical block-like stone housing and smoke spewing factories that make it one of the ugliest cities in the world.

New Freedom is often argued to be the center of Amanian life and this is not mere boasting. In addition to being the largest city in the country, it also is linked to nearly every other region of the Free Republic. Countless materials go to and from the mammoth city at all hours of the day and night. Thanks to New Freedom's strategic position, the Free Republic is able to keep functioning (albeit barely).

Surprisingly, the guard in New Freedom is amongst the most corrupt in the Republic and bribery can get one almost anywhere.

**Important Sites**

**Blackfold Prison:** Blackfold Prison is the most infamous location in New Freedom. A blackened castle once used by the nobility to house its political prisoners, it has since been put to use by the democratic government for much the same purpose. Literally no one has ever escaped Blackfold Prison and all those who are brought to it are never seen again. This is due to the horrifying fact that the Alchemical Mages use the prison as a center for

its abominable experiments on human tissue. Countless horrible chimera, monstrous golems, and twisted homunculi are produced there every year for the Amanian war effort.

The prison master is the psychotic swordsman Giller the Black (Male Human Heroic). One of the most talented warriors in Amania, he suffered horrific burns during a prison riot. Since that time, he now scours the countryside for criminals that he can inflict similar torments on.

**Death's Head Castle:** Death's Head Castle is the headquarters of the Alchemical Mages. A bizarre and twisted construction, no one knows who originally built it but the architect is widely believed to have been insane. Staircases suddenly stop in mid air, huge gaping holes exist for no reason, and secret passages litter the locale. Bizarrely, it seems to change daily and only grows more grotesque.

The secret of the twisted castle is Malys'stryx (Male Dragon Legendary). A descendant of the Dragon King Galax, he is one of the few surviving true wyrms in Alacarn. Obscenely powerful, he manipulates the entirety of the Alchemical Mage organization through his sorcery. Indeed, much of Amania is secretly under his control.

**The Iron Wall:** One of the typical examples of Amanian over-expenditure. A massive hundred mile long wall created over one of the major passes between the mountainous border between the Free Republic and Winterweir. The current Free Council realizes it'd be no significant impediment to invasion and merely uses it as an example of their construction skills now. Peculiarly, many communities have sprung up in the shadow of the Iron Wall.

**Adventuring in the Free Republic of Amania**

The Free Republic of Amania is a center for oppression and spy work. Characters can find no end of cloak and dagger style adventures to perform in the dark capital. Also, Amania may work as an antagonist nation for those countries that the PCs may want to defend. Interesting, Amania may make an interesting patron nation for anti-hero player characters.

| Keldor | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | None |
| **Population** | 28,282,281 (40% Bathas, 20% Slythin, 20% Trow, 10% Jotuns and Half-Jotuns, 4% Valken, 4% Human, 2% Other) |
| **Exports** | Cotton, Industrial Goods, Soyoma |
| **Imports** | Books, Recovered Dragon Relics |

The Kingdom of Keldor is one where humanity is not welcome. It is the home of Bathas, Slythin, Trow, and Valken nations with only a small population of humans in the more civilized areas. Indeed it is only referred to as a single body for the defense pact that its major factions have made. An agreement to make sure that no one interferes in their internal affairs.

Keldor is a dark and dismal nation that is perpetually racked by storms. Ancient ebonwood forests creak and twist with living trees that seem to violent reject intruders. The mountains are a grey and uninviting color that have been seemingly bleached clean of anything living. The mountains are a gray and uninviting color while seemingly bleached clean of anything living. Vast marshes and wetland seem to be almost a welcome change from the bleak and foreboding countryside.

Keldor is likely to survive as a nation despite its inhospitable nature. No one, not even the Turlon Empire, wants the territory. It would be a nightmare to colonize and the Far-Folk population would take centuries to put down.

**History:** Keldor has always been the frontier of the Alacarn Empire. The Grand Highway reached only the edges of the land and Belkor. The Bathas had no desire to be part of Alacarn's Empire but their own arcane technologies proved insufficient to deal with the tenacity of the

Uniter's wizards. Finally, they surroundered during the time of Empress Kalinka and accepted a nominal 'King' in the form of her fourth son Keldor.

Keldor's dream of a great kingdom never came to pass. The Bathas used endless delays to wait out his life-time. Each of his descendants was progressively less ambitious until they finally abandoned the region. The Revolt of Malaxas did not affect the region overmuch. The Bathas retreated into their mountain realm, shutting their doors to the outside world, and deftly avoided the worst of the conflict.

The Turlon Empire made their own immortal contribution to the land of Keldor when they banished the household of the black swordsman, Zebulon D'Dranathor into the wilderness. The descendents of that Valken nobleman constructed their own city in the region and have attempted to recreate some portion of the Turlon Empire's grandeur in the middle of the frontier. Since then, exile to Keldor has been a common alternative fate to death in the Turlon Empire's courts.

Perhaps the only important discovery during its many centuries of existence was the existence of Soyoma. A local plant that seems unable to grow anywhere else, Soyoma is a plant that can be eaten or smoked. The results are a profound state of euphoria that has made it a popular recreational drug. Many Valken nobles, realizing the wealth to be had, have constructed elaborate slave plantations on the choicest wilderness. This has caused many of the wild Slythin and Trow tribes in the region to start noticing the 'outsiders' on their land.

**Industries:** Keldor is a subsistence land for the most part. The Trow and Slythin exist for their own survival and have little desire to expend labor beyond this. The Valken fair somewhat better; growing valuable goods on their plantations but largely trading them at a small percentile of their value to continue their slothful lifestyle. The most profitable of all products in Keldor is Soyoma, a narcotic flower that is produced in vast amounts for the Empire of Turlon's upper classes.

Beyond Keldor's valleys in Belkor is the heart of Keldor's industry. The dark underground kingdom of the Bathas is filled with advanced technological devices and crude facsimiles that can theoretically produce a maddening array of effects. Thankfully, for the rest of the world, few Bathas can really use many of these ancient machines.

**Life and Society:** Keldor's society is broken up on racial lines. The Slythin and Trow live hand-to-mouth in their villages and clans. While their existence is poor and fairly primitive, all of the tribes are exceptionally well-armed by the Bathas.

Despite being a significant minority, the Valken of Keldor are almost all absurdly wealthy. Being exiled nobles of the Turlon Empire, they exist to indulge themselves in shadows of their former grandeur. Many hope to eventually discover some way to be returned to their former status in Turlon but only a handful have ever achieved such. Most humans in Keldor are servants of these Valken.

The Bathas of Belkor bear special note. Belkor is the homeland of the Bathas and it is the true power in the region. The majority of the race exists in the subterranean kingdom, working on their experiments and living off the labor of enslaved Jotuns. If ever there was an entire race of scientists, the Belkor come close to it.

The people who have it worse in Keldor are undoubtedly the Half-Jotuns and Jotuns that are enslaved by the Bathas. Living in dark tunnels and enduring pitiless slavery, they can expect nothing but a few scarce comforts for their labors before being bred to produce more slaves.

**Government and Politics:** The Kings of Belkor are the real power in Keldor. All of the various tribal chieftains and nobles are aware that they are possessed of power enough to wipe the country clean of all non-Bathas life. The current monarch of Belkor is Uthas D'Drethor (Male Bathas Seasoned), a corrupt and venal politician. Uthas cares nothing for expanding the power of the Bathas but is fanatical about protecting his nation against foreign intrusion. Uthas' paranoia has armed the surrounding natives with large amounts of modern weaponry that he hopes will be turned against his neighbors.

One individual who may turn this around is Drelnor (Male Trow Veteran). A warlord who despises the Bathas almost as he despises the Valken living in the region. Drelnor is faking an alliance with the Bathas until the time that he can mount a full scale assault on it. Drelnor's power is enough that most Trow look up to him as their unofficial king.

### Power Groups

**The Bathas:** The Bathas are the most powerful force in Keldor. From the nation of Belkor, they have enough firepower to reduce most of the surrounding countryside to slag. Their slave armies are almost as powerful as some of the larger nations. The Bathas have no desire to exert this power, for the most part. They are simply glad to have it.

**House Drana'thor:** House Drana'thor is a proud Wolf Valken house that is deeply tied to the Black Sword Brotherhood. The depraved house worships Paalok in forbidden rites and with Human, Slythin, and Trow sacrifices. While their position as the rulers of Mercer do not give it much influence, their control of the Soyoma trade gives them influence felt even in Turlon itself.

The depraved leader of the House is Elena A'Drana'thor (Female Valken [wolf] Veteran). A half-insane swordswoman whom is hopelessly addicted to the same drug that she has enslaved half the Turlon Empire to, she is as liable to kill a man on the spot as give him a present.

**The Obsidian Circle:** The Obsidian Circle finds the wilderness of Keldor to be a great comfort. Awing the local tribes of Slythin and Trow with their magic, Tiamate's followers use them as minions in their never-ending war against civilization. Both peoples hate other races enough that they rarely object to the raids and acts of murder that they are requested to perform. The Obsidian Circle despises the city of Mercer and is actively working to its destruction.

The head of the Obsidian Circle in the region is the Horned King (Male Lilin Veteran), a fierce and psychotic woodsman who has corrupted the imagery of Obaq to Tiamate's veneration.

### Religion

Keldor is a poor land for the Great Twelve. The Bathas do not believe in any gods and discourage their worship amongst their slaves. The Slythin and Trow both worship Pathyon exclusively, a god that may or may not be the inspiration for Paalok. In addition to Pathyon, they venerate a wide host of spirits and local deities.

Shamanism is an especially common pursuit for the magicians of Keldor. The spirits are believed to be large in number and variety.

In this environment, the worship of Tiamate has found a welcome audience and is widespread. Many Non-Lilin tribes worship Tiamate and hold her up as a savior who will eventually return to destroy humanity.

### Major Settlements

**Belkor (pop. 15,118,111):** The grand kingdom of Belkor is a massive realm that exists both on the mountain ranges of Keldor and underneath it. The Bathas have carved out the rocks underneath the land for thousands of years and so far, have not yet collapsed the realm. Those surface dwellers who visit the land are either awed by the beautiful underground cities or appalled by its dark and gloomy atmosphere. Buildings are constructed from artificial stalagmites and stalactites. Countless devices are constantly at work, both original and reverse-engineered from Dragon technology.

The miserable but constant presence of pale slaves is something that unsettles even many Bathas. Natives tend to find the realm to be depressing rather than beautiful.

**Mercer (pop. 63,281):** A city that most describe as a poor imitation of one of Turlon's great realms. It is partially submerged with large numbers of its buildings built upon artificial islands. Elaborate drainage systems exist to keep the place from sinking into the swamps around it. The Valken nobility try and pretend they are not exiles by indulging in never-ending parties and enjoying drug-induced hazes. Traders work with them for the products that the plantations around them produce.

### Important Sites

**The Promise Stone:** A sacred meeting ground between the Slythin and Trow in the land. No violence is to be shed here. Those wizards who visit this stone circle are profoundly unsettled by the evil power that seems to reside around it.

### Adventuring in Keldor

Keldor is a ripe place for wilderness-style adventures, visiting the homeland of the Bathas, and getting caught

up in the ever present criminal trades of Mercer's banished nobility. It is a nice change from more civilized lands for those who wish for something new.

| The Merchant States of Sephia | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Sephia |
| **Population** | 10,219,281 |
| **Exports** | Foodstuffs, Luxury Items, Metalwork, Slaves, Ships, Textiles, Trade goods, Weapons |
| **Imports** | Luxury Items, Metalwork, Slaves, Ships, Textiles, Trade goods, Weapons |

Sephia itself is a city that defies all conventional architectural physics. Gigantic domes and spiraling towers cover the massive city while walls rise to the sky higher than some mountains. Outside of the gigantic city, a vast series of lesser communities exist. These are sources of supplies for Sephia and often tremendously wealthy by themselves.

**History:** Sephia is a single city leftover from the days of Tiamate and is possibly the oldest in the world. During the revolt of Malaxas, it was converted into that diabolical deity's headquarters. Now, even centuries later, it is considered an ill-omened place of thieves and brigands. Arguably, it is home to something much worse: it is a realm ruled and controlled by commerce in all forms.

Several times in Sephia's history, the cults of Malaxas have risen up and tried to destroy the city. Worse, a kind of oppressive evil seems to reach out and drive even good men insane in the place. Yet, despite this, Sephia's history is almost entirely absent of major conflicts. It is as if the city was protected by a supernatural force that desires it to be kept safe from looting.

Sephia has weathered almost every disaster that fate has thrown at it. The city is a place of adventure and glory, but also corruption that makes even the Black Coast look tame.

**Industries:** The Merchant States of Sephia are not a great industrial power but are one of the great economic powers in Alacarn. Despite referring to them as 'Merchant States', it is not totally a trading empire. Indeed, the lands around Sephia are filled with many production facilities.

The nation, itself, is largely self-sufficent and thus makes a substantial amount of wealth by exporting its goods. It imports only a small fraction of luxuries for its leaders.

**Life and Society:** Life in the Merchant States of Sephia is a harsh and unforgiving one. Wealth is the only determinant in society. Aristocracy and bloodline mean almost nothing with the Merhant Lords having absolute power instead. Status is determined less by how much money one possesses than how much one can liberally waste on elaborate displays.

The pitiless nature of Sephia is emphasized by the fact is maintained solely by the Merchant Lord's private guards and that the poor have no protection whatsoever. Indeed, slavers are known to raid the lower wards in order to kidnap individuals and clap them in irons. No one attempts to stop them.

Thus, the citizens of Sephia worship wealth. Many care nothing for anything but the pursuit of it and they are stereotyped in Alacarn as the greediest people on the planet. This is a simple matter of survival in the Merchant States.

**Government and Politics:** Each of the Merchant Lords almost certainly belongs to one of the High Guilds. These organizations wield a disproportionate amount of power over city districts. Each of the High Guilds keeps its own mercenary force and demands tribute from all the citizens in the districts they control. Their tactics resemble feuding crime families as opposed to competing corporations.

As a matter of sheer survival, gangs are especially powerful in Sephia and are capable of fielding small armies in their wars. Oddly, the gangs are amongst the most concerned with maintaining some integrity in their dealings.

In this environment, it is less an issue of whether one is a criminal or not but if one is powerful enough to get

away with it. In Sephia, even the pretense of law is often discarded in the face of wealth with murder of a Freeborn being only a 'fine' worthy offense.

**Power Groups**

**The Immaculate Doom:** The Immaculate Doom always finds ample recruits in the halls of Sephia's citizenry. While officially illegal, hundreds of cults devoted to Malaxas exist independently of one another within the city-state's walls. Eliminating them all would be nearly impossible and it is almost certain they would refound themselves. Something about the city just breeds corruption.

**The Khatai:** The Guilds of Sephia are almost all controlled by the Shadow Network. The criminal organization is so imbedded in the city structure that they are the only thing that passes for genuine law in the city. Ironically, the Khatai have a reputation for honor and nobility in their dealings. This just goes to show how vacant the realm is of morals rather than there being anything different about the Khatai in Sephia.

**Religion**

Religion is little more than a tool in Sephia. The Churches in the Merchant States are amongst the most corrupt in all of Alacarn. The only church that the people seem to genuinely venerate is the Temple of Veethor. Disturbingly, many other Temples of Veethor hold the ones in Sephia up as examples to follow.

Over the centuries, the Temple of Malaxas has slowly returned to the Merchant States as well. With little else to look forward to, the dark and serene call of the Netherdeep has grown exponentially in the hidden areas of the city. Several times, the cult has even risen up and nearly destroyed the city.

**Major Settlements**

**Sephia (pop. 3,281,181):** The center of life in Sephia. The Merchant City State is noteworthy for the fact that it is filled with elaborate canals from the ocean and impossibly high arching architecture. The city is divided into circular districts and each one is filled with the ancient buildings that are largely unmodified from their origins millions of years ago in the Dragon's empire. Ownership is fluid in Sephia and many individuals are simply squatters.

The current ruler of Sephia is 'Duke' Rowan D'Zenyos (Male Human Heroic), an arrogant warlord who is nothing more than a mercenary with ties to the Khatai.

**Important Sites**

**The Underground:** A massive complex of tunnels and sewers underneath the city of Sephia that is frequently flooded in parts by a complicated system of controls run by the Guilds of Masons. The place is ridiculously huge and inhabited by clans of wild men, Rat Valken, and other subterranean dwellers. Here the aura of corruption is even stronger and residents turn to cannibalism or mutate under its power.

**Adventuring in The Merchant States of Sephia**

The Merchant States of Sephia are a vast collection of wealth-obsessed satellite nations and a festering boil of corruption on the face of Alacarn. Sephia is the perfect location for travel across Alacarn and all manner of murderous dealings.

| Thur | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | None |
| **Population** | 3,281,181 (Humans 90%, Valken 5%, Lilin 5%) |
| **Exports** | Bows, Cattle, Furs, Horses |
| **Imports** | Grains, Tools, Weapons |

Thur is a thoroughly uncivilized land. The nomadic Thur tribesmen construct no cities and raid outside of the land for anything that they cannot produce themselves. A limited amount of trade also occurs with the Tythan.

They purchase the Thur dwellers' vast amount of cattle for their own use. They are known as the "Horse Lords" by outsiders and it is a title that they wear proudly.

**History:** The plains of Thur have long kept Tythan apart from the rest of the world. During the height of Tythan's power, it was a place where the nobility sent its most cruel and vicious killers until the time they needed to be used. They were allowed to prey on the local populace as much as they wanted, so long as they kept away from more 'civilized' regions.

The horrendous gangs were abandoned long ago by the Tythan. The gloomy nation was left to its own devices. The Horsemen were forced to adapt as the peasantry fled or simply died out under their depredations. Time and necessity has transformed these groups into some of the greatest horsemen in the world. Modern-day Thur are not the vicious thugs that their ancestors were but few would want to get on their bad side.

Recently, drought and internal war has begun uniting the Horse Lords together. It is likely that they will soon pour out and bring an end to their neighbors. It is something that few but Tythan will have any objections to.

**Industries:** The Horse lands of Thur are lacking in any formal industry. The nomads spend much of their time cattle ranching and raising horses for their own use. What grains they need is primarily acquired through trade or extortion. The closest thing the Horse Lords have to elaborate metal work is their extremely light-weight and effective armor. This is made from bubbling pools of metal curiously found all over the plains.

Attempts to settle on the plains are routinely made by Tythan peasants. This is a profoundly stupid idea with most ending up executed by the Horse Lords. Only a rare few pockets of civilization have managed to survive.

**Life and Society:** The Horse Lords of Thur are a nomadic culture that has developed its own ideas and ways of doing things. The culture is deeply obsessed with honor and prestige. The penalties for being a liar or a thief are the same for murder, death by drawing. The tribes are constantly trying to one-up one another by kidnapping mates or engaging in small wars. Raiding an outside tribe is not considered theft and is performed routinely as a rite of adulthood.

The Horse Lords of Thur are a remarkably racist one. Kinfolk are treated much the same as the Far Folk. Kinfolk are treated much the same as the Far-Folk. The only exceptions are those that can display magical power, in which they are almost immediately treated as beings of respect. The Horse Lords are a superstitious people and magicians are considered more akin to gods than people.

**Government and Politics:** The Horse Lords of Thur are divided into tribal communities, sometimes ranging from a few hundred to others that number in the tens of thousands. Tribal chieftains refer to themselves as Kylar or "King." Even those lords of small clans can expect to be treated as peers of the larger ones.

The tribes tend to engage in fairly simple politics. Leaders are selected by mutual acclaim and those who are sponsored by a significant portion of the tribe may challenge the reigning ruler for leadership. These challenges tend to be in the form of horsemanship contests rather than direct duels, though the later have been known to occur. Those who refuse to accept the new leader are often given leave to form their own tribes.

Recently, the Red Queen (Female Human Heroic) has started uniting numerous tribes underneath her own and is now leader of nearly a quarter of Thur's populous. While no one knows her actual name, the Red Queen is believed by some outsiders to be an agent of the Shadow King. She is said to be a peerless archer amongst the Thur tribesmen.

**Power Groups**

**The Crimson Oath:** The Crimson Oath has long believed the Horse Lords might turn into a force capable of conquering Tythan if given sufficient incentive. They might be able to conquer much of Alacarn if lucky. They are currently selling Amanian weapons and manipulating politics in preparations for the time they can lead a vast host out onto the land. The Shadow King knows they don't have the infrastructure to resist his power once they've decimated his enemies.

Their leader, Chul'thor the Black (Male Lilin Veteran) is a fat and perverse creature that is kept on as a wiseman by the Red Queen. He feeds her ego and dreams of conquest.

### Religion

The Horse Lords of Thur survive on the worship of Heton and Sybus. The gods Tyros and Paalok play a role in the religion but curiously, as brothers who are merely the feuding sons of the two gods above them. Most of the other gods are forgotten with the exception of Kaalon and Wynessa.

The God of Death and the Dead is almost unrecognizable given he is treated as a malevolent spirit who steals the souls of the living. Wynessa is simply referred to as Mistress Fortune in their tongue.

The Shadow King and Malaxas have their own worshipers in Thur. These "Lost Tribes" are considered the subject of ill deeds and outcasts. They are also growing in rank and power.

### Major Settlements

**Fort Tranis (30,422):** Fort Tranis is one of the few large settlements on the Plains. A thriving city, it is also one that deeply offends the Horse Lords. Only the judicious bribes paid by the traders to the surrounding peoples keep it in check.

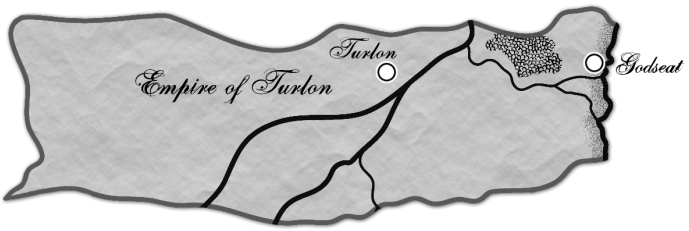
Its leader, Count Rynock D'Stark (Male Human Seasoned), is in exile. He desires to conquer the surrounding people so he can return to his homeland. He is deeply delusional at this point.

### Important Sites

**The Lake of Death:** The Lake of Death is a poisonous and corrosive lake that bubbles with blackish water mixed with foul fumes. No one knows the source of the evil, but it is actually a gateway to the Netherdeep that has spells cast by the Grand Arcanum to keep its horrors at bay. Occasionally, terrible creatures emerge to menace the Horse Lords. The lake has a metallic froth that occasionally forms pieces large enough for the Horse Lords to form armor from (-1 to weight). While there is only one large Lake of Death, small pools from the same source can be found throughout the plains.

### Adventuring in Thur

Thur is the perfect place for dealing with human mistrust and the potential for deep tribal politics. One can play Thur very close to the Wild West or Mongolia, depending on which way one wants to do it.




| Turlon | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Turlon |
| **Population** | 30,281,293 (50% Humans, 10% Bathas, 10% Half-Jotuns, 10% Other, 10% Slythin, 5% Lilin, 5% Valken) |
| **Exports** | Gold, Grain, Stone, Iron, Nickel, Tin, Silver |
| **Imports** | Slaves |

The Empire of Turlon is the most powerful nation on all of Alacarn. Turlon is the seat of a crumbling,decadent, and ruthless nobility that is utterly amoral in its pursuit of pleasure. Despite the fading glories of the Turlon, the cruelty and power of its Valken masters is legendary throughout the Great Kingdoms.

The Empire of Turlon is a mostly civilized land. A land filled with ancient crumbling roads, decaying but gorgeous white stone cities, and estates where Valken aristocrats are attended by brainwashed slaves. The borders of the Turlon Empire are infamously known for their thousands of crucified skeletons. A display that the rulers of Turlon have left as a message to the rest of the world.

The Turlon Empire is hated and envied by nearly every other nation in Alacarn. More than its power, its naked cruelty and capriciousness are feared. One can never really predict where the Turlon Great Houses were intervene and to what end. They are as insane as they are powerful.

**History:** The Empire of Turlon was founded in the early annals of the continent's history. Turlon's name symbolizes power. The entire reign of Alacarn and her descendants is treated as little more than an unpleasant

bump in the eternal existence of the nation. At least by its interbred nobility.

Describing the Turlon Empire's history since then as glorious is making a fundamental mistake. Substantive efforts are made to keep the nation as static as possible. Ambition to anything other than expanding the borders and securing the priviledged status of the Great Houses is discouraged. Writing about about anything other than the glorification of the state is punishable by death.

As far as the Turlon Empire's published histories go, they all agree that the Great Houses have never known defeat. Their books speak of an unblemished series of successes. Serious scholars are often appalled at the blanket revisionism that the Great Houses indulge in as part of their daily self-aggrandizement.

The actual history amounts to an endless series of wars with only the occasional breaks for personal intrigue. The Great Houses' nobility never changes and few others in the land have any influence in the nation. Thus, Turlon continues to rot like grapes left too long on the vine.

Some of the Great Houses have sensed this. They seek to instill a new ruler that will unite them and break them from their lethargy while others believe the Empire must be destroyed to be reborn. Some believe that the Divine Emperor must somehow be roused and his power used to bring the land back to its glory days.

**Industries:** TThe industries of Turlon are myriad and devoted to maintaining the luxurious lives of the nobility. While other realms have opulence, no other nation approaches the decadent and galling excess of Turlon. The population of slaves in Turlon is higher than in any other nation with only a small collection of Freeborn citizens existing in the cities.

Turlon survives in no small part by the sheer amount of terror that it inflicts in its surrounding nations. What their slaves cannot make, they acquire via tribute or simply extort from those surrounding lands. Many lesser kingdoms are allowed to spring up solely so that the Valken nobility can raid them for wealth later on.

Turlon is a parasitic nation that subsists on the efforts of other lands and the backs of its conquered peoples.

**Life and Society:** The Empire of Turlon is defined by the Great Houses, known as the Tralax. Each of these Thirteen Houses has adopted one of the gods of Alacarn as its patron but they are one of the least pious groups in the world. They exist solely to amuse themselves and are incapable of anything resembling nobility. Only a few Tralax are anything but self-serving near-insane hedonists. Typical examples of entertainments include torture parties or hunting down individuals in the street after dark.

The life for Turlon's Freeborn is a careful balance. They must be suitably servile to the members of the Great Houses and do their best to avoid drawing their ire. They must also avoid becoming too associated with slaves or they are likely to simply be clapped in irons and tossed in with them. Only the allure of money and that some have grown to love the land is enough to keep them in the accursed Empire.

The slaves of Turlon live a miserable life. Whether they were born in captivity or were taken in battle, they are considered nothing more than resources and easily replaced ones at that. Pleasure slaves and soldiers live slightly better existences than the others of their kind but they suffer their own particular indignities. Revolts are fairly common in Turlon but put down ruthlessly by the Great Houses' magic.

The only slaves with any real status are the Praetor. Extraordinarily well-trained (all Seasoned or Higher), the Praetor are a feared warrior class, raised to battle in the name of Paalok. Officially, they are the bodyguards of the Divine Emperor and thus cannot be harmed even by the Great Houses' members without punishment. Unofficially, they handle all of the military affairs that the regular nobility is too lazy to perform.

**Government and Politics:** The Tralax rule the Empire of Turlon like they're gods. While they were forced to acknowledge human nobles as equals during the reign of Alacarn, this quality has almost completely faded away. Non-noble Valken are treated slightly better than noble humans while all others are tolerated as employees or simply dismissed like animals.

Given how the Tralax treat one another, it is questionable how the Turlon Empire hasn't self-destructed. Most humans can't wrap their minds around the dysfunctional nature of Turlon politics. The profound arrogance and

vengeful nature of its nobles leads to plots that last decades in duration over even petty insults.

The most powerful house is the House of Paalok, lead by Matriarch Zellune A'Paalok (Female Valken [Cat] Veteran). An albino skinned cat-like Valken, she is affectionately known as the 'Mistress of Poisons.' Sultry even amongst a race prizing itself for such, she has left a host of dead lovers across the country. She is the current Ruling Regent and has done a better job than some.

Talos D'Paalok (Male Valken [Cat] Heroic) is another important figure. Zellune's son, Talos is attempting to raise an army of slaves to destroy the Tralax for their abominable crimes. This is more out of hatred for is family than any real care what happens to the enslaved and his revolt is largely being ignored by the Great Houses, to their folly.

**Power Groups**

**The Death Whisperers:** The Death Whisperers are one of the few sources of justice in the Turlon Empire. The secretive order of assassins has made it their appointed mission to prune the more insane and villainous nobles from the Great Houses. This is a thankless task that has gotten the organization actively persecuted on occasion. But there is no end to the employers willing to pay the fees necessary to bring an end to the monsters who reign over the land. Sadly, it seems each generation is somehow worse than the last.

**The Black Sword Brotherhood:** One of the few groups in Turlon that has any goal other than self-indulgence. The Black Sword Brotherhood is terrifying to the normally unflappably arrogant Great House nobles. Recently, they have started to become more militant in their hatred of the lethargy affecting the kingdom. It may come to the point that the Brotherhood attempts to seize control of Turlon. In which case, it's almost certain that the weak-willed products of the other houses will fall before the might of Paalok's Chosen.

**The Divine Emperor of Turlon:** A mysterious figure that many believe to either be an entrapped Formorian, Celestial incarnated in a suit of armor, or the living spirit of the nation. The Divine Emperor of Turlon (Male ??? Legendary) is a giant armored humanoid that may or may not even be alive. The idol, however, speaks his wisdom on occasion to those who come to visit his palace. Many legends about him, such as Alacarn once visited the Divine Emperor and was left severely shaken. One thing is for certain, aside from its devoted priesthood and unofficial status as the master of Turlon, the Divine Emperor exerts very little of its immense power.

**Religion**

The Tralax make offerings to all the gods but most consider them irrelevant to their existence. The arrogance of the Valken nobility is too great to acknowledge powers higher above them. Even the Immaculate Doom is barely able to make any inroads with the self-absorbed and power-hungry aristocracts.

The exception to this is the Black Sword Brotherhood. The devotees of Paalok are twisted and psychotic but they genuinely believe in their deity. The Black Sword Brotherhood induces a supernatural fear in the ranks of even the Tralax. Many of their ranks go forth each year to perform great deeds in honor of the Storm Bringer.

The religion of Turlon's slaves is another matter and varies somewhat. They have little interest in the Great Twelve unless they are captured from other lands and often worship their own invented deities.

**Major Settlements**

**Turlon (2,111,292):** The grandiose city of Turlon is a city for the strong of stomach and will. Turlon place inhabited by merchants willing to debase themselves before the Great Houses, utterly broken slaves, and Valken nobles lost in eternal ennui. Orgies of excess spill out into the streets nearly every day and the continued maintenance of the city has not prevented it from looking like it's about to fall apart. Statues that long ago should have been replaced still stand for the sake of continuity and the sense of age is accompanied by an all-pervading sense of doom.

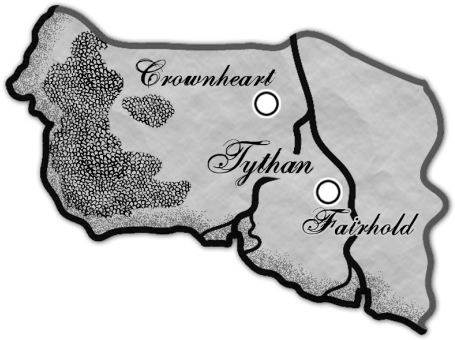
**Important Sites**

**The Great Games:** An unimaginably large coliseum able to house more than a hundred thousand people. The Great Games are a palace to the mob of part-Valken that inhabit Turlon. Every day is filled with animal fights, gladiator competitions, monsters released to fight soldier

slaves, and public executions. Anyone can choose to participate in the Great Games and the amount of wealth available for victors is only matched by the callousness of the audience.

**Adventuring in the Empire of Turlon**

A perfect example of a civilization on its final legs but still terrifying at even a shadow of its former grandeur. The Empire of Turlon is the perfect place for the hedonism and alien morals of the setting to be illustrated. It's probably too late to save the Turlon Empire but it might ne an epic struggle to try. They make almost perfect villains for traditionally heroic campaigns.




| Tythan | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Crownheart |
| **Population** | 12,921,181 (Humans 60%, Valken 10%, Half-Jotuns 10%, Bathas 10%, Other 5%, Slythin 5%, Trow 5%) |
| **Exports** | Ale, Barley, Beer, Cattle, Grain, Honey |
| **Imports** | Armor, Luxury Items, Weapons, Ships |

Tythan is a land of rolling green hills and grasslands. One could not find a more archetypal countryside for the endless feuding warfare of the land. Tythan is also a land of deep forests that even the locals avoid for their peculiarly large and menacing qualities. Tythan slave farms dot the land and almost always are overseen by mansions or castles beside them.

**History:** Tythan is the nation that most individuals think of when they speak of glory, knighthood, and aristocracy. It is a nation that has managed to survive despite the fact that its nobles are amongst the worst for feuding in Alacarn. How long this will last with expansionist Amania to the North and the Horselands of Thur to the East is anyone's guess.

The Tythan aristocrats are so divided as a people over points of honor and ancient feuds that their history is nothing more than a prolonged series of civil wars that have the saving grace of being largely patch-work in nature. The current civil war is far different and encompasses the whole of Tythan.

The War of Blue Roses may result in the nation being so weakened that it ceases to be an entity that can be called a Great Nation. It will be the end of a great age of pageantry but given the massive number of dead from it, perhaps it needed to occur long ago.

**Industries:** Tythan is a largely an agrarian nation. The principle products of the nation are grain and other produce. This goes into feeding the populous and filling the nobles' coffers. It is a decidedly low-tech nation, even by the standards of Alacarn. The nobility of Tythan have mostly refused to update like their northern neighbors.

Part of Tythan's lack of advancement is due to the nearly endless conflict between its nobles, which is extreme even by the standards of Alacarn. Education and skilled labor is disdained in preference to soldiery as a profession. This has severely impeded Tythan from moving towards a more technologically adept civilization.

This primitive philosophy towards the advancement of its technology is not universal, however. At least one Duchess, General Maya A'Quenya (Female Half-Jotun Veteran), is determined to bring the military up to speed. She is in secret negotiations with Amania to purchase large amounts of cannon and Thunder Wands. General A'Quenya's desire for them may simply be patriotism or a ambition to overthrow the current monarchs.

**Life and Society:** Tythan nobles do little more than manage their serfs, feud with one another, and struggle for power with the Temples of the Great Twelve. They are a people dominated by their desire for honor on the battlefield and social prestige. Many consider Tythan nobles amongst the most pompous individuals in Alacarn due to their exaggerated sense of prestige and personal entitlement. Everything from courtship to dining takes on an elaborate role in Tythan noble society. The aristocracy is always mindful of what they consider social faux pause.

Freeborn and slaves in Tythan are considerably less motivated by chivalry. Instead, they are a cynical people who concern themselves with survival and making do. Most Tythan of the lower classes are accustomed to being respectful towards the nobility in public and condescending behind closed doors.

A farming people by nature, most Tythan Freeborn do not concern themselves with war or outside doings unless it comes directly to their doorstep. A few seek wealth and power by attempting to pass themselves off as bastard born mercenaries (with varying degrees of success).

**Government and Politics:** Queen Yinthala A'Sterak (Female Human Novice) and King Yetar D'Sabyr (Male Human Seasoned) are the monarchs of Tythan, officially. They truly control less than half of Tythan and it is questionable if they'll retain that with the War of Blue Roses continuing despite all their best efforts to bring it to a close.

The two half-siblings are hated for numerous reasons. They are incompetent rulers, they are incestuous lovers (one of the few taboos on Alacarn regarding sex), and their act of regicide against the old monarch was barely covered up. The only reason they have managed to stay on the throne as long as they have is due to the superior quality of their generals.

Ruling an equally large portion of the country is Duchess Merlyn A'Tarrington (Female Human Veteran)**.** A brilliant general, the Duchess is cousin to the late King. She motivated as much by righteous fury at the monarch's murder as power lust. Unfortunately, she lacks the troops to deliver a sufficient finishing blow to their armies and is too honorable to kill them via assassin.

**Power Groups**

**The Imperial Society of the Crown:** The Imperial Society of the Crown is a powerful force in Tythan and one of the main reasons that the current monarchs have not fallen. Obsessive and relentless in their desire to unite Tythan, they employ assassins and other 'dishonorable tactics' to try and eliminate those who would tear the nation apart. Sadly, they have difficulty coping with the utter failure that is the current rulers of the land.

High Magistrate Zolos D'Traster (Male Expert Seasoned) is the current Kingdom Master of Treasure. He is the real power in the country and one of the few who genuinely cares about it continuing functioning despite the War.

**Religion**

The people of Tythan worship Heton as the God of Nobles and thus the Lord of all the Gods. Sybus is treated as his consort and the goddess of courtly love. She is considerably more demure and aristocratic than in other lands. Tyros is a popular god and worshiped by many knights seeking higher ideals to follow than simple victory.

The common folk worship the Great Twelve as other nations do. Demae and Kaalon are popular deities for their role as the creators of the human race. Their elemental natures also play an important part in many rites.

**Major Settlements**

**Crownheart (pop. 831,821):** Crownheart is the capital of Tythan and the center for the Blue Rose Dynasty. The capital has long been a bustling center of commerce and trade and remains so. However, the war and the constant toll of taxes to finance it have resulted in many leaving for greener pastures.

Compared to some of the major ports of the land, it is dirty and provincial but it is famous for the glorious High Castle of the Tythan at the center of it. The Crownheart port is defended by a massive navy of blue-flag flying ships but they are obsolete and would be swiftly dealt wit by either Martok or Amania's navies.

**Fairhold (pop. 192,921):** Fairhold is the seat of the opposition to the Blue Rose Dynasty. Ruled by Duchess A'Tarrington, it is a military dictatorship that is the most advanced city in the realm. Fortified beyond all reason, the populous is ridiculously nationalistic and countless visitors come every year to join the Rebel General's armies. At least a quarter of the city's population is directly involved in the war effort in some manner.

Many dislike the large presence of Amanians in the city and believe the Duchess is setting herself up for eventual betrayal by the revolutionaries to the north.

### Important Sites

**The Dead Marches:** The Dead Marches are one of the most frequent sites for battles in Tythan. This is due to its strategic position. The recent battles of the war have resulted in it becoming so literred with noble corpses that no one has bothered to clean it up. It is a ghastly site that has become inhabited by the psychic residue (ghosts) of countless beings. The Dead Marches now routinely explodes with the undead.

### Adventuring in Tythan

Tythan is a Dark Ages kingdom that helps remind players what a thoroughly unpleasant time that was. Codes of Honor are excuses to kill in Tythan and the land is utterly soaked in blood. The kind of chivalric adventures, both subverted and normal, available in Tythan are considerable.

| Volkelstein | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Romya |
| **Population** | 3,392,181 |
| **Exports** | Barley, Grains, Mead, Vodka, Wine |
| **Imports** | Luxury Items, Slaves |

The tiny mountain nation of Volkelstein is reputed by some to not be worthy of the title 'Great Kingdom.' A series of counties and baronies with destructive and insane nobles, Volkelstein is believed to represent the worst of the aristocracy in Alacarn. This charge may be unfair but it is one of the few nations where the unnatural are allowed to rule openly and treat humanity as chattel.

Volkelstein is an agrarian nation with mostly nothing but small hamlets accompanied by the occasional palatial lord's estate or castle. Some who have visited the realm with little concern about the atrocities committed within have called the nation 'quaint.' The distrust and paranoia from the locals accompanied by the sight of impaled bodies is usually enough to disabuse most from treating Volkelstein as a pleasant place to live.

**History:** The almost supernatural dread that accompanies Volkelstein's mention in other nations has prevented most from attempting to reclaim the nation from the forces of evil. The locals themselves are unenthusiastic about such possibilities, having been subject to the many reprisals that occur when would-be heroes attempt to liberate the land.

**Industries:** Volkelstein is one of the most self-sufficient regions in Alacarn. The cruel and rapacious overlords of the principality want as little contact with the outside world as possible. This does not mean that it does not occur; the nobility often finds itself in need of luxuries not available in the region, but it is decidedly muted. Otherwise, it is technologically stagnant.

The chief export of Volkelstein is actually their varieties of alcohol. The brewers of Volkelstein's are reputed to be the best in the world.

**Life and Society:** Volkelstein peasantry are a hard-working and insular group. They are famous for keeping a stoic face during tragedy. They are insular and suspicious but also quick to servility when faced with superior power. Only rarely do they muster enough courage to attempt to destroy some of the monsters that live around them. Due to the preponderance of death around them, they have developed a strong set of family values. One's loyalty is chiefly devoted to a person's immediate blood relations.

Volkelstein's nobility is even worse. The rumors they are all undead or werewolves are patently false. Only a small portion of Volkelstein's nobility are actually monsters. Unfortunately, almost all noble houses have one 'secret' or another. Madness and mild deformities are common amongst the more debased of the bloodlines in Volkelstein. Almost all of them are trained to consider the peasantry as property rather than people. The common punishments include impalement and torture. These do not do much to endear the nobility to the populous.

**Government and Politics:** Volkelstein is an autocracy, let this never be stated otherwise. Queen Carmeera A'Trayan (Female Vampire [Half-Celestial] Heroic) is known by most of the peasantry as a vampire. She has, after all, ruled Volkelstein since its foundation. However, few individuals are willing to publicly acknowledge this terrible fact and even the nobility pretends she is a normal human.

Most of the modern nobility of Volkelstein is a descendent of Queen Carmeera. They are her descendents, her line being founded after her transformation into a vampire. Thus, numerous qualities like homicidal tendencies and fascination with blood are common. Many also become bloodthirsty warriors or occultists. A few attempt to actively resist the darkness within them and attempt to wipe out the many undead creatures crawling across the land.

In addition to the nobility, each individual village often elects a Mayor to rule them. The nobility rarely spends any real effort in leading and thus delegates most of their authority to these individuals. However, any Mayor who refuses a command from their reigning Lord will die swiftly along with his or her family.

### Power Groups

**The Watchmen:** The Watchmen are a hunted and hated organization within the land of Volkelstein. For daring to stand up against the degenerate nobility and their vampire masters, they must contend from opposition within both the townsfolk and the creatures on above. In the face of all of this, they are one of the few sources of hope in the country.

### Religion

The chief god worshiped in Volkelstein is Kaalon. The populous look to the god of Death and the Dead as a deliverer away from the harsh treatment of this world. The other gods are treated as less relevant with Demae being one of the few to receive any real praise. A secret cult to Heton exists that is known as the "Children of the Dawn." The Children are devoted to the overthrow of the vampire tyranny that afflicts the land.

The undead nobility tend towards the worship of the Drakkath and other obscene ancient entities. The Cult of Malaxas is also popular in the region. Only a small portion worship Heton and Tyros.

### Major Settlements

**Romya (pop. 83,291):** Romya is the capital city and exists in the shadow of the Queen's own desolate mountain castle. The populous of Romya is deeply immersed in the Immaculate Doom and many worship their vampire overlords as gods. Indeed, quite a few willingly serve their undead masters and there is a population of nearly a thousand inhuman undead within the city. While the Aristocracy maintains the pretext of being human, the city is perhaps the largest concentration of unnatural evil on Alacarn.

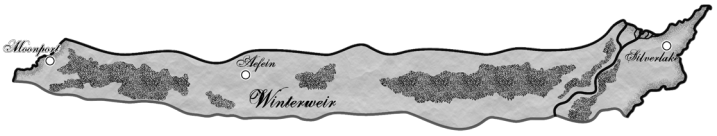
### Important Sites

**The Cathedral of Blood:** A terrible place rumored to be the center of the Immaculate Doom's worship in the region. It is a church inhabited solely by vampires for its congregation and a place for orgies of blood letting in Malaxas' name. The architects were all undead and the place is evil in a way that no human mind could fathom.

Its congressional leader is Brother Lucien D'Dragoth (Male Vampire [Bat Valken] Legendary) whom is one of the oldest vampires in the world. He is a hideous creature who resembles more a hairless animal than a human. He is often referred to as 'Brother Shadowspawn' by superstitious peasants.

### Adventuring in Volkelstein

Volkelstein is the kind of deserted and dark countryside that one can find in old horror movies. Unlike those realms though, the undead and monsters of Alacarn are truly grotesque creatures that engage in the most sanity blasting of atrocities. It is a realm that needs a thorough cleansing.




| Winterweir | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Aefien |
| **Population** | 55,292,281 (40% Humans, 30% Valken, 20% Other, 10% Half-Jotuns) |
| **Exports** | Grain, Lumber, Iron |
| **Imports** | Industrial Goods, Weapons |

The wild and untamed Kingdom of Winterweir is a shining example of Alacarn's few merits. The nobility of Alacarn believe that their position demands certain obligations of them, the populous cooperates for the greater good in times of crisis, the clergy of Tyros is largely

sincere in its pursuit of the greater good, and the tensions between the various races are rarely high enough to justify violence. It is not a perfect nation and has numerous flaws but it is considered one of the few places where aristocratic virtue is not an oxymoron.

Winterweir is a mostly uninhabited land that is dotted with sturdy kingdoms and cities linked together by the Grand Highway. The great forests of the land are particularly spectacular. Individual trees in Winterweir are known to grow three or four times the size of their cousins to the south. The mountains are often home to vast communities of Jotuns and their half-breed descendents. More Valken live in the wilds of Winterweir than in any other place on Alacarn.

**History:** Winterweir's history is surprisingly free of the atrocities and petty wars that have characterized other lands. Certainly, the nobility in Winterweir has many unpleasant deeds to their name and the War of Iron proves that the Kingdom of the North can be as ruthless as any other nation but mostly it has shown itself to be a progressive land.

The most consistent conflicts in the land have been between the Jotun and Valken peoples with Winterweir's humans. The settlers of Winterweir are often willing to cooperate but the constant expansion of the populous is something that causes numerous dust ups. The native peoples and the comparatively recent human arrivals have yet to reach a lasting peace.

The Kingdom of Winterweir is unlikely to continue its current prosperity for very long if the surrounding nations have anything to say about it. The Kingdom of Amania desires the vast untapped natural resources of the country while the Empire of Turlon longs for a lengthy war to occupy itself. The Pirate Isles are also a danger to the Eastern Coast and Martok lies just off to the side of the Western seaboard. It will take all of the country's heroism to survive the coming century.

**Industries:** Winterweir is a nation that has only begun to tap its vast material resources. The country has achieved great prosperity by exporting its iron strong timber to the rest of the continent along with metals of all types.

Winterweir is under-populated enough that it will take a number of centuries to fully harness all of its vast material wealth. Despite this, it is home for a vast number of 'frontier' communities that simply set up on their own. It is common enough for nobles to ride in and take over communities that have already been established or the Queen to raise frontiersmen who manage to petition her for recognition of their lands.

Both the East and West coasts of Winterweir have successful trading ports as well.

**Life and Society:** The peasantry of Winterweir is an unusually opinionated and strong-willed bunch. They are aware that the majority of nobles are descendents of those who simply fought their way into positions of power and that such can be their destiny. Thus, they are less servile than the common folk of other lands. Slavery does not exist in Winterweir and the worst position one can have is of being a landed tenant in debt. Even then, one has certain rights guaranteed by the Queen's law (at least until a noble works out a way around them).

The nobility of Winterweir is hardly a collection of saints. They are cunning and ruthless like all aristocrats of Alacarn. However, most of them lack the innate arrogance that seems to creep into most nation's ranks. The requirements for leadership in Winterweir are higher than in other lands and they are of hardier stock than most. Intermixing amongst Humans and the Kinfolk races is not unheard of either.

While the Winterweir have strong ideals about courage and honor, they are mostly driven by a grim resolve that matches their climate. Winterweir are a practical people and only seem to break from their stoic resolve during the aftermath of epic battle or a bleak winter. They are a people that celebrate with lavish parties, but only after their work is done. If there is one quality that will never be attributed to the Winterweir, it is being frivolous.

**Government and Politics:** Unlike nearly every other realm in Alacarn, Winterweir also has a Council of Barons. The Baron's Council wields an exceptional amount of authority as the master of the Kingdom's treasury. While Dukes and other high ranking nobles may wield far greater power than any lesser lord, the Baron's Council holds more power than any authority less than the Queen.

Queen Alusan A'Winterweir (Female Human Veteran) is the current ruler of the nation. A wise and just monarch, she is continually frustrated by the fact that the Council of Barons do not see the danger from surrounding nations. Alusan thus relies on her mother, High Justicar Meylinda A'Fangdon (Female Human Heroic), to seek out individuals who can be used as mercenaries or spies against their enemies. High Justicar Meylinda, in addition to being a powerful figure in the clergy, is also a Witch of the Fallen World. Alusan's own magical ability is a secret from her subjects and even the Witches of the Fallen World do not know.

There is currently a dispute within Winterweir over succession to a certain degree as Alusan's sister, Magran A'Winterweir (Female Human Seasoned) is the guardian of the 12 year old Grand Justicar of the Tyros faith. Grand Justicar Ruwena I (Female Half-Celestial Seasoned) is renowned as a seer and some suggest she should be the Queen as well.

**Power Groups**

**Death Whisperers:** Death Whisperers have made one of their largest presences in Winterweir. Something about the frigid country appeals to the stoic Kaalon and Vaasti worshipers. They have made it a point to defend the country and are employed by many in the pursuit of a better world. They are disliked and distrusted by the Knights of Tyros but tolerated due to the Queen's protection of them. Even the Church of Tyros occasionally makes use them. The most famous assassin in Winterweir is the enigmatic Poet (Male Half-Celestial Heroic). Poet is unaware he is being employed by the church, which hopes to take advantage of prophecies that state he will eventually rule a large portion of the continent. Poet is unaware of those prophecies as well.

**The Knights of Winterweir:** The Knights of Winterweir are the defenders of the nation and one of the most respected bodies in the whole of the country. Even powerful nobles are unable to get their children accepted into the body unless they meet both the physical and moral requirements. While the occasional bad seed does exist, most knights are genuinely loyal to the nation and pious to Tyros' principles.

Lord Knight Aleyssa A'Turran (Female Human Heroic) is the leader of the Knights of Winterweir. A middle aged but still powerful knight, she worries about the coming war she predicts will occur with Amania.

**Witches of the Fallen World:** The Witches of the Fallen World wield a powerful influence from their home base in Twilight Forest. It is here they recruit young women from the populous and their own descendants to induct into the mysteries of the order. Their council is respected rather than feared amongst the various noble houses of Winterweir.

**Religion**

Tyros is the most worshiped god in Winterweir, unsurprisingly since the country was founded by religious zealots. Worship of the Great Twelve still continues despite the fact that Tyros has the greatest temples and the highest social position amongst the gods. Because of this, many are surprised by the prominence that the God of Justice has in ceremonies traditionally performed by other god's clergy.

The Cult of Malaxas is not tolerated here and neither is the worship of Paalok. Both gods are considered to be evil spirits rather than genuine deities. Nevertheless, few people will harm a worshiper of Paalok while they will descend with torches and pitch forks on a worshiper of the Immaculate Doom.

**Major Settlements**

**Aefien (pop. 528,181):** Aefien tends to unsettle travelers. Ironically, it is one of the most pleasant cities in Alacarn. The capital of Winterweir is clean, pristine, and well guarded. It is the similarity to the cities of Turlon that sets many off. Unlike the cities of the Great Empire, most of Aefien's construction is new and well-maintained. It is like something out of the height of the Empire. Also unlike Turlon, a remarkably generous legal system exists that protects Freeborn from depredations by the nobility.

**Moonport (pop. 82,281):** Moonport is Winterweir's picturesque port town that is the center of much of the country's Western trade. Ruled by the corrupt Darkholme family, Moonport is infamous as a location that trades with Winterweir's ancestral enemies of Martok and Amania. While most of the citizenry is of high integrity, the amount of corruption in the city is far worse than in other Winterweir ports.

**Silverlake (pop. 5,211):** A pleasant timber and mining community, Silverlake is typical of Winterweir communities that will one day become great cities. It is notable because of the fact that it lies on the edges of a vast amount of Far Folk land. It is notable because of the fact that it lies on the edge of a vast amount of Far-Folk land.

**Important Sites**

**High Road Keep:** High Road Keep is the Knights of Winterweir headquarters. A massive fifty story stone keep constructed by Jotuns, High Road Keep is a citadel with room for five thousand knights and their protectors. It is here that a number of flying serpents are kept to transport knights all over Winterweir as needed. High Road Keep is also the center for the defense of the entire Western Coast of the nation.

**Adventuring in Winterweir**

Winterweir is a fantasy kingdom meant to be a place that the player characters should feel reasonably good about protecting. It's not perfect but that sort of realm would probably not survive in the kill or be killed land of Alacarn. It's certainly one of the best realms in the land and the kind of base that most fantasy gamers will feel most familiar operating from.

# Other Lands of Teth-Ammon

Alacarn is not the only civilized land in the world. It is surrounded by inhabited islands and continents with their own secrets. Some have been explored by humans, others have not been.

## The Island Nations

### Lartan

| Lartan | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Edos |
| **Population** | 8,822,101 (75% Human, 20% Valken, 5% Other) |
| **Exports** | Fish, Ink, Machinery, Ships |
| **Imports** | Lumber, Metal |

Lartan is an island with a wide variety of environments. Amongst its many types of terrain are deserts, forests, mountains, and plains. The populous remains fairly similiar despite these varying atmospheres. It was formerly connected by a well-maintained series of roads and stean vehicle tracks. Most of these devices have fallen into disrepair and disuse with the continuing civil war wracking the nation.

**History:** Lartan is an island infamous for its feuding warlords and its technological prowess. While the Lartan conduct a limited amount of trade with the rest of the continent, much of their recent developments have been overshadowed by the breakdown of social order in their country. It is now a country filled with lone warriors doing battle in isolated fiefdoms that refuse to have anything to do with one another.

Lartan selected its own Emperor, the Grand Warlord, after the Revolt of Malaxas, but it has never been able to maintain a successful dynasty for more than a few centuries. The island's warlords are too evenly matched and the traditions of war too strong for anyone to hold onto power indefinitely. The last Grand Warlord, Kola the Fair, died twenty years ago and the country has since known continuous military conflict ever since. It is known as the War of Black Powder.

Despite the Lartan's current state of disrepair, it is still considered to be a place of wonders unmatched in the continent. Many Pretax Academy engineers and even Bathas alchemists have been known to journey to the island to view their accomplishments. The Lartan themselves are justly proud of their devices and have a desire to spread them farther than their island confines.

Until it stabilizes, it will remain a country known for its strict class roles and quirky inventions.

**Industries:** Lartan is the most advanced society on Alacarn, though it is hardly that far ahead from its fellows. A somewhat industrialized society, it was formerly moreso, but many of its factories have been destroyed in the recent civil wars. Unlike Amania, Lartan has no natural powder-based weapons but purchases them from their trade partners.

The most fascinating devices of Lartan society are their airships. The primitive flying vessels utilize hundreds of tiny balloons wrapped in a single sack that can carry small ships through the air. The vessels are considered peculiar by most of Alacarn but are ubiquitous enough that few consider them examples of witchcraft. Some are altered by sorcery so they can overcome some laws of physics that would otherwise require far greater technology. Due to Lartan's civil war, only perhaps a hundred still exist.

Lartan is primarily an agricultural society now. With all the hording by the various warlords, food is a scarce resource and those who trade in such and other supplies are welcomed by the locals.

**Life and Society:** Lartan society is strictly divided into seven castes. In order from the lowest to the highest, they are slave caste, farmer caste, labor caste, merchant caste, warrior caste, engineer caste, and ruler caste. No one can move out of his or her designated caste and intermarriage amongst them is considered highly taboo.

Criminals are immediately cast out of the social hierarchy and individuals may do them harm without repercussions. While only rulers are allowed to order other castes around, all are expected to show those of higher caste respect. Foreigners, of course, are outside the caste system and are usually treated with a sort of curt politeness. Priests occupy a peculiar place and attend the spiritual needs of only those within their caste.

Honor means a great deal more in Lartan than in other countries, at least to the merchant, warrior, engineer, and ruler castes. Insults are expected to be met with duels. While not everyone can defend their own honor, most of the higher ranks have proxies that that are willing to protect it for them. This climate of social status and violence has contributed to the current state of civil war.

Until the civil war, Lartan was almost unique in that it had a public education system for all citizens. The level of education for each caste, of course, varied tremendously.

**Government and Politics:** The Warlords of Lartan are a feuding and fractious lot. Their actual noble titles mean almost nothing now. Even low-ranking lords have managed to assemble large armies to claim significant portions of the country. There are nine major warlords currently dominating the countryside and fighting a brutal war over who will rule the remains. It is unknown if any of them will have anything to fight over by the time they finally finish their conflict.

The most powerful warlord in Lartan is Notho A'Hawtyn (Female Human Veteran). Called the "Red Falcon", Notho A'Hawtyn was born the daughter of a minor clan. Through strategic alliances, use of her own private clan of assassins (The Doom Walkers), and ruthlessness; she's come to rule a third of the nation. Notho is unlikely to remain satisfied with this and is angered that she does not yet have the power to conquer the remaining two-thirds of Lartan.

The next most influential Warlord is Song (Female Human Seasoned). Song is a silver haired noble of uncertain parentage and a Witch of the Fallen World. She foresees that the war will be brought to an end soon but is unsure of who exactly will be the Warlord to emerge on top. She is less concerned about whether or not she wins but whether the victor is just.

Against all protocol, many of the cities have come to be dominated by merchant governors instead of nobles. They pay heavy tribute to the warlords to avoid being invaded.

**Power Groups**

**Pretax Academy:** The Pretax Academy is, curiously enough, one of the most powerful bodies on Lartan. The sages there and teachers are treated as the greatest scholars in the country and wield tremendous authority. To graduate from one of its institutions is to guarantee a privileged position in one of the Warlord's courts. Sadly, the war has cost many scholars their lives and ruined countless facilities devoted to knowledge. If the war continues, the Pretax Academy will likely soon have nothing left to show its once glorious place on the island.

**Religion**

The people of Lartan worship a wide variety of deities that are organized under a single religion called the Divine Court. This is ostensibly lead by Heton and Sybus, though Tyros actually has a higher position of respect as the giver of law. Filanti, as the goddess of creation, is the chief divinity of Lartan's engineering caste.

All things are said to have a spirit in Lartan. Outsiders are often bewildered by the vast number of deities found on the island. There are individual ones for things like corn or specific types of drinks. All of them fit together in a neat little hierarchy but one needs extensive priestly training to discern it.

The Supreme Throne has established several missions on the island. Their converts are unpopular and considered to have forsaken their castes. Oddly, they have established numerous enclaves where they live under the rule of the Divine Order.

### Major Settlements

**Edos (pop. 203,281):** Edos is a rigidly social and traditionalist city. So far, no warlord has dared attempt to take the city that is both the spiritual and economic center of the country. This is not so much out of altruism but the belief that the country will fall to total anarchy if it is damaged beyond repair. Thus, for the time being, life continues as normal in Edos.

Edos' hides a seamy underbelly underneath its prim and proper exterior. A second city exists in a special walled off quarter where the inhabitants indulge their every virtue and vice. Foreigners are almost always shocked by the sudden change in attitude. Needless to say, this region is controlled by the Khatai and it is actually where that brotherhood originated.

### Important Sites

**The Living Forest:** The Living Forest is a massive stretch of trees that exists unmolested by ax or settler despite the rarity of uncultivated land on Lartan. This is due to the bizarre fact that the animals within are sentient and can speak. Moreover, the animals are often quite willing to defend themselves. Only Slythin and Valken are welcome or those who have proven themselves friends. Some temples find the creatures to be abominations and desire their destruction. The Living Forest is almost certainly linked to the Other Realm.

### Adventuring in Lartan

Lartan is a wonderful for a peculiar of martial arts adventure and steampunk heroism. This peculiar concoction will hopefully appeal to gamers who want something slightly different.

| Martok | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Martok |
| **Population** | 5,732,113 (50% Lilin, 20% Humans, 30% Other) |
| **Exports** | Metalwork, Ships, Soldiers, Weapons |
| **Imports** | Luxury Items, Wood |

Martok is an infamous land in Teth-Ammon. It is a volcanic island kept constantly boiling by the Shadow King's will but never quite erupting. Martok is a place that most consider to be accursed. The fact that the predominant population of the island is Lilin doesn't help its reputation any.

Despite stories of it being a blackened and horrible wasteland, Martok is actually a lush and fertile island. Jungles and rainforests exist in-between the rich farmland that is ruled over by the Crimson Oath's lords. It is also home to the gigantic city of Martok that is said to have the largest concentration of soldiers in the world.

Ruled by the infamous Shadow King, Martok is a frequent participant in wars across Alacarn. Many petty kingdoms and powerful nobles are nothing more than puppets for its dark master. Others believe the Shadow King is nothing more than a title for given to an all-too-human monarch. These are all too happy to deal wit what they percieve to be an unpleasant but otherwise normal kingdom.

**History:** Martok was a originally a barren and desolate but tempoerate island that had no inhabitants of note. During the Revolt of Malaxas, the Shadow King used his power to rip forth a volcano from the heart of the island and cover much of the world in ash. From there, he made it his base of operations as he waged war on the whole of Creation.

The Revolt of Malaxas failed but not before the Shadow King had brought massive numbers of Lilin slaves to the island and bred them to be his personal servants. Likewise, a massive amount of Teth-Ammon's territory was still under his direct rule. Countless skilled laborers were also taken to Martok in order to build him a grand city.

Realizing that it would be more difficult to conquer a humanity united against Malaxas' reign, the Shadow King

retreated into his castle and instead began ruling through a series of puppet kings while continuing to spread his domination over many regions of the world. Thanks to treachery or Celestial intervention, many of these plots were thwarted while others succeeded brilliantly. Oftentimes, the Shadow King would sacrifice fleeting temporal power for greater esoteric might. It is said that he once traded an entire nation's rule for a lost book of advanced mathematics.

There has, honestly speaking, never been a time that Martok has not been at war. The Martok do not often engage in open invasions but instead offer themselves as mercenaries to the Shadow King's many puppets.

The current number of petty kingdoms under their direct or indirect domination is difficult to guess at. It may include up to a tenth of Alacarn's total land mass. A few nations are simply under their influence and have soldiers waiting for the time they might eventually rise up to overthrow their masters on the Shadow King's orders.

The most devastating conflict that Martok has ever faced was only twelve years ago. There, an undead agent of the Shadow King called the Dread Lord (Male Liche Legendary), revolted against the Shadow King and attempted to seize rulership of Martok. The volcano was nearly caused to erupt and an earthquake killed tens of thousands. The Dread Lord was defeated and his followers banished but it was the only time someone nearly overthrew the Shadow King.

**Industries:** Martok is a land totally devoted to the industries of war. They produce armor, ships, and weapons while making sure that all of their soldiers are properly outfitted. While its technology is not quite to the level of Amania, Martok already has its agents studying their devices and will likely catch up very soon. Thus, the telltale signs of industry are appearing for the first time on the volcanic island.

The populous as a whole does not make much from this as all these industries are owned by the Shadow King's agents. The government outfits its troops and claims all profits from the sale of these arms and trade to outfit itself further. There are few merchants in Martok and they mostly are agents for the Crimson Oath or truly unscrupulous traders.

**Life and Society:** The people of Martok live a harsh and unforgiving life. The majority of all food goes to the military and rationings are frequently imposed. Almost all of them cope with the fact that they can be obliterated at any time if a Crimson Oath wizard or Immaculate Doom priest is feeling annoyed. Most realize the only real way to get ahead in life is to join the Army. It is a joke that the only five professions in Martok are barkeep, priest, prostitute, soldier, and wizard. While not true, it seems the entirety of the country is devoted to war.

Rural citizens of Martok have it better than one might expect. The power of the Shadow King is focused on the urban areas of Martok, especially the capital. While farmers are considered to be property of the state, they are left largely alone if they pay the tithes of food expected of them. The land of Martok is surprisingly fertile and they suffer almost none of the leanness that other Martok citizens display.

It should be noted that military service is not mandatory but makes up a ridiculously large number of citizens. More than a fifth of all Martok citizens are soldiers in one capacity or another. The majority of the rest are individuals devoted to maintaining the nation's infrastructure.

**Government and Politics:** Martok is ruled by the Shadow King, whom everyone treats as both monarch and god. The Formorian warlord is the unquestioned leader of the Crimson Oath, The Church of the Immaculate Doom, and the Kingdom of Martok. As such, he holds absolute power over every source of authority in the realm. Curiously, the Shadow King rarely exerts this authority and mostly leaves it to his underlings as he focuses his mind on other matters.

Instead, the wizards of the Crimson Oath are the more common rulers of Martok. Functioning as an aristocracy and bureaucracy as one, they compete with each other in much the same way as continental nobility. The only thing they are not allowed to do is waste valuable resources in their petty feuds, or they are eliminated outright by the Shadow King's will.

The White Marshal (See *Antagonists*) is a disturbing armored figure that wears a human skull mask with a colorless shroud. The leader of Martok's military forces, she answers directly to the Shadow King rather than the wizards of the Crimson Oath.

**Power Groups**

**The Crimson Oath:** The Crimson Oath makes its headquarters in Martok and is synonymous with that nation. It is here the Red Court gathers and works their darkest magic. The Crimson Oath tests every newborn child for magical potential every four years and those that are found are claimed before their twelfth birthday.

Membership within the Crimson Oath is highly sought after since the families of its members are given large payments in silver. Unlike on the continent, where members are effectively free to do as they like, in-fighting on Martok is tremendous. Many desire to be assigned to the continent to avoid the treachery of their fellows.

The Crimson Oath has an intense rivalry with the Immaculate Doom and battles with it for the Shadow King's attention.

**The Immaculate Doom:** The Immaculate Doom acknowleges the Shadow King as their god instead of Malaxas. It is not also not allowed to conduct its sacrificial offerings on citizens of Martok unless they have committed some crime (insolence qualifying as a crime).

The Immaculate Doom also avoids some of its more esoteric experiments in the mortification of the flesh, instead adopting a reasonably attractive exterior. This has caused many outside sects to view the Martok variant of Malaxas' worship as debased. The Immaculate Doom of Martok wields authority and power nearly unmatched by their fellows. The Immaculate Doom's summoned demons do not seem to differentiate between the fanatics on the continent and the more subdued worshipers on Martok.

**The Shadow King:** The Shadow King is, unsurprisingly, the ultimate power on Martok. His influence coats everything and almost no street corner is not covered in some mural or invocation of his name. Tiny idols of the Shadow King are located in every household and his power is often said to be felt at the back of all Martok minds.

In actuality, the Shadow King does very little ruling. Instead, the ancient being more interested in the pursuit of magical power and plotting to expand his influence in other lands. The Shadow King rarely meets with his minions and often delegates to his more trusted lieutenants even important strategy sessions.

When the Shadow King's attention is gained, a subject is more often contacted via telepathy than through direct meeting.

**The Watchmen:** The Watchmen maintain many spies in Martok. While it is likely the Shadow King is aware of them through his immense psychic powers, he makes no effort to inform his minions of their presence or plans. The Watchmen report on the activities of Martok and attempt to undermine the activities of the Crimson Oath and Immaculate Doom. The Crimson Oath spends a disproportionate amount of its effort trying to root out Watchmen agents than is really necessary for the amount that exists in Martok.

**Religion**

The Immaculate Doom is the official religion of Martok. The Shadow King is worship as the ruler of the universe and all souls are said to go to the Netherdeep upon one's death in order to enjoy endless pleasures. The ruler of Martok is considered only an avatar of the 'true' Shadow King. Only a small few individuals who feel genuine piety towards the church ever are initiated into deeper mysteries.

The Churches of Kaalon and Paalok both operate reasonably in Martok. Brought by foreigners, the Shadow King has decreed they are not to be opposed. Like most citizens of Alacarn, the citizens of Martok see little problem venerating the official gods as well as the Storm Bringer and God of Death. Kaalon's creed of enduring suffering and acting with kindness is growing quite popular in some circles.

Worship of other gods in Martok is forbidden. Usually, this carries a fine. The exception is the worship of the Supreme Throne. The punishment for worship of the Supreme Throne is transformation into an undead creature. This is considered a fate worse than death.

**Major Settlements**

**Martok (pop. 3,001,211)** Martok is the greatest city on the island that bears its name. It is also one of the largest ports in the West. The place is disturbing to those

foreign traders willing to work with Martok. This is due to the fact that soldiers are a near-omnipresent feature of the city. The architecture of Martok is dark and gloomy with almost every building constructed of stone rather than wood. Citadel Mal'thor is visible in the far distance and able to be seen from every point in the city.

Martok is ruled by the cruel Governor Beld D'Arraym (Male Lilin Seasoned), one of the few Non-Crimson Oath or Immaculate Doom members with real power in the country. The red-eyed military commander spends most of his time attempting to keep the various feuding factions in his city happy.

**Dreadport (pop. 102,821)** Dreadport is the second largest city on Martok. Dreadport is a great deal wilder and more uninhibited than the capital. The 'soldiers' of Dreadport are little more than pirates that give a portion of their wealth to the Crimson Oath. The city is directly ruled by wizards but they devote almost no effort to ruling.

The Scarlet Castle is located in Dreadport and so is the White Academy. Magical conflicts are frequent in the city and often spill over into rioting.

**Important Sites**

**Citadel Mal'thor:** Citadel Mal'thor is the headquarters of the Shadow King. A dark and isolated place, very few people who journey to it are ever expected to return. The inner sanctums are devoted to the Shadow King's research into matters arcane. Because the Formorian never sleeps, he is constantly working on one dark scheme or another.

Citadel Mal'thor is notable for being built for the twenty-foot tall Shadow King rather than normal-sized human beings. It is believed that a host of undead servants work here and that there is at least one small clan of Dragons that pay him homage.

**The Scarlet Castle:** The Scarlet Castle is the estate where the Crimson Oath's leadership resides. Made of a peculiar red stone, the Scarlet Castle literally embodies its name. The Scarlet Castle is a place of decadent luxury where the wizards of the castle enjoy lives of leisure. However, it is also a place of tremendous betrayal, politicking, murder, and toadying. It is infamous for its Hall of Ten Thousand Mirrors that can transport members instantly across all of Teth-Ammon.

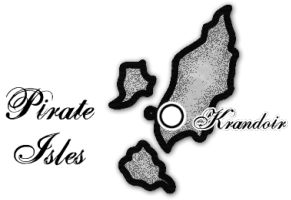
The Red Circle is based in the Scarlet Castle and supervises all of the Crimson Oath's activities. Its current leader is Kylessa A'Greywyn (Female Lilin Heroic), a bald and cruel woman whom is known for performing unnatural experiments with her Immaculate Doom lab assistants/lovers.

**The Death Swamp:** A polluted and stinking swamp that is inhabited by an army of undead created by the Shadow King during one of his many wars. The dead are kept from escaping out into the outside farmland by the Formorian's will but roam about the swamp, seeking lives to satisfy their gnawing hunger. Curiously, it is a funerary custom to send the dead with treasures down the rivers of Martok into this disturbing place. Thus, extremely brave (or foolish) treasure hunters have been known to investigate it.

**The White Academy:** The White Academy is a skull shaped keep that is made of polished stone. It is guarded and tended by a small army of undead soldiers. It is here that children are brought before their fourteenth birthday and educated in the ways of the Crimson Oath. The children are swiftly inured to horror and violence as part of their training. They are educated in the ways of the Crimson Oath and the Shadow King. A small sect of heretical Kaalon worshipers provides for the spiritual needs of the children.

**Adventuring in Martok**

Martok is one of those vile cesspits of tyranny that is the source of wonderful cloak and dagger adventures. There's also nothing preventing player characters from throwing their lot in with the Shadow King and his twisted followers. All manner of vile plots are hatched in Martok and it's not a problem for player characters who want steady (if utterly amoral) work.




| The Pirate Isles | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Krandoir (ostensibly) |
| **Population** | 3,282,811 (60% Human, 30% Kinfolk, 10% Other) |
| **Exports** | Fish, Ships, Trade Goods |
| **Imports** | Tools, Trade Goods, Weapons |

The Pirate Isles are more properly known as the High Kingdom of Krandoir. Given there hasn't been a High King on the isle of Krandoir for the better part of six centuries, most of the islanders don't call it that themselves. Instead, the natives take a perverse in being labeled as the Pirate Isles. Their own maps tend to call it some variant thereof.

The Pirate Isles are an island chain of about a hundred different landmasses of varying size. Each of these islands is mostly cold, forested, and rocky. Winters are harsh on the isles and have produced an exceptionally hardy bunch of inhabitants on a world that is already filled with toughened individuals. Most of the Isles are chartered but a few remain unexplored for varying reasons (mostly superstition and the treachery of the reefs).

**History:** For most of the Pirate Isles' history, they were inhabited only by a set of sea-fairing Valken tribes that lived on the rocky islands. It was during the time of the Revolt of Malaxas that soldiers of the Alacarn Empire fled to the Islands under the Pirate Queen Krandoir. There, they established the first human settlements of the island and interbred with the Valken there.

The Pirate Isles inhabitants waged an unforgiving war against Malaxas' Chaos Ships and successfully managed to sink many (at extreme cost to themselves). The end of the conflict did not bring peace, however. The Pirate Isles' inhabitants realized that the Alacarn Empire offered little to them and took their service for granted.

After a failed attempt by Emperor Attax the Unworthy to retake the islands, the High Kingdom of Krandoir broke away and began raiding the Eastern Coast and shipping lanes for treasure. This is the status-quo even today. A never-ending cycle of raiding and reprisal exists between the coastal nations and the Pirate Isles.

Since the time of Attax's raid, both Turlon and D'Henna have made attempts to re-conquer the island for themselves. On occasion, they have managed to force fealty but such control is incredibly hard to maintain over the fractious sailing people.

The most notable event in the Pirate Isles' past six hundred years of history is the War of Five Sea Lords. Just before the death of the last High Queen of Krandoir, she proceeded to disinherit all of her children. All five of them immediately gathered up armies of their own and divided up the five major islands between each other. Despite their best efforts, the war ended inconclusively with none of them able to totally defeat the others.

Since the War of the Five Sea Lords, the Pirate Isles have remained fairly anarchic. They only manage to maintain their independence due to the fact that the clergy is able to call a War Council where all feuds are put aside for the defense of the Isles. This has managed to prevent any sea-going power from conquering the divided isles. Almost immediately after any victory, the feuding begins anew. So far, it's been an effective system for preserving the islands' sovereignty.

**Life and Society:** The Syrevan ("Oceanborn") are not all pirates, but there is a far larger number than in other lands due to the fact that most traders amongst the Pirate Isles folk are not unwilling to engage in piracy. The Oceanborn culture tends to exalt the belief that carrying off poorly defended treasure is nothing to be ashamed of. Syrevan stories and myth are filled with legendary pirates and thieves performing acts of daring-do.

This attitude towards buccaneering has not given the Syrevan a very good reputation but their skill as sailors and merchantmen has made them a common sight at nearly every port along the Eastern Coast. Unless the Turlon or Winterweir finally invade the islands, it is unlikely they will give up this lifestyle any time soon. It is simply too profitable to do so.

Almost all Oceanborn make their living from the sea in one manner or another with nearly all communities

being coastal. It is a common saying that most Oceanborn can swim before they can walk and sail before they learn how to talk. Oceanborn are taught how to fight in nearly equal amounts to their sailing skill. The Syrevan are feared throughout the Great Kingdoms for their warriors.

One curious custom of the Syrevan is the fact that more than half of their ships are segregated by sex. This is meant to cut down on discipline problems but has lead to many strange glances from those ships they encounter. Syrevan courting customs are just outright bizarre. For a marriage to take place, a man or woman must be able to match the price set for their consort if they are of higher status. This has lead to many great epics about dowry quests.

**Government and Politics:** The Oceanborn are not a terribly legalistic lot. Each captain is monarch of their own ship. Each King or Queen of the Isles rules only at the sufferance of the captains beneath them and heredity is only a loose guide for determining who shal reign after them. More often, the next monarch of any given island is selected by mutual consent. Those who disagree often just find their own islands to colonize or take over.

Politics are a simple and bloody affair. Those who can prove themselves to be fit Captains and defend their rule with steel are able to do so. Dissent is not tolerated and the law of one's captain is considered the word of the gods unless one is willing to challenge them for rulership of the vessel. More often, these contests end in one party giving up peacefully rather than death.

The High King of the Pirate Isles used to be selected from the bloodline of Krandoir's founder. However, most of the modern islanders can trace at least distant kinship from him now. No individual Island King has a large enough fleet to subdue all of the others.

Instead, politics between the islands and their Kings is more often meditated by the Priests of the Twelve (usually either Paalok or Vulthoo depending on the inclinations of the monarch).

**Power Groups**

**Church of Paalok:** The Church of Paalok is the most influential body currently in the Pirate Isles. The current leader of it is Brother Branth B'Brathos (Half-Celestial Male Veteran). Brother Branth has converted several of the most influence of the Isles' captains to Paalok's sole worship. He's convinced them that he is the god's own son. Branth believes that he can trigger a massive war with Winterweir's coast and then unite the Pirate Isles under his rule. So far, he is doing well in this.

**Church of Vulthoo:** The Church of Vulthoo is the second most powerful body in the Pirate Isles. Recently, the Church's influence has been on the decline due to a series of corrupt Ocean Masters. While still tremendously powerful, the Church of Paalok has been rising in strength. The current Ocean Master of Vulthoo is Nalya A'Telyssa (Female Valken [Seal] Seasoned). Nalya is not particularly powerful but she is charismatic and determined to have great deeds performed in Vulthoo's name until he once more eclipses Paalok.

**The Iron Reavers:** If there is anything that frightens the sailors of the Pirate Isles it is the Iron Reavers. A group of corrupt islanders that turned to the worship of Malaxas, they have been warped and transformed into hideously mutated monsters. Showing none of the restraint that other Pirate Islanders do, which says a great deal, they kill and slaughter less for plunder than for the sheer joy of murder. Worse, at least according to the Oceanborn, is that they do not restrict their raids to foreigners.

On occasion, The Iron Reavers are allowed by their masters to pilot Chaos Ships and call upon them in battle. The current 'leader' of the anarchic group of madmen is Alor the Unspeakable (Lilin Sex Indeterminate Seasoned) that rules less through magical might than chicanery and pure charisma.

**Religion**

The Oceanborn worship the Great Twelve but certain gods predominate over others. Paalok and Vulthoo are the most revered deities by far. Their clergy routinely compete for the position of most influence priest or priestess in an area. Unlike on the continent, Vulthoo is considered to be the god of rulership. Paalok is considered a much more amiable figure and even heroic at times.

Kaalon is said to dwell in the ocean depth rather than an extra-dimensional vault. Kaalon routinely curses sailors who die with unfinished business to continue sailing forever. These ghost ships are rooted in truth but few ever

discover that they are from the Netherdeep rather than Kaalon's Vault. Sybus is the only female deity worshiped to any significant degree and it is mostly in her position as goddess of the moons.

The Supreme Throne has attempted to make converts on the isles but so far they have found almost uniform failure in convincing any of the Oceanborn to give up on their traditional lifestyle.

**Major Settlements**

**Krandoir (pop. 123,722)** is the heart of the Pirate Isles. The massive city rests on the largest of the islands and it is tended by hundreds of ships every day. It's current queen, Lyressa the Second (Human Female Seasoned), is a typical Oceanborn queen in that she's a brutal fighter with a foul mouth. Lyressa is mockingly, behind closed doors, called the Fair due to the fact she's unusually petite for a Oceanborn queen.

Lyressa has no ambitions of ruling the entirety of the Pirate Isles and instead focuses on turning Krandoir into a massive trading center in legitimate enterprises. Given most other would-be rulers of the Oceanborn feel Krandoir is the key to their domination, the city is filled with no end of rogues exploring it for weaknesses. Krandoir is also unusual for its large population of foreign descended citizens.

**Important Sites**

**The Iron Keep:** A formidable castle that rests on one of the smallest islands in the Pirate Isles. Inhabited by Thenas D'Xendor (Lilin Male Heroic), a rogue magician of the Grand Arcanum, it is a place where obscene experiments are conducted into the nature of reality. The Oceanborn are powerless to oppose him given that he has control over the waves and host mutated monsters to call his own. Surrounding villages send young men and women as sacrifices every year so that he does not raid them.

**The Sunken City:** A relic of the ancient Dragons, the Sunken City operates on ancient machinery that continues to defend it despite the fact that its original inhabitants have long since died out. Filled with incomparable relics of an advanced civilization, the city is guarded by freakishly deformed Fish-men like Valken and a gigantic metallic sea-adapted Dragon. Every four years, the Sunken City rises from the ocean and causes tidal waves along with a rise in attacks on ships.

**Adventuring in The Pirate Isles**

The Pirate Isles are tailor made for sea-going adventure. Stories of buccaneers, clan warfare, ghosts, piracy, sunken treasure, and Vikings are all appropriate for tales set within the island chain. As long as player characters are decent in a fight and don't get too seasick, they'll be able to find any number of ships willing to take them on.

| The Wyvern Isles | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Seth |
| **Population** | Population: 2,829,932 (60% Human, 20% Bathas, 12% Valken, 8% Other) |
| **Exports** | Mercenaries, Metal, Wool |
| **Imports** | Grain, Mead, Meat, Tools |

The Wyvern Isles are a series of mountains, valleys, and rolling hills only occasionally interrupted by flat land. Attempting to conquer the islands without the aid of flight is as close to a military impossibility as can reasonably be expected. The locals themselves have adapted numerous flying animals to their service and live along the surfaces of their raised environment with little difficulty.

In addition to its human inhabitants, the Wyvern Isles are also famous for its avian Valken. Several clans of them congregate in the islands and rule their own petty mountain kingdoms.

**History:** The Wyvern Isles are treated as a far more powerful nation than it is. The fear that even the mighty Turlon Empire has of the Wyvern Riders is enough to cause many to treat the islands as a magical land best trucked with light. The heyday of the Wyvern Isles and its glories

has long since passed, though. It will take a leader of truly exceptional courage and strength to once more unite the clans into a fighting force capable of conquering Alacarn.

How the original Wyvern Riders came to tame their mounts is lost to the ages but local legends claim that refugees from an ancient (and long deceased) land fled from the Terra'ssar race's slavery and then found their weaker kinsmen living in the ruins of one of their city. They then tamed the creatures they found there and made them their own.

Once employed as the personal secret police and guard of the Alacarn Royal House, the Wyvern Riders retreated back to their island after the Revolt of Malaxas. Most of their descendants living abroad were killed during that war or slain afterwards by a populous who hated any reminder of Alacarn's rule. The Wyvern Riders became bitter and vengeful, retreating into their own affairs and only occasionally venturing out to raid the coastline of Alacarn.

Despite the power of the Wyvern Riders and their mighty mounts, the islands are not tamed by any stretch of the imagination. Terrible monsters that are capable of snacking on even dragons are known to inhabit the region and the power of the clans to repulse them has grown weaker as time has passed. In spite of this, the Isles are home to a proud warrior people that believes itself to be the most honorable in Teth-Ammon.

**Industries:** The Wyvern Isles folk are a people that survive by growing food along the slopes of their mountains, raising birds for food, and mining the ore of the mountains they inhabit. Many have commented that the humans live lives closer to the Bathas and Valken that dwell on the islands than their own kinfolk.

There is a great deal that the Wyvern Isles folk cannot produce for themselves and must trade the fruits of their mining efforts to outsiders for a fraction of their value. The Wyvern Riders are not particularly happy about this arrangement and are agitating for war. The clan chiefs hope that by conquering the peoples of the surrounding isles, they can develop a more 'equitable' rate of exchange.

**Life and Society:** The Wyvern Isles folk can be appropriately called "Mountain people." They live alongside and inside the mountains that dot the land. The valleys are filled with creatures too dangerous to live amongst and not even the taming of Wyvern mounts has allowed the humanoid races of the isles to eliminate them all. Shepherding is one of the most common professions on the Isles.

Most Wyvern Isle dwellers live in the cities built onto the sides of the mountains or inside their caverns. They are an individualistic and rugged lot that has little regard for ceremony. All aristocrats are expected to be able to live up to their ancestors as warriors and any commoner who can prove himself as such will be elevated to the ranks of the nobility. Only a small few live to become Wyvern Riders and those that do are the most celebrated of the isle's folk.

The racism that is a given to Kinfolk and Far-Folk in other lands is largely absent on the Wyvern Isles. The Wyvern Isles folk believe that skill is a much more important determinant of whether one is a worthwhile being than species.

**Government and Politics:** The politics of the Wyvern Isles are not particularly complex. The individual Clan Lords of the Wyvern Isles tribes lead by mutual consent of their followers, generally agreeing to follow the greatest rider. There are often many competitions for young riders to show off their skill. Clan Lords, once selected, are expected to appoint a priestly advisor that will help them make wise decisions. In practice, the priests tend to handle the governing of the cities more than the Clan Lords.

The law in the Wyvern Isles is, appropriately enough, draconian. Criminals are allowed to make restitution for small crimes but those who cannot or commit serious offenses are released into the wild in order to be devoured by the monstrosities there. This has lead to the formation of several outlaw clans.

At present, there is no particular Clan Lord that is likely to unite the people of the islands.

**Power Groups**

**The Obsidian Circle:** A growing sect within the land. The Obsidian Circle is less interested in destroying civilization in the Wyvern Isles than it is for recruiting the riders to invade and conquer the lands of the continent.

It is here that Tiamate takes on a draconic visage and is referred to as the Leviathan. The Obsidian Circle has impressed many by living in the valleys and mastering the creatures below.

**Religion**

The Wyvern Isles folk worship dragons as opposed to the Great Twelve. These deities are mostly singular entities that are unique to each clan and may or may not have been based on a dragon that once lived in the area. While small cults exist to the Great Twelve and ancestor gods, most of the Wyvern Riders believe on in their draconic deities. Few have ever seen a real dragon other than their wyverns.

**Major Settlements**

**Seth (pop. 83,191):** Seth is the greatest city in the Wyvern Isles, built on the top of a plateau where there was ample room (by the island's standards) to expand. Now most of the mountain is covered in city and riddled with crevices that lead to underground communities. Better still, Seth is a coastal mountain that has a port town to the base of it.

Curiously, the Wyvern Riders only rarely visit Seth and seem to dislike the individuals who dwell there as having somehow become less than what they were. The populous from many clans intermingle in Seth and share their distinct cultures. Foreign merchants are not particularly liked but are abundant in the land, selling their wares for a far higher cost than they'd gather elsewhere.

**Important Sites**

**The Great Stone Dragon:** The Great Stone Dragon is a curious monument leftover from a long lost age. Resembling a two-hundred foot Terra'ssar, its creators are unknown. However, the giant stone monolith has an interior that links to a still active volcanic pool. There is some machinery inside, probably a relic of the Dragons, that indicate it might have once been a weapon. The clans have agreed to place a guard on the place drawn from all of their ranks and leave it alone.

**Adventuring in the Wyvern Isles**

The Wyvern Isles are one of the more fantastical realms in Teth-Ammon. Player characters will probably be amused by the novelty of individuals riding great flying dragon-like creatures. It is a potentially terrible danger for the whole of Alacarn however and the clans are possessed of their own provincial laws that may make excellent fodder for revenge dramas.

## Other Continents

### The Barrier Wastes

The Barrier Wastes are the northernmost continent on Teth-Ammon. Indeed, the continent goes right up to the planet's northern pole. The former seat of the last remnants of the Terra'ssar Empire, the Barrier Wastes were largely wiped clean of civilization by Tiamate's purges. Even after all this, several indestructible cities remain. These cities are still populated by *something* and are the source of numerous strange phenomenon. It might be that the Terra'ssar civilization continues in some respect.

Despite its name, the Barrier Wastes are hardly as desolate as might be assumed. In fact, the majority of the continent is not that dissimilar from Winterweir. Gigantic evergreen forests and huge lakes dot the land. While the winters are even harsher than in the top of Alacarn, life is perfectly livable for most of the continent. It is only to the northern half of the country that it becomes tundra and permafrost.

The Barrier Wastes are assumed to be sparsely populated wilderness with almost no real inhabitation by the people of Alacarn. Truthfully, several vast tribes of Far-Folk exist within the land next to an ever-expanding nation of Martok colonists that intend to unite the continent under the control of the Shadow King.

This is the 'nation' of Mathos, despite it being nothing more than a colonial extension of Martok. There is also the 'kingdom' of Flayn that is little more than a single city founded by ship-wrecked Winterweir knights. These two are dueling for control of the vast untapped resources of the Barrier Wastes but given that Flayn is utterly isolated, its doom seems pre-ordained.

If present trends continue, the civilization of Mathos will continue to grow unopposed and soon control a vast army of enslaved Trow. A army that they have converted to the Shadow King's worship. Combined with unchecked growth, Martok's colony will become one of the most powerful nations in the world and it will be able to sweep down upon Alacarn like a swarm of locusts. As the Shadow King notes: "All things come to those with time."

Aside from the Martok, some Bathas make pilgrimages up to the ruins of the Dragon Cities in hopes of looting portions of their lost technology. These expeditions are tremendously hazardous and are usually on the other side of the continent from the civilized coastal region controlled by Martok.

## The Great Crossing

The Great Crossing is unlike other regions listed in this section due to the fact that it is scarcely inhabited. The populous exists only in isolated villages that have very little contact with one another. The Great Crossing is a geological anomaly that seems to be the result of Draconic science that no one has yet really deduced the reasoning behind.

The Great Crossing is a narrow sea that exists between the continent of Alacarn and the Barrier Wastes. A freshwater sea, it is filled with all manner of fish and underwater wildfire. This includes numerous gigantic squid-like creatures and gigantic turtles. The locals live along the edges of the Great Crossing and frequently make offerings to the creatures as gods.

The most curious element of the Great Crossing is the frequent icings over that seem to have no rhyme or reason to the environment around them. Quite suddenly, without warning, entire portions of the ocean transform themselves into a massive ice sheet. It is even possible to cross over from Alacarn to the Barrier Wastes on foot during these times.

These drastic climate changes are one of the reasons that the Great Crossing has never become a popular passage for traders. While it is the easiest way to reach the other side of the continent, it is also something that offers no guarantee of actually succeeding.

The Great Crossing is, understandably, considered to be ill-omened by the people of Winterweir and the Pirate Isles folk. The only inhabitants around it are those whom have chosen to risk life away from the hand of Winterweir's monarchs by living on the edge of civilization.

Also, there is a substantial population of Sea Valken that live underneath the Great Crossing's surface. Bizarrely, the water underneath the surface never seems to freeze. There is a thriving civilization underneath the waves that no one has been able to take an accurate census of.

The Great Crossing is currently the study of both the Grand Arcanum and the Pretax. Both believe that the place holds substantial information regarding the controlling of weather. Certain parties in Winterweir worry that the Great Crossing's freezing over might be stabilized by individuals in the Barrier Wastes who want to invade.

| The Divine Covenant (Saiya) | |
|---|---|
| **Capitol** | Herui |
| **Population** | 332,828,188 (60% Human, 20% Kinfolk, 20% Far Folk) |
| **Exports** | Ships, Mercenaries, Metalwork, Trade Goods |
| **Imports** | Luxury Items, Slaves |

The Divine Covenant is only dimly known by the majority of Alacarn's people. While it has sent its ambassadors to the various royal courts, very few people can actually believe the stories that come out of their lips. Those few traders that head down to the Divine Covenant's ports are kept isolated from the rest of the nation as if carrying some sort of disease. Instead, they are restricted to special enclaves set up from them and dealt with only through intermediaries.

This is because the truth of the nation is too horrible to even contemplate. The Divine Covenant is a religious tyranny controlled by an elite oligarchy formed of mages and fanatics. Everyone in its auspices is kept under constant surveilance. Worse, the number of executions performed every year for relatively trivial offenses is staggering.

**History:** The Divine Covenant is composed of what was once more than a dozen independent nations that covered a continent even larger than Alacarn. When the First Martyr was killed, his followers seized the port-city of Herui. They proceeded to make it the capital of their burgeoning theocracy.

At that time, the continent was filled with massive Far Folk Empires and powerful Wizard Kingdoms that ruled over the lands with an iron fist. Ironically, many other theocracies existed at the time. They were mostly devoted to bloody deities that demanded frequent human sacrifices.

The Divine Covenant seemed unlikely to survive its early years. However, a series of fortuitous strokes of good luck managed to prevent it from being destroyed by its more powerful neighbors. Defections from the wizard kingdoms around them gave the Divine Covenant a much needed boost in mystical power. With the aid of assassins and heroes, the Divine Covenant overthrew several of the Wizard Kings and was welcomed by the populous as liberators.

The Divine Covenant grew increasingly more oppressive as time passed. Under Supreme Steward Virtue VI, he declared that Far-Folk did not have souls and began the Purification Wars. Several Far-Folk kingdoms were totally destroyed and their property seized. While the Divine Covenant would eventually soften its stance towards nonhumans, the hatred that the populous would feel towards them would never entirely go away.

The most telling of the Divine Covenant's conflict would occur when the Shadow King lead an army under Malaxas that proceeded to conquer most of Saiya. Known as the War of Dead Men Rising, it would be a nightmare that left much of the South Lands in waste. The War of Dead Men Rising unexpectedly ended less than fifty years ago. Seemingly all of the Shadow King's forces departed and allowed the Divine Covenant to conquer the remainder of the nation.

The Divine Covenant has become ever more radical with its 'triumph.' Determined that the nation is filled with spies for the Shadow King, it is already preparing for an invasion of Alacarn in order to convert that continent to the "One True Faith."

**Industries:** The Divine Covenant is an entire continent and has an entire breadth of industries. The majority of its major cities are located on the coast, however, as the jungles and interior of the continent is largely impenetrable. Because of this, the majority of the Divine Covenant's industries are devoted to the sea. Fishing is one of the most common trades for a Freeborn to take.

The Divine Covenant has a large number of mines that are operated by the vast host of slaves they own. They purchase these slaves from the free tribes that exist outside the theocracy's influence. These mines are mostly leftover from the Shadow King's empire but are ample sources of gold, iron, silver, and other substances.

**Life and Society:** The Freeborn of the Divine Covenant live a life not terribly different from the people of Alacarn. The difference is that the Supreme Throne's clergy (referred to by locals as 'The Faith') has almost absolute power over their lives. They are expected to grovel when one passes by and attend the mandatory services that are held every week.

Sexual taboos are punished severely. Even consensual adultery is punished by death for both partners. Promiscuity and harlotry still occurs, one really can't ever get rid of it, but it is substantially more clandestine even in areas where the Supreme Throne's clergy have better things to do than investigate vice parlors.

Other capital crimes in the Divine Covenant include; blasphemy, striking a priest, or worshiping gods other than the Supreme Throne. Theft and other crimes against property are punished by having a hand chopped off. Priests often 'commute' sentences to eternal slavery.

The Faith is not particularly loved in the Divine Covenant but it is all that most people know. The only optrion for escaping it is attempting to flee into the wilderness. Most would rather die than try and take their chances with the Far-Folk whom still survive in this region. Far-Folk who exist in the Divine Covenant are considered to automatically be slaves of humans and innately inferior. Kinfolk are subject to prejudice and bias, even if they are still allowed some rights.

**Government and Politics:** The Supreme Throne's clergy holds all positions of prominence in the land. Hereditary aristocracy does not exist nor are commoners

ever ennobled. Instead, a large number of children are brought in every year to fill the ranks of the theocracy as eunuchs and half-women. Faithful, or simply ambitious, citizens can join the mercenary arm of the Church or become paid religiously sworn officials as 'Servitors.'

Wealthy families do exist in the Divine Covenant but they exist only at the mercy of the Faith. Instead, these Merchant Lords do their best to offer up ample bribes, flattery, and gifts ever year in order to maintain the good will of the clergy. While the Supreme Throne's clergy are the ruling class, few have any objections to increasing the size of their stipend.

Competition for high ranking positions is extremely high. Blackmail, bribery, frame-ups, kidnapping, and murder are all methods used in order to free up space for promotion.

**Power Groups**

**The Crimson Oath:** The Crimson Oath is one of the most powerful bodies within the continent. In addition to its infiltration of the clergy's upper ranks, the Crimson Oath is growing steadily in numbers amongst the common people.

Where once the Shadow King was hated and feared as a monstrous evil, the consistent depredations of the Divine Covenant are starting to make him be remembered more fondly. The Throne of Purity is more interested in rooting out political treason than genuinely rooting out the faith's dissidents.

The Crimson Oath's leader in Saiya is the corrupt Throme Master of Miracles, Inowyn (Female Human Heroic). She has used dark magic to restore her ability to feel sexual pleasure. Tragically, she leads many misguided young men and women who want reform and do not realize what sort of a monster leads their organization.

**The Divine Covenant:** The Divine Covenant is, unsurprisingly, the most powerful body within the name that bears its name. It is from Saiya that the vast majority of its agents come and they all bear an unshakable loyalty to their home land. In truth, the majority of agents in other lands are actually from the Throne of Purity.

The Throne of Purity wields a disproportionate amount of influence in the Divine Covenant and is the party currently agitating for war against Alacarn. The leader of the Divine Covenant is ostensibly Supreme Steward Chastity VIII (Female Human Seasoned) but it is actually Throne Master Kraster (Male Human Heroic) whom is currently leading the country. Throne Master Kraster believes that his position as a 'mere' Throne Master allows him all the influence of being the Supreme Steward without being bogged down in petty bureaucracy.

**The Obsidian Circle:** Devotees of Tiamate long ago made their way down to the continent of Saiya and converted many of the local Far-Folk to the Obsidian Queen's worship. This faith has only become more popular as the Divine Order has driven most of the remaining Far Folk into uncivilized wilderness. The idea of driving the humans out of their cities and then destroying all of their accomplishments is an appealing prospect.

The Obsidian Circle holds dominion over nearly half the tribes in Saiya and are only growing in rank. They mostly limit their current tactics to banditry and raids on small villages that the Divine Order could not care less about yet allows the Tiamate worshipers to solidify their position as the opposition.

Its current leader, Sytomax (Male Slythin Veteran), is twice the size of a normal member of his race. Sytomax is not content with such ideas. Soon he will call a massive war band and strike at the farms and other vital support networks of the Divine Order. He is uninterested in conquest and instead desires genocide.

**The Watchmen:** The Watchmen's infiltration of the nation is still in its infancy. However, they have already made contact with several tiny resistance groups. They are mostly in an information gathering stage but their disgust with the Faith is clear. The Watchmen hope to eventually trigger a rebellion from within that, if it cannot replace the Faith, will at least weaken its stranglehold over the continent.

**Religion**

The Divine Covenant takes its name from the Faith devoted to the Supreme Throne. Religion is the chief driving motivation in the country and affects all walks of life. All other considerations take a secondary place be

they economy or military strategy. Indeed, all other religions are illegal in the Divine Covenant and punishable by death.

The second largest religion in the Divine Covenant is that of the Crimson Oath. The Shadow King's agents deliberately allowed the Divine Covenant to take over the continent. They have been infiltrating the Faith's ranks from the beginning. Whether agents use magic to disguise themselves or are corrupted from the clergy, there's a tremendous number of secret Crimson Oath operatives inside the church's ranks. They continue to pressure the faith for war against Alacarn while eliminating true believers under false charges.

A small number of Far-Folk tribes worship animal gods and shamanistic spirits in the jungles outside of the Divine Covenant's reach.

**Major Settlements**

**Feanthor (pop. 24,321 formerly 372,721):** The former capital of the Shadow King's empire is at the center of of a hundred-mile blackened wasteland of swamp and polluted bog. Called 'The Iron City', it is ostensibly abandoned but filled with Trow and Slythin tribes that await their master's return. The desiccated husks of once grand factories lie in ruins alongside blackened ruins that were once mansions for his lieutenants.

The Shadow King's Tower at the center of the center of the city is untouched after all this time. Few individuals are willing to approach it. Even the Faith believes it is too dangerous despite the tempting prospect of esoteric magical lore and hidden wealth. Disturbingly, strange noises and lights come from it at odd times.

**Herui (pop. 1,632,922)** is the capital of the Divine Covenant and one of the largest cities in the world with over a million and a half inhabitants. The center of the Faith, the Supreme Steward rules the entirety of the theocracy from this city. Countless pilgrims visit every year and others hoping to gain favor with the clergy.

It is a clean and serious city with Thrones of Purity wandering the streets at all times and keeping it clear of blasphemy. The districts cordoned off for foreign traders have become remarkably popular with native inhabitants who want to escape the Faith's ever vigilant eyes and have some fun. A thriving Shadow Network trade has begun in illicit goods, especially those that can be sold to those members of the clergy that can afford them.

The majority of foreign ships that dock at Herui are slavers. The Faith pays an extremely high price for them and many pirates have begun redoubling their efforts thanks to the inexhaustible demand for flesh that the Divine Order displays.

**Important Sites**

**The Lost City of Galzereth:** An ancient city once belonging to a race of Half-Valken and Half-Celestials. It supposedly wiped away the memory of its location from every being on Teth-Ammon before eradicating the Divine Order army that had come to destroy it. Since then, the jungle has buried its location and no one has any idea how to reach it. Quite a few have since come to believe the city is a myth. Galzereth is reputed to be a 'City of Silver' with unimaginable magic at its disposal.

**Pretax Academy:** Uninterested in anything but study, the Academy has been allowed a campus here and its members have limited access to the nation. The Pretax Academy has, unsurprisingly, become a nest of spies. The genuine scholars are more interested in exploring the jungle ruins than studying the local faith though.

**The Virtue Camps:** The Virtue Camps are one of the darker aspects of the Divine Covenant's rule. Dissenters are sent to these labor camps where they are worked to death trying to hack apart the jungle and build new farms or mine more ore for the Faith. Brainwashing is part of the treatment that prisoners undergo in order to prepare their souls for their final resting place. The most fanatical converts are placed in charge of keeping other prisoners from escaping.

**Adventuring in the Divine Covenant**

The Divine Covenant is an extremely difficult place to get into. While one can get into the enclaves easily enough, the actual country requires one to speak the language and passing yourself off as a local. Another option is to be deliberately invited by the Faith for some purpose. Once this is accomplished, the Divine Covenant opens up as a wonderful source for revolutionary and spy adventures. The Divine Covenant is a danger to Alacarn

and its own people, almost certainly deserving to be overthrown.

Finally, the ruins and jungle of Saiya are ready for pulp adventures. There, the players can compete against hostile tribes and those who might exploit the secrets of the distant past.

## Unexplored Territory

There are five more continents on Teth-Ammon than those in the Western Hemisphere. Rather than give a vague description about them, they are left to the development of the Game Master. Provided that some way could be found to either placate the sea creatures or destroy them, new regions could open up to exploration and perhaps conquest.

There is no telling what lays in the other landmasses of the world.

## New Dimensions

The borders between universes are particularly weak on Teth-Ammon due to the damaging experiments with reality that the Terra'ssar performed long ago. These dimensions are not the Heavens and Hells that most mortals think of when they think of other realities. Instead, they are weird and terrifying universes that contain seemingly unfathomable possibilities.

These are five of the most well documented dimensions. They are but a fraction of the true number.

## The Dreamlands

The Dreamlands are a peculiar realm that was created by the collected psychic energies of Teth-Ammon and other worlds with a capacity for sorcery. The unconscious thoughts and ideas of those with even the least amount of talent are gathered here and take form from the raw energies that permeate the place. Visitors to the Dreamlands must adjust to the fact that it is a place that alters and morphs itself according to the perceptions of the viewer. There is no distance or space in the world. Instead, everything is measured in memory and metaphor.

Most creations in the Dreamland only last for a few moments before shifting back into the seas of magic that form the reality. However, those things that are sincerely believed in or dwell in the darker corner of one's mind tend to take on a life of their own. These are the Aeons and the Nocturnals. Describing their physical properties is fruitless given they are each uniquely the product of the mind that created them.

The Dreamlands hold a peculiar attractiveness for magic users as they are a place where reality is ridiculously easy to mold. Any magic-user can use his own arcane skill to use any Power untrained. Non-Magicians can be trained y locals in Dream Manipulation as well. Many quickly become enamored of the power to be found in the place. Quite a number of mages, called Solipsists by their peers, abandon reality completely dwell in their own private kingdoms. Where they reign as gods over an illusionary world.

The Dreamlands, despite its appeal to those cursed with unusual amounts of hubris, is inhabited by only a few mortal beings. In truth, it is ridiculously hostile to most individuals. In a reality where the laws of casualty and physics are merely suggestions, the kind of unfathomably horrible creatures that exist are indescribable. Whatever dreams exist most powerfully in this world, nightmares seem to be a particularly powerful result.

### Notable Locations

**The City of Tales:** A corroded and bizarre community inhabited by the forgotten and half-remembered stories of one's youth. The cynicism of adulthood mixed with the dark nature of most of these stories has tainted many of these spirits. It is one of the few reasonably stable pockets in the Dreamlands and a place for trade between the many worlds within.

**The Court of the Gods:** is where the collected sum of all humanity's beliefs in the Great Twelve have created a perfect replication of them. Their power is only slightly less than that typically ascribed to them and they can manipulate magic themselves.

**The Vault of Kaalon:** is another realm that many seek with some desiring to speak to the psychic impressions of their dead loved ones. Their afterlives are determined less by justice than by their own beliefs.

**The Eternal Crags of Horror:** are a mountain range where the self-styled Lord of Horrors (Sex Indeterminate, Species Indeterminate, Legendary) has created a vast realm where he snatches psychic impressions from sleeping infants and the elderly to torment forever.

## The Far Chaos

The Far Chaos is where the laws of physical reality begin to break down. Even more so than the Dreamlands, which are still governed by mortal consciousness and thought, the Far Chaos exists independently of the normal universe's rules. This is the cosmos where the Undying Ones and their masters dwell.

Mortals who visit the Far Chaos must specially customize their spells to transform themselves into a mental presence rather than visit physically. Normal physical life would be utterly eradicated by gravity that could crush galaxies or heat that equals the surface of the sun.

Accordingly; all the attributes of Strength, Agility, and Vigor are replaced by Smarts, Spirit, and the average between Smarts and Spirit respectively. Unfortunately, the creatures who dwell in this universe are ones that exist on multiple realities and can strike these mental presences as if they were regular flesh and blood.

The realm is terrifying to look upon. It often drives individuals who spend too much time in its presence utterly insane. Few mortals can cope with the kind of strange colors and liquid creation that seems to exist in multiple possibilities. If there are any rules to the place, they are subject to the whims of the inhabitants

No being would journey to the Far Chaos if not for the abundant pools of raw magic that exist in this reality. Sorcerous devices crafted from the substances of the Far Chaos are capable of doing unfathomably horrible things. The origins of undead and terrifying mutations in Teth-Ammon is from just small particles of the reality interacting with the physical world. The truly vile harness this part of the Far Chaos for these sorts of purposes.

A few brave (or suicidally deranged) magi attempt to make bargains with the Undying Ones or at least fragments of their consciousness. While most ignore them, some lesser spirits are eager to explore or conquer the physical reality. These creatures become the source of widespread disaster and transformation when they are brought back to Teth-Ammon.

### Notable Locations

**The Engine of Horrors:** A cataclysmic device that is the size of a small country and clearly invented by a civilization far greater than the Terra'ssar, the Engine of Horrors cycles the energies of the Far Chaos for its own use. Some speculate that it is prolonging the physical life of the normal universe while others believe it might be bringing it closer to its end. The Engine of Horrors is guarded by mutated amalgamations of mortals that somehow have had their psychic presences fused together.

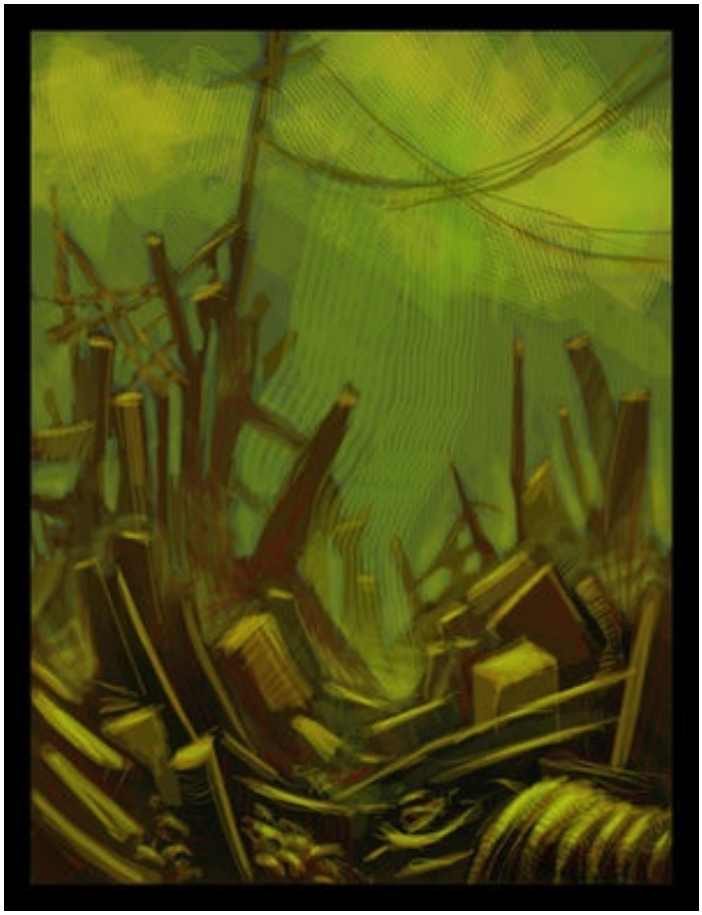
**The Plateau of the Never-Sleepers:** A place inhabited by eyeless and faceless cultists that have projected their consciousnesses firmly into the Far Chaos. The Never-Sleepers believe they have achieved ultimate enlightenment and have built a city from their nightmares given life. Utterly insane, the Never-Sleepers have all grown to Archmage levels of power and desire to bring their 'gift' of madness to the rest of the mortal cosmos.

## The Silver Eternity

The Silver Eternity is considered to be paradise by some while others considering a stifling Hell that is all the more insidious because some individuals would willingly embrace it. It is the world inhabited by the Celestials and those that they have brought up to be their eternal servants from various mortals. These beings are granted immortality at the price of eternal devotion.

The Silver Eternity is a realm of pure order. The beautiful alien cities of silver-ish material are beyond anything that mortal achievement could match but also imposing in their rigid nature. Everything seems to have been created according to a singular vision and it fills most visitors with a sort of vague unease. Even the plants grow along perfectly designed patterns. A sense of solemnity and purpose coats everything so that it is almost unearthly quiet at all times.

The will of the Celestials exerts a powerful subconscious field across the place that tames the passions of all individuals who dwell within it. There is no crime or disorder and attempts to disturb the public peace require a Spirit Check. Most individuals abandon themselves to



the euphoria of the Celestials presence and become utterly different from regular humans. This is not an active attempt at brainwashing by the Celestials but the natural result of their powerful consciousnesses overriding those of weaker mindsets.

The Silver Eternity has a tremendous population of Half-Celestials, perhaps compromising up to half of the population. They are alone in the mortals who maintain a certain level of free will and the most frequent source of new innovations and ideas. They are also the most ambitious. Many have willingly fled the Silver Eternity to use their advanced knowledge and skill to set themselves up as gods. Others choose service in the physical world out of ideology. Most who leave the Silver Eternity tend to be profoundly arrogant about their innate superiority.

The technology of the Silver Eternity is roughly equal to the Dragons of Old and capable of performing miracles that leave even great wizards in utter awe.

**Notable Locations**

**The Solaris:** A gigantic ball of golden flame that exists at the heart of the Silver Eternity. It is the collected knowledge and psychic energy of all Celestials and their descendants. Rather than trust themselves with their own rule, the Celestials have abandoned themselves to the infinite wisdom of the Solaris in return. It is said that the arcane entities' plans for the cosmos stretch into the millions of years. Its ultimate ends are unknown and it has destroyed entire worlds for the sake of its goals.

**Tal'Arvar:** The Crystalline City of Tal'Arvar is an impossibly gorgeous realm that is surrounded by oceans of liquid star metal. Tal'Arvar is the gate city to the Silver Eternity and where most outsiders are brought or automatically shunted if they attempted to reach the realm by magic. Tal'Arvar is also where the many attacks by the Netherdeep are fended off. It is one of the few realms where the Half-Celestials of the Silver Eternity can also interact with mortals who yet maintain their own wills.

## The Netherdeep

The Netherdeep is where the figure of Malaxas was banished with the majority of his followers. Most of them were destroyed in the cataclysmic confusion of the dimension's unfamiliar rules. The Immaculate Doom's god managed to stabilize the reality for his surviving servants by spreading his existence across the dimension. Unfortunately, for Malaxas, this meant that he was now imprisoned in the heart of the Hell-like reality.

The Netherdeep is, frankly put, like something out of a nightmare. Endless labyrinths exist where mortals are placed in cells that contain their darkest fears. Great cathedrals exist made of pure flesh and bone that are home for the worship of transformation. Vast industrial wastelands produce hordes of surreal weaponry that is distributed to wars being waged across a thousand worlds. Oceans of roaring fire dot the coast. There, terrible Chaos Ships sail with crews of Mutates and Fallen Celestial captains.

Gruesome tortures are carried out in this place. Torments that slowly mutate captured prisoners into willing servants of Malaxas. Pleasures both glorious and obscene are freely available from the beautiful yet terrifying Fallen Celestials that fill the place. For the enlightened of the Immaculate Doom, it is paradise. They envision that the

entire cosmos will someday become its physical and spiritual match.

The Netherdeep is the center for Malaxas' war on the rest of creation. It is here that his followers experiment with the basic substances of life and reality in order to discover ever greater limits of power and pleasure. The chaos and destruction that the Netherdeep dwellers inflict is done not out of hatred but out of love.

They believe by laying waste to the old and forcing mortals to adapt, the change results in something stronger and better. Other realms, they totally obliterate and simply fill with their own horrible creations or leave barren wastelands. It is impossible to tell what Malaxas' forces will do in any given situation.

Every day spent in the Netherdeep requires a Horror Test. In some areas, just visiting requires a Madness Test.

**Notable Locations**

**The Brothel of Unearthly Delights:** The Brothel of Unearthly delights is a vast citadel where the limits of human ecstasy and torture are explored. It is tended by shape-shifters who use their psychic powers to appear as

relaxing figures to visitors. They slowly lead their 'guests' through a series of temptations meant to compel their willing obedience. They are then subjected to a series of addictive substances meant to break down their resistance. Those who willingly give in are eventually mutated into nightmarish parodies of human beings that embody their excesses. Those who resist are forcibly given their "heart's desire." Such as a great warrior being surgically altered to become an unstoppable killing machine or a fading beauty gaining the ability to steal the features of others.

**The Forest of Smoke and Oil:** The Forest of Smoke and Oil is a vast factory district. Here lobotomized drones labor endlessly alongside those who willingly serve. This is in exchange for the meager favors that their masters dole out for good behavior. It is clear to alchemists who study the demented arcane technologies that none of their labor is actually necessary. The machines merely exist to collect the workers' emotions.

Each of the factories is impossibly huge, made of jagged metal, and places that seem to belch fire for no reason. Gigantic mutated rats and other vermin inhabit the place along with rebellious mutants. The layout of the rusted and twisted hallways is maze-like, with almost all of them merely leading to further levels of human misery.

It is here that terrifying devices of magic and science are created, each unique and beautiful in the eyes of the Immaculate Doom.

**Malaxas:** Malaxas' form lies at the exact center of the Netherdeep. It is difficult to say what his true form resembles now as it has become bloated and twisted with his consciousness' scattering. Many fools throw their lives away yearly to try and slay the godlike entity. If it were ever destroyed, then either a new Crimson King would take his place or the entire realm would collapse.

## The Other Realm

The Other Realm has often been accused of being little more than a perverse reflection of Teth-Ammon. In truth, this is not entirely inaccurate. The Other Realm is an idealized version of Teth-Ammon created by the descendants of the Obsidian Empire. Over time, their alien and jaded consciousness has made the realm ever more disturbing and perilous to mortal visitors.

The Other Realm is best described as a hyper-realized version of the regular world. Forests are gigantic and primordial with trees that come to life to eliminate intruders. Lakes come alive and become beautiful women or men. Nights are deeper and more vibrant with stars seemingly bleeding like wounds in the sky. Animals are, as often as not, gigantic and intelligent. Furthermore, the weather makes no rational sense. Icy glacier covered kingdoms sit next to temperate grasslords.

The Fae Lords rule over the Other Realm in a manner that would make the Great Houses of Turlon envious. Their utter disregard for anything aside from themselves is not only obvious but absolute. They are incapable of feeling anything for any other being than themselves. Those who are attracted to their beauty or etherealness will be treated as pets at best or causally eradicated as one might wipe away smoke. If the Fae Lords were once like mortals, it no longer seems to be the case in any way but appearance.

The Fae Commoners are little better. Creatures of passion and whimsy, they do not seem to have limits on their behavior nor any morality other than naked indulgence. A horde of blood crazed murderers may enter a village, slaughter everything and devour the corpses, before moving on. Yet, the victims themselves would feel nothing for their comrades and resume their pleasures almost as soon as their magic had repaired the damage.

Humans are often brought as slaves to the Other Realm and frequently transformed into the varying creatures that inhabit it. Few manage to survive in the Other Realm for very long without becoming totally broken emotionally or mentally. Those that do are often the first to become warped into Fae themselves.

### Notable Locations

**The Evergreen:** A forest filled with animated and living trees that links to every forest on Teth-Ammon if you know the right way to navigate. The Evergreen is actually populated by countless slaves that have managed to escape and form their own crude kingsom. Sadly, some twisted enchantment prevents them from accessing the paths that would allow them to return home. The Fae frequently lead vast hosts of monsters on hunting expeditions through this region.

**The Fire Caves of the One-Eyed Lord:** A festering swamp of crystal plants that emerge from molten rivers. The Fire Caves are inhabited by hundreds of Bathas transformed into beings of rock. The One-Eyed Lord has them constantly producing ever greater works of beauty that are then promptly destroyed for not being perfect enough. Powerful magic can be bartered here but it is just as often that the Fairy King might destroy them or transform them into raw materials for his work.

**The Ice Palace of the Snow Queen:** A frozen land where an entire human kingdom was brought and then eternally preserved. Terrifyingly, the humans are still conscious in their eternal imprisonment. The entire realm is overwhelmed with creatures of living ice ice and faeries that serve the Snow Queen. She has an obsession with human art and frequently sends her minions to steal it, be it painting or person.

# Bestiary of Winterweir

## New Monstrous Abilities

This chapter discusses the various types of monsters and creatures that will be found in the *Winterweir* setting.

### God

*Winterweir* is different from other games in that some things are really beyond mortal comprehension and understanding. A select number of beings in the *Winterweir* universe qualify for the 'God' descriptor. God characters have the rank of X. This means that they are possessed of the ability to work effectively any change that they want within the limits of the opposition by other beings with the X rank.

They are invulnerable to effectively anything that the player characters might do to them. While they might not be omnipotent or omniscient, they are close enough for the purposes of the game that opposition by humans is pointless. At least, through standard means.

This being a game of heroism, it is possible to defeat characters with the rank of X despite what Lovecraftian ethics might inform a character. They must be defeated through purely Deus Ex Machina or Maguffin methods.

## Bestiary of Winterweir

### Aristocrat

*"Commoners and rats are almost identical. The only difference is that Commoners can be made to pay taxes."*

Aristocrats are the descendants of Alacarn and her House's myriad off-shoots. They take a ridiculous amount of pride in this state despite the fact that most of them are related only through the most distant of alliances. Ennobled Commoners often compensate for their lesser pedigree by attempting to ape the courtly behavior that they believe comes naturally to the true nobility.

| Example: Aristocrat | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility d6, Smarts D8, Spirit d6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D4, Guts D6, Knowledge (Civics) D8, Notice D8, Persuasion D8, Riding D6 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Charismatic |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Equipment** | Fop's Clothing, Rapier (D6+d4, +1 Parry |

### Assassin

*"Nothing personal, bloke. Just business."*

The art of killing is a well sought after one in Teth-Ammon. Assassins are a common tool of state-craft and the streets. In a society as cruel as the one in Alacarn, few individuals balk at using murder to achieve their aims. Many assassins work in teams, especially the less skilled ones, to better facilitate taking down especially strong or well guarded targets.

Master Assassins are a different breed altogether from their common kindred. Sometimes they are the favored servants of a Guild or they are solo operatives who have trained themselves to an absurd degree. All Death Whisperers must reach this level before they are accepted as full members of the order. Most Master Assassins use

trickery and cunning to engage their opponents or are simply so skilled they can engage opponents directly.

| Example: Assassin | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D10, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D6, Knowledge (Local) D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D8, Riding D6, Stealth D8, Shooting D6, Streetwise D8, Throwing D6 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Alertness, Assassin, Dodge, First Strike, Steady Hands |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Sneak Attack: An assassin who gets the drop on an enemy may inflict an extra D6 of damage on an opponent. |
| **Equipment** | Crossbow (2d6), Dagger (D6+D4), Disguise |

| Example: Master Assassin | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D12, Smarts D8, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Climbing D8, Fighting D12, Guts D10, Intimidation d8, Notice D10, Riding D8, Shooting D8, Stealth D12, Streetwise D8, Throwing D10 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 10 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Acrobat, Alertness, Assassin, Block, Dodge, First Strike, Level Headed, No Mercy, Quick Draw, Steady Hands |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Sneak Attack: An assassin who gets the drop on an enemy may inflict an extra D6 of damage on an opponent. |
| **Equipment** | Crossbow (2d6), Dagger (D6+D4), Disguise |

## Barbarian

*"ANCESTORS! GUIDE MY HAMMER!"*

There are countless tribes outside of 'civilization.' Most of them are Far-Folk who are not able to dwell in human communities but many tribes of 'Wild' humans exist. Wild Human tribes to be insular but not necessarily hostile to civilized humanity. The exception is when civilized folk encroach on their territory or a particularly charismatic leader decided to form an army. Far Folk Tribes and Humans are far more hostile as the two sides rarely see eye to eye on anything. The best that any can hope for between them is uneasy peace.

| Barbarian | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D4, Spirit D6, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D8, Intimidation D6, Notice D4, Stealth D6, Survival D6, Throwing D8 |
| **Charisma** | -2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 7 |
| **Edges** | Combat Reflexes |
| **Hindrances** | All Thumbs, Mean |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Furs, Helmet, Warhammer (D10+D6) |

## Bathas

*"I'll let this one go for 500 silver pieces. Too much? Tsk. How about you trade me a look at that spell book of yours?"*

The Bathas are the former slave lords of the Terra'ssar and still make use of expansive amounts of forced labor. A nocturnal and subterranean race by preference, the Bathas have expanded well beyond their home territories in the interests of knowledge. They are the greatest alchemists and sages on Alacarn. Bathas have a reputation as a cynical and gruff race due to their distaste for human concepts of honor and religion. Bathas can usually be found in any location that requires skilled craftsmen or thinkers.

| Bathas | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D8, Knowledge (Any Trade) D8, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Stealth D6, Throwing D8 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 5 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 8 |
| **Edges** | Combat Reflexes, Nerves of Steel, Sweep |
| **Hindrances** | Greedy (Minor), Stubborn |
| **Special Abilities** | • Thermal Vision: Can see in the dark without penalty.<br>• Light Blindness: -1 in Bright Light without fogged goggles. |
| **Equipment** | Battle Ax (D8+D8), Chain Mail (+2), Crossbow (2d6), Fogged Goggles, Medium Shield (+1, parry) |

## Celestial

*"Be not afraid, mortal."*

Celestials are the descendants of human beings that learned to transcend their physical form and become living incarnations of psychic energy. This transformation has not been without its price. As they are no longer motivated by biological influenced ideas like anger or romance, Celestials come off as distant and aloof to human beings. Their concerns are loftier than those of the flesh (though a substantive number take on physical form to enjoy them).

Celestials desire mortal races to transcend their physical states and also to work against the Netherdeep that is their dire enemy. Otherwise, they care little for the doings of lesser beings and mostly focus on gaining greater esoteric understanding of creation. Celestials, in general, despise disorder and have a preference for those who live by rigid codes.

Celestials exist as beings of light but often assume the appearance of winged humanoids.

| Celestial | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D10, Smarts D10, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D10, Guts D10, Healing D10, Intimidation D10, Knowledge (Religion) D10, Notice D10, Persuasion D10, Psionics D10 |
| **Charisma** | +4 |
| **Pace** | 6", 12" (Flight) |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | Combat Reflexes, Connections (Silver Eternity), Immortal, Improved Level Headed, Improved Sweep, Very Attractive |
| **Hindrances** | Code of Honor |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Psionics): Celestials have 1d10 Powers and 30 Ether Points to use them.<br>• Ethereal: Celestials can become Intangible at will.<br>• Flight: Celestials are capable of flying at will.<br>• Invisible: Celestials can become unseen at will.<br>• Vulnerability: Celestials suffer an additional D6 damage from Daemon steel and Unholy weapons. |
| **Equipment** | Crysteel Armor (+3), Crysteel Sword (D10+D10) |

## Celestial, Fallen

*"Abandon yourself to the ecstasy of the flesh."*

Despite the Celestials being ostensibly removed from the rest of the world, they are actually far from it. In truth, many crave the sensations that humans take for granted and come to let desire for them overwhelm them. After a certain period of displaying these behaviors, these Celestials are banished from the Silver Eternity and forced out onto the world. Most end up being consumed by their feelings and are eventually lured to Malaxas' service in the Netherdeep. Once corrupted by Malaxas, Fallen Celestials become truly nightmarish perversions of their original selves.

Newly Fallen Celestials are identical to normal Celestials but those who serve the Netherdeep often decorate their bodies in piercing, tattoos, and even mutilate their features as part of their desire to experiment more sensation. Some grow quite hideous.

| Celestial, Fallen | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D10, Smarts D10, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D10, Guts D10, Intimidation D12, Knowledge (Pleasure) D10, Knowledge (Torture) D10, Notice D10, Persuasion D12, Psionics D10 |
| **Charisma** | +4 |
| **Pace** | 6" 12" (Flight) |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | Combat Reflexes, Connections (Netherdeep), Immortal, Improved Level Headed, Improved Sweep, Seductive, Very Attractive |
| **Hindrances** | Insane, Habit (Major), Power Mad |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Psionics): Fallen Celestials have 1d10 Powers and 30 Ether Points to use them.<br>• Ethereal: Fallen Celestials can become Intangible at will.<br>• Flight: Fallen Celestials are capable of flying at will.<br>• Invisible: Fallen Celestials can become unseen at will.<br>• Vulnerability: Fallen Celestials suffer an additional D6 damage from Crysteel and Holy weapons. |
| **Equipment** | Daemon steel Armor (+4), Daemon steel Sword (D10+D10), Leather robes, Torture implements |

## Celestial, Half

*"The blood of the gods runs through my veins. Yet, it is my wrath you will feel for insulting me!"*

Half-Celestials are the product of Celestials attempting to influence the events of Teth-Ammon by creating champions who will be pre-destined to affect Causality. A rare few are the products of love or trysts but most are the result of deliberate attempts to create people at times to disrupt or alter the course of nations. Many more, ironically, are created by Greater Divinities who rarely do anything other than for lust. Why they are functionally identical to the children of Celestials is a mystery to even the gods.

The largest population of Half-Celestials exists in the Silver Eternity. These serve as the armies of the Celestials and their servants. Many desire to eventually learn the secrets of transcending into Celestials themselves. If such has ever happened, it is a well guarded secret.

| Celestial, Half | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D10, Smarts D6, Spirit D10, Strength D8, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts, D10, Healing D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D8, Persuasion D10, Riding D8 |
| **Charisma** | +4 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 8 |
| **Edges** | Attractive, Charismatic, Command |
| **Hindrances** | Code of Honor |
| **Special Abilities** | • Vulnerability: Half-Celestials take an extra point of damage from Daemon Steel and Unholy weapons. |
| **Equipment** | Crysteel Blade (D8 + D10 damage), Leather Armor (+1) |

## Commoner

*"I saw nothing! Don't hurt me!"*

Commoners share some distinguishing qualities across Winterweir. Specifically, the vast majority of them are smart enough to not try and get themselves involved in anything but their own concerns. The wars that nobles wage to increase their territory is largely a matter of switching overlords and only recently has nationalism taken root. Most are relatively decent individuals but few are willing to risk their necks for anything beyond their own families and homes.

| Commoner | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Knowledge (One Trade) D6, Notice D6, Persuasion D4 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | +0 |
| **Parry** | 2 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Tools of their trade |

## Demon, Demon Lord

*"Bow down and offer me your soul. Otherwise, I will torture you forever. Ah, glad that you are able to appreciate simplicity in one's dealings."*

Made from the earliest followers of Malaxas amongst the Lilin, the Demon Lords are the most powerful beings in the Netherdeep with the exception of a few Fallen Celestials. The Demon Lords rule as petty kings in the Hell dimension and command vast infernal hosts. The Demon Lords often give themselves grandiose titles like "The Lord of Flame and Sorrow" or "The Master of Torments."

In honest truth, Demon Lords are not as powerful as they think they are. While they often compare themselves to the gods, they are nowhere near their power level. Some were even slain by great heroes during the war against Malaxas. They are, ultimately, petty and vain beings that merely serve a purpose as the managers of the Fallen One's kingdom.

| Demon, Demon Lord | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D10, Smarts D12, Spirit D12, Strength D12+2, Vigor D12 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D12, Intimidate D12, Knowledge (Arcane) D10, Knowledge (Religion) D10, Knowledge (Tactics) D10, Persuasion D12, Spell-casting D10, Taunt D10, Throwing D8 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 8", 12" (Flight) |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 12 |
| **Edges** | Charismatic, Connections (Netherdeep), Fearsome, Followers, Holdings (Netherdeep), Noble (Netherdeep) |
| **Hindrances** | Power Mad, Vow (Serve Malaxas) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Spells): A Demon Lord has 2D10 Powers and 50 Ether Points.<br>• Armor: The thick hide of a Demon Lord gives a natural +2 Toughness.<br>• Conjure Fire: Demon Lords can naturally conjure globes of fire that inflict 2D10 damage when they strike enemies.<br>• Fear: The first time someone sees a Demon Lord, they must make a Fear Test at a -2 penalty.<br>• Flight: Demon Lords have retractable wings that are fully functional.<br>• Immunity (Fire): Demon Lords are immune to fire.<br>• Improved Frenzy: A Demon Lord can make two attack checks per round at no penalty.<br>• Natural Attacks: A Demon Lord may attack with claws, teeth, horns, or hooves for +2 damage.<br>• Size: A typical Demon Lord is 9 feet tall and weighs 600-800lbs.<br>• Vulnerabilities: Demon Lords take +4 extra damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Demon Lords are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground.<br>• Weakness (True Name): A Demon Lord must obey whoever knows their true name. |
| **Equipment** | Whatever they want. |

Most Demon Lords have a classical diabolical appearance with great horns coming out of red skinned bodies and animal features like wings or cloven hooves. They dwarf normal human beings in size and are equal in size to Jotuns. Lilin find them to be strikingly beautiful while other races find them a mixture of repulsive with the sublime. While Demon Lords worship Malaxas as a god, few believe in the Immaculate Doom's goals in quite the same way as the Fallen Celestials do.

## Demon, Hell Hound

*"HOOWWWwwwwwwwwwwwwwww-wwwwwwl."*

| Demon, Hell Hound | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Notice D10, Stealth D4, Survival D8, Tracking D10 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | 8 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 8 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | Insane, Mean, Ugly |
| **Special Abilities** | • Armor +1: Hell Hounds have especially tough hides.<br>• Fire Breath: Once per day, a Hell Hound can breath out a cone of flames that inflicts D8 Damage.<br>• Fear: Anyone who sees a Hell Hound must make a Fear Test.<br>• Fleet Footed: Hell Hounds have a D10 Running Dice.<br>• Go for the Throat: If a Hell Hound gets a raise on its attack roll, it strikes an opponent's least armored location.<br>• Immunity (Fire): Hell Hounds are immune to fire.<br>• Vulnerabilities: Hell Hounds suffer +4 damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Hell Hounds are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground. |
| **Equipment** | None |

The Demon Dogs of Malaxas are actually Lilin that have been altered over centuries of breeding to have the appearance of giant canines. The creatures possess a human intellect and a malevolence that can only come from worshipers of the Netherdeep. The creatures breath flame from their mouths and have glowing red eyes. It is said they will unerringly track the scent of any quarry they seek, even across dimensions.

## Demon, Hell Knight

*"Bow down before your master!"*

Hell Knights are the commanders of the Demon Lord's armies. Hell Knights are different from other Netherdeep creatures in that they were originally human beings. Upon the deaths of truly mighty warriors, their corpses are carried off to the Netherdeep and reborn in a foul ritual that transforms them into champions of Malaxas.

Hell Knights maintain more of their humanity than most, but this only drives them to ever deeper acts of depravity. They despise humans for living lives that they might have once been able to enjoy. Demon Lords hate Hell Knights almost as much as they need them, since they are the few beings in the Netherdeep they cannot frighten into service.

| Demon, Hell Knight | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D8, Strength D12, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D10, Guts D12, Intimidation D10, Knowledge (Tactics) D10, Riding D10 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 9 |
| **Toughness** | 11 |
| **Edges** | Combat Reflexes, Fearsome, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Level Headed |
| **Hindrances** | Vow (Obey Malaxas) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Curse: Anyone struck by a Hell Knight in battle may be subject to a Curse (GM's discretion) or suffer a -2 penalty for the rest of the combat.<br>• Immunity (Fire): Hell Knights are immune to damage from flame.<br>• Size: Hell Knights stand over 7' tall.<br>• Vulnerabilities: Hell Knights suffer +4 damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Hell Knights are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground. |
| **Equipment** | Daemon Steel Armor (+4), Daemon Steel Sword (D12 + D10), Daemon steel Lance (D12+D10), Demonic Winged Horse (Pace: 10, 12 [Fly]), Horror Helm |

## Demon, Imp

*"I live to serve."*

Even in the Netherdeep, there is comic relief. At least, that's what the imps want to be thought as. Slavish and loyal, Imps exist to be little more than entertainment to their fellow demons while subtlety influencing their masters. This is but the cover for their real role as spies and silent killers.

A number of Imps use their inborn ability to shape-change in order to become familiars to the comparatively easier to control human magicians of the world. There, the Imps often become the power behind the throne. A common punishment for powerful demons as an alternative to death is to be transformed into an Imp.

| Demon, Imp | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D10, Smarts D10, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D4, Knowledge (Arcana) D8, Notice D10, Spell-casting D8, Stealth D6, Persuasion D8 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 4, 8 (Flight) |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 4 |
| **Edges** | Charismatic |
| **Hindrances** | Power Mad |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Spells): Imps have 20 Ether Points and 1D6 Powers.<br>• Claws: Str +1<br>• Flight: Imps can fly.<br>• Shape shift: Imps can take the form of small animals. They can also become familiars to wizards.<br>• Size -1: Imps are the size of small children.<br>• Vulnerabilities: Imps suffer +4 damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Imps are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground. |
| **Equipment** | None |

## Demon, Incubi/Succubi

*"Abandon yourself to the ecstasy of the flesh."*

The most infamous servants of the Netherdeep. Incubi and Succubi are most dangerous in Saiya, due to the repressive nature of the Divine Order towards sex. They are less effective in Alacarn, where sexuality is something considered intrinsically holy by some. Still, there are always unsatisfied longings that they are excellent to play upon. The mortal need for companionship and sexual fulfillment is so intrinsic that they remain dangerous no matter where they exist.

| Demon, Inccubi/Succubi | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D10, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D8, Knowledge (Pleasure), Notice D6, Persuasion D12 |
| **Charisma** | +6 |
| **Pace** | 6, 12 (Flight) |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 6 |
| **Edges** | Charismatic, Extremely Attractive, Seductive |
| **Hindrances** | Habit (Sexual Pleasure) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Claws and Teeth: Str+2<br>• Drain: A Succubus may take a point of Vigor away from a subject through sexual congress. A subject reduced to zero via this method, dies, and reanimates as a non-decaying Zombie under their control. Vigor returns at a rate of one point per day of rest.<br>• Flight: Succubus/Incubus can fly.<br>• Horror: Someone whose had congress with a Incubus or Succubus must make a Horror test at -2 penalty if they discover their true nature afterwards.<br>• Seductive Gaze: A Succubus/Incubus can use the Puppet Power by using their Spirit Score as their Arcane Skill. They have 20 Ether Points for this purpose.<br>• Vulnerabilities: Incubi/Succubi suffer +4 damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Incubi/Succubi are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground. |
| **Equipment** | Seductive attire, Thorn Whip (Strength + 2) |

## Demon, Warrior Demon

*"Rarrrrrrrrrgghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"*

Warrior Demons are the terrible shock troopers of the Netherdeep. Terrible clawed monsters with animal qualities and huge muscles, they are not particularly intelligent. However, they are still tremendously powerful and their appearance through a rift is enough to turn entire armies around.

Some Warrior Demons do develop an intelligence far beyond their fellows and a skill that surpasses them. These must be careful amongst their kind or find a way to the mortal world where they can harness their skill. A few gather enough power to become Demon Lords.

| Demon, Warrior Demon | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D4, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D10, Intimidation D8 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Fearsome, Natural Berserker |
| **Hindrances** | Bloodthirsty, Homicidal Fury, Insane, Mean, Ugly |
| **Special Abilities** | • Claws and Teeth: Str+1<br>• Vulnerabilities: Warrior Demons suffer +4 damage from Crysteel and Holy Weapons.<br>• Weakness (Holy Ground): Warrior Demons are at a -2 penalty on Holy Ground. |
| **Equipment** | None |

## Divinities, Lesser

*"Worship me and take refuge under my gaze. I will provide you healthy children and abundant crops."*

Lesser Divinities are the product of sincere belief causing certain ideas to become permanent in the Dreamlands. When these ideas are worshiped, they sometimes gain the ability to manifest themselves in sacred places to them and Vortices. Lesser Divinities are rarely more powerful than many adventurers but their supernatural powers are vital to the people that worship them as local gods.

| Example Lesser Divinity: River God | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Intimidate D8, Persuasion D8, Swimming D12 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 7 |
| **Edges** | Charismatic, Followers |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Elemental: No additional damage from called shots. Fearless. Immune to disease and poison.<br>• Invulnerability: River Gods are immune to all non-magical attacks except Fire. A torch or lantern causes 1D6 damage but is instantly put out.<br>• Shape shift: River Gods can assume human form.<br>• Seep: River Gods can squeeze through any porous gap as if it were difficult ground.<br>• Slam: Str+D6, Non-Lethal Damage.<br>• Waterspout: River Gods can throw a torrent of rushing water at an enemy. This will put out all normal fires and 1D6 ship fires. Creatures in the cone must make a Strength roll at -2 or be Shaken. |
| **Equipment** | None |

## Divinities, Greater

*"I am Kaalon. Welcome to my Vault. I fear you shall never be able to leave it."*

Greater Divinities are spawned from the accumulated psychic essence of millions pouring their belief into a Lesser Divinity for centuries. The resulting creatures that are spawned are subject to the ideas that human beings have about them and frequently gain or lose traits due to the nature of such beliefs.

Greater Divinities are not slaves to human faith, however, and have been known to inspire prophets or send dreams to influence those that they do not like. Heresy is a major enemy to Greater Divinities and something they are eager to stamp out. On occasion, the results of a heretical belief have caused a deity to split in half and battle for supremacy. Greater Divinities are limited from interacting too much in human affairs. Ironically, this is because most human beings believe powerful deities to act in an inscrutable manner. Nevertheless, they are known to take special interest in heroic behavior.

Most Greater Divinities have vast realms in the Dreamlands where they rule over thousands of lesser spirits.

Rank: X

## Drakkath

*"*piping howling like the screams of a million damned souls accompanied by the sounds of the very world shuddering at their rumbling.*"*

The oldest beings in the cosmos, the Drakkath are beyond piddling concepts like good and evil or even acknowledging the concerns of human beings at all. Their power is so great that they warp the very nature of the cosmos by their very nature. The Drakkath do not exist on Teth-Ammon, or the world would have long since collapsed into literal Chaos. However, it is possible for magicians to summon Manifestations.

Manifestations are still impossible to face with magic but they can be banished or interacted with on a level conceivable by human beings. Even then, they tend to react as if the majority of the world is without concern to them and are the size of small cities. They have been known to drive men mad just by looking at them and turn small countries to dust. Only a few Manifestations have ever been awakened in Teth-Ammon's history and it is better if humans forget those times ever occurred.

Unfortunately, Drakkath cults and wizards that are drunk on their own power are always attempting to summon the creatures in the vain belief they can be compelled or controlled. Only the difficulty of the magic has kept the world from being destroyed on multiple occasions.

Rank: X

## Guardsman

*"Halt in the name of the King!"*

Almost every city in Alacarn has a Town Guard or Militia. The land is simply too violent for it to be any other way. Guardsmen also can be found in most major temples and noble castles. Their morale may very tremendously but only the most religious or nationalistic will willingly throw their lives away against superior foes. Most town guard like harassing the disreputable looking and obvious mercenaries but will be fawning towards lords or well bred priests.

| Guardsman | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D6, Knowledge (Local) D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Shooting D6 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 6 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Crossbow (2D6), Leather Armor (+1), Spear (D6+D6) |

## Golem, Flesh

*"Look at my hideous face and remember it for the last moments of your life. It was your revulsion that cost you it."*

Flesh Golems are the necromantic creations of Alchemists and Wizards. In truth, most Flesh Golems are not the attempt to create a better zombie. Most Flesh Golems are created by magicians attempting to overcome the limitations of the Revive spell in order to resurrect someone that has died. The results are, invariably, failures with only a dim echo of the original personality possessed. The repeated failures of this process has done little to deter individuals from attempting them.

Flesh Golems are the most intelligent of all their kind and often attempt to live amongst the outcasts of society, nursing a bitter grudge against their creators.

| Golem, Flesh | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D10, Strength D12, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D6, Intimidation D10, Notice D6, Stealth, D6 Survival D8 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 8 |
| **Edges** | Fearsome, Natural Berserker |
| **Hindrances** | Ugly, Mean |
| **Special Abilities** | • Armor +1: A Flesh Golem's skin is exceptionally hard.<br>• Construct: +2 to recover from being shaken. No additional damage from called shots. Piercing attacks do half-damage. Immune to poison and disease.<br>• Fear: Characters seeing a Flesh Golem's face must make a Fear test.<br>• Fearless: Flesh Golems are immune to fear and Intimidation.<br>• Vulnerability: Flesh Golems take an additional +2 from Fire damage. |
| **Equipment** | Bandages, Burlap Mask, Ragged Clothing |

## Golem, Statue

*"*Clunk Clunk Clunk."*

Statue Golems are one of the preferred weapons of Witches and Priests. They are fundamentally stupid creatures and useful only for basic tasks but are still quite impressive to outsiders. Some are made from clay and then baked while others are stone. The actual method is unimportant as their supernatural toughness comes from the magic rather than their materials. They are vulnerable on the mark that enchants them.

| Golem, Statue | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D4, Smarts D4, Spirit D8, Strength D12, Vigor D12 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D10, Intimidation D10, Notice D8 |
| **Charisma** | 5 |
| **Pace** | 7 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 13 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Armor +4: Magically enhanced materials.<br>• Construct: +2 to recover from being shaken. No additional damage from called shots. Piercing attacks do half-damage. Immune to poison and disease.<br>• Fearless: Statue Golems are immune to Fear and Intimidation.<br>• Size +1: Statue golems stand over 8' high and weigh over 2,000 pounds.<br>• Hard Fists: Str+2 damage.<br>• Weakness: Destroying the magical rune on a statue golem's forehead will eliminate it. |
| **Equipment** | None |

## Ghoul

*"Braaiinnsssssssssssssssss!"*

Terrible magics mean that the dead do not always sleep easy. When too much magic is soaked in an area that is particularly filled with a history of hate and death, then the corpses will rise from the grave with the intent to devour the living. Some ghouls maintain a semblance of human intelligence but few are capable of maintaining their personality for very long. They flee from the daylight and move at night to feast upon the bodies humans leave behind and attack the unwary..

| Ghoul | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D4, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D8, Intimidation D6, Notice D8, Stealth D8, Tracking D6 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 8 |
| **Edges** | Fearsome |
| **Hindrances** | Insane, Mean, Ugly |
| **Special Abilities** | • Claws: Strength +1<br>• Infravision: Ghouls have halved penalties (round down) for bad lighting when attacking living targets.<br>• Keen Nose: Ghouls get +2 to Notice and Tracking against Living Targets.<br>• Paralysis: Victims of a Ghoul Attack must make a Vigor roll at -2 or be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.<br>• Undead: +2 to Toughness, +2 to recover from being shaken. No additional damage from called shots. Immune to disease and poison. |
| **Equipment** | Ragged Clothing |

## Jotun

*"Who dares enter the Halls of Gunther without showing proper homage!?"*

Jotuns are a race descended from human beings that were modified for greater strength and physical prowess. Jotuns are largely welcome in human lands but mostly spend their time in their own kingdoms. They are outnumbered by mankind by a significant degree but suffer no real discrimination. Instead, their direst enemies are the Bathas whom routinely wage war upon them in order to enslave them and their descendants.

For whatever reason, certain giants have become tied to the elements. These Jotuns gain strange mystical abilities but are rarely seen in Alacarn.

| Jotun | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D12+2, Vigor 12D |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D8, Intimidation D10, Notice D6, Throwing D8 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 11 |
| **Edges** | Brawny, Fearsome |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Giant sized: Jotuns can use Giant Sized equipment without penalty.<br>• Size +2: Jotuns are over nine feet tall |
| **Equipment** | Giant Sized Chain mail (+3), Giant Sized Helmet, Giant Sword (12D+2 + 12D) |

## Jotun, Half

*"I am a slave no more and will kill any man who tries to make me one!"*

Half-Jotuns are the result of humans crossbreeding with Jotuns. Because the genes of the giant humans are dominant, several generations after the initial crossbreeding may show signs of their massive ancestry. Half-Jotuns live a troubled life with many enslaved by Bathas who love breeding them as slaves. Others must make their living as warriors with few other trades available to one of their size.

| Jotun, Half | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D10, Vigor 10D |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D8, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Throwing D6 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | Brawny |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Giant sized: Jotuns can use Giant Sized equipment without penalty.<br>• Size +1: Half-Jotuns are close to seven feet tall. |
| **Equipment** | Giant Sized Chain mail (+3), Giant Sized Helmet, Giant Sword (12D+2 + 12D) |

## Knight

*"Onward brave soldiers! For Tyros and Queen Alusan!"*

Knights are the heart and soul of combat in Alacarn's armies. Most knights are Aristocrats but a cottage industry exists for "Hedge Knights." Effectively, Commoners who buy themselves a horse and blade to sell themselves to noble service. Those that live long enough to be useful are formally knighted.

Veteran Knights are those who have managed to live up to their hereditary class by proving themselves in several battles. Most Ennobled Commoners are Veteran Knights due to the amount of bloodshed that is required to be spilled to become one.

Divine Knights (also known as Paladins or Templars) are a special type of priest that is selected from the ranks of especially pious warriors or physically capable clergy. They are then taught the ways of magic by spell-casting clerics and put through a punishing regime of training until they are as skilled in war as sorcery. Divine Knights then go out into the world to fight the enemies of the faith.

The Knights of Winterweir are often associated with Divine Knights due to the number that are trained of

them from their ranks. However, only a very small portion of their ranks are capable of spell-casting. Contrary to popular opinion, Divine Knights are no more kind or gentle than any other priest.

| Example: Knight | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D8, Intimidation D6, Knowledge (Tactics) D6, Notice D6, Riding D8 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 9 |
| **Edges** | Command, Noble |
| **Hindrances** | Code of Honor |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Chain Mail (+2), Helmet, Shield (+1 to Parry), Lance (D8+D8), Long Sword (D8 + D8), War Horse |

| Example: Veteran Knight | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | D10, Guts D10, Intimidation D8, Knowledge (tactics) D8, Notice D6, Riding 10 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 10 |
| **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed, Noble |
| **Hindrances** | Code of Honor |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Shield (+1 to Parry), Lance (D8+D8), Long Sword (D8 + D8), Plate Mail (+2), War Horse |

## Lilin

*"I will enact the blood price for my brother out of your entire town's hides!"*

Most Lilin live a ghettoized or nomadic lifestyle. Rarely are they accepted into any community and they do not desire the company of outsiders for the most part. They live by entertainment, self-sufficiency, and theft. The most dangerous of them are those that have been banished from their tribes and have nothing left to lose. These are referred to as Shadow Lilin.

| Lilin | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Gambling D8, Guts D6, Lock picking D6, Notice D8, Persuasion D8 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Attractive |
| **Hindrances** | Vow (Help other Lilin) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Vulnerability: Crysteel and Holy Weapons inflict an extra point of damage. |
| **Equipment** | Colorful Clothing, Knife (D6 + D4), Lock picks |

## Merchant

*"I'm sure we can come to some sort of arrangement..."*

After military force, commerce in the most powerful force in Winterweir. Merchants must walk a fine line between appeasing the nobility and not allowing themselves to be exploited by them. The richest become Merchant Lords who are almost as powerful as the Aristocracy.

| Example: Merchant | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D4, Gambling D6, Knowledge (Business) D8, Notice D6, Persuasion D8 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Merchant, Rich |
| **Hindrances** | Greedy (Minor) |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Bodyguards, Expensive Clothes, Money Pouches (1000 Bronze Pieces equivalent) |

## Mummy

*"You have blasphemed against Heton. Prepare to die."*

Most of the dead rest easily in their tombs. The dead of Calipan are a special case, ironically because of the care and attention that are paid to certain individual's tombs. The reverence paid them and special rituals done over their bodies result in them being capable of returning back to life for limited periods. The Calipan tend to react to them with fear and respect rather than hatred.

| Mummy | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D4, Smarts D8, Spirit D10, Strength D12, Vigor D12 |
| **Skills** | Faith D8, Fighting D8, Guts D10, Intimidation D10, Knowledge (Religion) D10 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 4, 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Faith): A typical Mummy has 1D6 Powers and 15 Ether Points.<br>• Fear: Individuals who see a Mummy must make a Fear Test.<br>• Mummy Rot: A Mummy can inflict a deliberating disease that will cause the loss of a point of Vigor every hour until a subject dies, unless the wound is cleansed with fire or magic.<br>• Shape shift: Mummies can assume human form.<br>• Undead: +2 to Toughness, +2 to recover from being shaken. No additional damage from called shots. Piercing weapons do half damage; Immune to disease and poison.<br>• Shuffling Gait: In Mummy form, a Mummy suffers a -2 to its pace.<br>• Vulnerability: Mummies take an extra 2 damage from fire.<br>• Weakness: Mummies must make a fear check in the face of a cat's presence. This is due to their historic role as servants of Kaalon. |
| **Equipment** | Ankh, Bandages, Ceremonial Knife (D12+D4) |

## Mutant

*"Arrghhh! Please don't hurt Seamus! Seamus is helpless!" *pause* "Roar!" *goes for their throat**

The wretched survivors of magical corruption. While those with minor mutations can pass themselves off as

regular members of society, the truly mutated are horrible to look upon. Some have their eyes on their hands, huge mouths on their stomachs, and a few are just twisted masses of flesh. Most Mutants dress in cast off clothing from civilized society and dwell in the wilderness. Those that live in Amania and Winterweir live reasonably better than the rest of their kind but are still subject to human prejudice. Those that serve the Immaculate Doom, however, can be truly terrifying.

| Mutant | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Persuasion D6 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | +0 |
| **Parry** | 2 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | Ugly, Outsider |
| **Special Abilities** | • Claws and Teeth: +2 damage.<br>• Fear Test: Individuals encountering Mutants must make a Fear Test upon the first time. A person who finds out he's a Mutant must make a Horror Test.<br>• Mutation: Most Mutants have one Power that they can use automatically. Choose one from the list Armor (retractable spiny shell), Bolt (Acid Spit, Boost/Lower Trait), Fly (wings, Veteran+), Quickness (Cloven Hooves) |
| **Equipment** | Ragged Clothing |

## Pirate

*"Your wealth or your lives! Of course, if we kill you then we can have both..."*

Piracy is a constant danger in Winterweir. The Pirate Isles, Martok, and some major ports along the Shadow Coast are all filled with entire economies based on the theft of sea transported wealth. Amazingly, Piracy has not managed to significantly impact the massive amount of ocean trade. Pirates are not a romantic or pleasant lot, as a rule. It is a brutal business and it attracts brutal men who become worse because of their deeds.

| Pirate | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6. Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Boating D6, Climbing D6, Fighting D6, Guts D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Shooting D6, Swimming D6 |
| **Charisma** | -2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Dirty Fighter |
| **Hindrances** | Mean |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Cutlass (D6+D6), Crossbow (2D6), Knife (D6+D4), Sailor's clothing |

## Priest

*"Mister Smith, we DO investigate these things. The charges against you were found to be completely false after a cursory examination. You're free to go. Unfortunately, I must inform you that we did find some Divine Order paraphernalia amongst your wife's possessions. She's been sentenced to death."*

Priests are found in almost every corner of Teth-Ammon. Ministering to the spiritual needs and superstitions of the populous equally, priests are greatly respected and wield a tremendous amount of authority. The authority of the gods is not absolute, however. Few nobles have any difficulty finding a clergyman willing to repudiate the condemnations of one of their own. This has diminished the authority of the high priests as a whole.

Most feared of all priests are the Inquisitors. The first Inquisition board was set up by Empress Kalinka as part of her efforts to impose religious unification. Contrary to the speeches of many rabble rousers, Inquisitors spend more of their time imposing fines and writing formal condemnations than burning heretics. Alacarn Inquisitors are only allowed to use torture and impose the punishment of death at the discretion of the local reigning lords. In general, Inquisitors are only allowed to use such brutal

methods to deal with the followers of Malaxas and those who serve the Divine Order.

Few Inquisitors care about the worship of local gods. They only care about stamping out the above two mentioned cults and correcting misapprehensions about their own deities. Ironically, the Divine Order has an almost identical system in Saiya. The only difference is they wield the power to use torture and impose the death penalty at their discretion.

| Example: Priest | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Healing D6, Knowledge (Religion) D8, Notice D6, Persuasion D6 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | +0 |
| **Parry** | 2 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Holy Symbol, Priestly Vestments |

| Example: Inquisitor | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D10, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Faith D8, Fighting D10, Guts D10, Intimidation D10, Notice D10, Stealth D8, Persuasion D10 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 8 |
| **Edges** | Fearsome |
| **Hindrances** | Vow (Destroy Heretics) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Faith): Inquisitors are usually spell-casting priests. They have at least 1D6 Powers and 15 Ether Points. |
| **Equipment** | Chain Mail (+2), Crossbow (2D6), Long Sword (D8 + D8) |

## Sea Monster

*"GArrrghhhhhhhhhh!"*

The seas of Teth-Ammon are filled with all manner of horrible creatures and terrifying mutations. One of the most fearsome is simply the gigantic serpents known as the Sea Monsters. They are twisted and evil things that want nothing more than to dine on the flesh of mammals for reasons that sages do not understand. Expansive bounties are given for anyone who can deliver the head of a Sea Serpent to the coastal kingdom authorities.

| Seamonster | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D4 (A), Spirit D8, Strength D12+8, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D10, Intimidation D10, Notice D6, Survival D10 |
| **Charisma** | -- |
| **Pace** | -- |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 20 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Aquatic: Pace 12<br>• Fear: Those who see a Sea Monster must make a Fear check at -2 penalty.<br>• Gargantuan: +4 for attackers to hit the Sea Monster due to its size.<br>• Improved Frenzy: A Sea Monster may attack twice in a single round.<br>• Long Neck: A Sea Monster's long neck gives it a reach of 2.<br>• Size +12: Sea Monsters are often upwards to a hundred and 120 to two hundred feet long.<br>• Tail Swipe: A Sea Monster can make a devastating attack with it's tail. A target hit by it must make a Vigor check or die instantly. It's Tail swipe inflicts 1d12+20 damage against sailing ships. |
| **Equipment** | None |

## Slavers

*"This one will fetch a good price!"*

Slavery is a lucrative business on Teth-Ammon. Some Slavers go to families and purchase children. Others focus on getting the government to hand over criminals or war prisoners. A few have hideous 'ranches' where they breed slaves and train them for specific duties. A cheap but risky way for slavers to make money is simple kidnapping. Bandits and raiders often sell their captives to slavers, bringing in extensive profits for both.

Despite the legality of slavery in most kingdoms, it is a business that almost everyone looks down in disgust. Only in Turlon is it considered a legitimate trade and even they tend to find most other nation's slavers disreputable by comparison. Amania and Winterweir have a simple policy to kill any slavers found in their lands without trial or hesitation.

| Slavers | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6. Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Climbing D6, Fighting D6, Guts D6, Intimidation D8, Notice D6, Shooting D6, Persuasion D6 |
| **Charisma** | -2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 7 |
| **Edges** | Dirty Fighter |
| **Hindrances** | Greedy |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Chain Mail (+2), Crossbow (2D6), Long Sword (D6 + D8), Whip (+2) |

## Slythin

*"*Garrrrrr* *Gnash* Hisssssss!"*

The Slythin are a race that have peculiarly managed to maintain its barbarian ways while living alongside human civilization. Their desire for meat and willingness to devour human corpses have not endeared them to man, but they have lived alongside man far more peacefully than the Trow. Few Southern Kingdoms do not have Slythin hard laborers in one area or another. The Slythin, themselves, have little love for humans but do not have the same ambitions towards meaningless title or land that the mammals do.

| Slythin | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Shooting D6, Survival D8 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 6 |
| **Edges** | Dirty Fighter |
| **Hindrances** | Greedy |
| **Special Abilities** | • Cold Blooded: Slythin suffer a -1 penalty in extremely cold climates.<br>• Keen Sense of Smell: Slythin are naturally blessed with d6 Notice and Tracking skills at the start for free.<br>• Thermal Vision: Slythin have the monstrous ability, Infravision. |
| **Equipment** | Bows (2D6), Hand Ax (D6+D6), Loin Cloth |

## Soldier

*"I'm a mercenary. Causes are for fools."*

It is unlikely that the people of Alacarn would survive as a society without the option for soldiery as a profession. In an environment with so little social mobility, the only possible outlet for people to move beyond their station is to learn to fight and become useful on the battlefield. Some soldiers are noble bastards who can't afford to become knights while others are simple peasants who've picked up a sword to try and become more than a dirt picker.

Soldiers vary wildly in quality and training across Alacarn but they fight on for a chance at spoils and a permanent position as a noble's guard. Only rarely do they have any real loyalty to their commanders.

| Soldier | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Shooting D6 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 7 |
| **Edges** | Steady Hands |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Chain Mail (+2), Crossbow (2D6), Helmet, Long sword (D6 + D8) |

## Thug

*"Ello, Ello, Ello. Whot we have ere? Looks like a couple of young aristocrat sots on for a stroll. Purses fat with coin, I think."*

Wherever you go in Winterweir, there are bandits and urban vermin that are eager to kill or wound for coin. Thugs are not usually very intelligent and rarely do they have very complicated schemes. They do, however, exist in great numbers. Crime bosses and petty nobles often make use of their services for the vile deeds that routinely need to be done by a successful leader.

| Thug | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D4, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D6, Intimidation D6 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 6 |
| **Edges** | None |
| **Hindrances** | Greedy, Mean, Ugly |
| **Special Abilities** | None |
| **Equipment** | Clothes, Club (D6+D4), Dagger (D8+D4) |

## Trow

*"Hatai Tok Moto!" (translated as "Slay the Humans!")*

A warrior race of Far Folk that have no genetic association with humans. A bipedal race from another planet, they have horns and ape-like faces. Their bodies are covered in fur and their blood is a strange shade of green. Trow are one of the most numerous races on Teth-Ammon and rarely get along with humans to any significant degree. They are also a good deal more primitive with the old Trow nations being wiped out by Alacarn or Malaxas.

Trow Chiefs are chosen from the best warriors in the tribe. The Trow believe that in order for a warrior to truly be great, they must not only be the strongest but also the most cunning. Trow duels are rarely to the death. Only when an opponent refuses to acknowledge his inferiority is it only to the death. Those who agree to show submission are allowed to live. This has been a reasonably effective system thus far for their society. Often, Old Chiefs are allowed to have privileged positions as advisors.

Trow Shaman wield a position that is theoretically equal to that of the Chief. In truth, they often wield more power as their 'suggestions' are taken as commands. While Trow are theoretically holy men, in truth, they tend to control and cajole spirits as much as placate them. The only god they show any reverence towards is Paalok. That is because no Shaman can imagine getting control over the Storm bringer.

Trow Shamans do not commune with the gods as their primary duty but act as healers and solicitors of spirits (which are distinct from the gods in Trow mythology).

| Example: Trow Warrior | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D8, Guts D8, Intimidation D6, Survival D8, Tracking D4 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 7 |
| **Edges** | None |

| Example: Trow Warrior | |
|---|---|
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Horns: Strength + D4<br>• Gore: A Trow with room to charge at least 6" before attacking can add +4 to his damage total, if he attacks with his horns.<br>• Weakness (Sunlight): Trow are nocturnal creatures and live in heavily wooded areas or underground. In bright sunlight, they are at a -1 penalty. |
| **Equipment** | Bows (2D6), Hand Ax (D10 + D6) |

| Example: Trow Chief | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D8, Strength D12, Vigor D12 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D10, Guts D8, Intimidation D8, Survival D8, Tracking D8, Persuasion D6 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 9 |
| **Edges** | Brawny, Command, Nobility |
| **Hindrances** | Vow (Protect Tribe) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Horns: Strength + D4<br>• Gore: A Trow with room to charge at least 6" before attacking can add +4 to his damage total, if he attacks with his horns.<br>• Size: The diet of Trow chiefs usually results in them becoming over 7' in height.<br>• Weakness (Sunlight): Trow are nocturnal creatures and live in heavily wooded areas or underground. In bright sunlight, they are at a -1 penalty. |
| **Equipment** | Bows (2D6), Hand Ax (D12 + D6) |

| Example: Trow Shaman | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D10, Strength D10, Vigor D10 |
| **Skills** | Spells D8, Fighting D8, Guts D8, Knowledge (Religion) D8, Intimidation D6, Survival D8, Persuasion D8 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 6 |
| **Toughness** | 7 |
| **Edges** | Charismatic |
| **Hindrances** | Vow (Serve the Spirits) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Faith): Trow Shamans have a D4 number of Powers and 15 Ether Points.<br>• Horns: Strength + D4<br>• Gore: A Trow with room to charge at least 6" before attacking can add +4 to his damage total, if he attacks with his horns.<br>• Weakness (Sunlight): Trow are nocturnal creatures and live in heavily wooded areas or underground. In bright sunlight, they are at a -1 penalty. |
| **Equipment** | Head dress, Ornate Staff (D10+D4) |

## Undying One

*"HAHAHAHA! Now see my TRUE form, mortal fool!"*

Undying Ones in the physical world are result of a human being using a Chaos Stone to merge their souls with that of a Far Chaos spirit. Relentlessly powerful and unimaginably strong, Undying Ones have far exaggerated appetites and tastes that make them the enemies of all that live. They are capable of passing themselves off as human but their true forms are hideous things that almost defy description. A typical one might be a blob of eyes and animal parts with tentacles as just a tamer example.

Most Undying Ones work for themselves but a few believe they do the will of the Drakkath or come to serve the Netherdeep.

| Example: Wasp Undying One | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D10, Strength D12+2, Vigor D12, Fighting D12 |
| **Skills** | Intimidate D10 |
| **Charisma** | -4 |
| **Pace** | 6, Fly 12 |
| **Parry** | 8 |
| **Toughness** | 10 |
| **Edges** | Brawny, Fearsome |
| **Hindrances** | Insane, Ugly, Mean |
| **Special Abilities** | • Devour: A Worm Undying One may attempt to swallow a human hole. They must make a Agility check to escape or lose a point of Vigor every round until they are dissolved in the monster's stomach.<br>• Shape shift: Undying One can assume the form of a (ugly) human.<br>• Size +2: Their true form is 14 feet in all.<br>• Tail Swipe: Wyverns may make a tail lash that attacks all opponents in their rear. The Damage is their Strength score -2 (D12).<br>• Weakness: Crysteel and Holy Weapons inflict an extra dice of damage against Undying Ones. |
| **Equipment** | Malaxas' Tear, Ornate Robes |

## Valken

*"The universe is made of many spirits. Understanding each is the key to a successful life."*

Valken are a spiritual and mystic people according to stereotype. In truth, the vast majority that people will meet are little different from human beings except for exaggerated quirks related to their animal natures. The majority of Valken are from common animal types with Birds, Canines, Felines, and Vermin being amongst the most often found. It is unknown how many varieties exist but some speculate there's possibly thousands. Valken can interbred across tribe but the children are always one of their parent's type, not "mixed."

| Example: Cat Valken | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Knowledge (One Trade) D6, Notice D6, Persuasion D6, Survival 6 |
| **Charisma** | +2 |
| **Pace** | 0 |
| **Parry** | 2 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Attractive |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Beast Bond: The Valken automatically receives Beast Bond with his animal type.<br>• Totem Bond: Valken are linked to their tribes' totem and must observe some rituals to placate their spirits. If they ever fail to live up to these minor obligations, then they will suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls until they make amends. |
| **Equipment** | Clothes, Dagger (D6 + D4) |

## Wizard

*"Kneel before my awesome might, puny mortal! Do you not know that I am death to all unbelievers!?"*

Wizards are an uncommon sight in Teth-Ammon but they are hardly unknown. Almost everyone craves the aid of magic, even if it is only that of a minor magician. Wizards tend to live well, a compensation for the tremendous amount of education that they require. Most magicians prefer to avoid direct combat but plenty have become arrogant about their own power, failing to realize how vulnerable they truly are.

To become a Master Wizard is the goal of only the most ambitious of magi. It takes a passion and drive that most lack. Master Wizards must not only study, they must also push themselves past the limits of normal human ability to channel magic. Many seek immortality or transformation of their bodies so as to continue their research. Master Wizards are feared and respected by all but most especially by those younger wizards that desire to eventually match their accomplishments. Master Wizards rarely have the ear of Kings, instead, they more often dictate to them.

| Example: Typical Wizard | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D10, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D8, Intimidation D8, Knowledge (Arcana) D8, Notice D6, Spell-casting D8, Taunt D6 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Wizard |
| **Hindrances** | Arrogant |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Spells): Wizards have 1D6 Powers and 15 Ether Points. |
| **Equipment** | Robes, Staff (D6+D4) |

| Example: Master Wizard | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | Agility D6, Smarts D12, Spirit D10, Strength D6, Vigor D6 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D6, Guts D6, Intimidation D8, Knowledge (Arcana) D10, Notice D8, Persuasion D8, Spell-casting D12, Taunt D10 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 6 |
| **Parry** | 5 |
| **Toughness** | 5 |
| **Edges** | Wizard |
| **Hindrances** | None |
| **Special Abilities** | • Arcane Background (Spells): Master Wizards have 1D10 Powers and 30 Ether Points. |
| **Equipment** | 3 Magic Items, Robes, Staff (D6+D4) |

## Wyvern

*"Shall we destroy them....Master?"*

Wyverns are the mutated descendants of the Terra'ssar. Possessing only a fraction of their ancestors former strength and intelligence, they are still more

powerful than humans by far. Most Wyverns are bitterly aware they are nowhere near the mastery of the world that they feel should be their birthright. Some cope with this by accepting their diminished role and enjoying life as best they can. Others attempt to play politics and rule through human pawns.

| Wyvern | |
|---|---|
| **Attributes** | AgilityD6, Smarts D10, Spirit D10, Strength D12+6, Vigor D12+2 |
| **Skills** | Fighting D10, Guts D12, Knowledge (Any Three) D8, Intimidate D10, Notice D8, Persuasion D10 |
| **Charisma** | +0 |
| **Pace** | 4 |
| **Parry** | 7 |
| **Toughness** | 18 |
| **Edges** | Fearsome |
| **Hindrances** | Arrogant, Greedy (Minor) |
| **Special Abilities** | • Armor +4: Scaly Hide.<br>• Claws/Bite: D12+6 + D8<br>• Fiery Breath: Wyverns can release a cone of fire that inflicts 2D10 Fire Damage. Opponents may make an Agility penalty at -2 penalty to avoid this.<br>• Large: Attackers add a +2 to their attack rolls when attacking Wyverns due to their large size.<br>• Poisoned Bite: Victims of a Wyvern's bite attack must make a Vigor check at -2 penalty or die instantly.<br>• Size +5: Wyverns are over 20 feet long and weight two metric tons.<br>• Tail Lash: Wyverns may make a tail lash that attacks all opponents in their rear. The Damage is their Strength -2 (12D+4). |
| **Equipment** | Saddle, Rider |

ADORN

# WINTERWEIR

*"Journey into the Dark Side of Fantasy."*

*"A world of betrayal, treachery, and war."*

A detailed guide to the setting of Winterweir for Savage Worlds. Containing three continents, more than a dozen new nations, a system for generating New Powers, and a cosmology of new dimensions for player characters to take part in. The Winterweir setting book gives details on a half dozen new player character races and over forty new additions to the Savage Worlds Bestiary. It also contains a detailed guide to creating adventures within the confines of the setting.

Explore the world of Teth-Ammon, a planet that is riddled with war between the various factions fighting for supremacy. Follow the history of the setting from the universe's creation to the fall of Alacarn Empire and the resulting Dark Age! See the various feuding Factions that range a gamult from dark grey to outright black in their morality. It is a world that desperately needs heroes; whether they fight for the betterment of the world or their own personal gain.

The Winterweir setting book is a comprehensive guide to creating a Dark Fantasy campaign that will take your player characters to the verge of insanity and against unimaginable evil both within and without. It is a world where the player characters have a chance to save the world, or rule it. Which path will your players take?

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