

*Lords of Gossamer & Shadow*

# Threats: Dawn of the Dwimmerlaik



*by Andrew Peregrine*





Rite Publishing Presents:

# Threats: Dawn of the Dwimmerlaik

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Lucien,

*I ran into these intriguing documents recently and thought you might find them useful. They were stuffed between the pages of a rather heavy encyclopaedia in a ruined library on the world of Taramis. As they were written in old Dwimmerlaik script, the pages caught my attention as I'm sure you can imagine. It is a weird language, and while the penmanship (for want of a better term) is excellent it frankly looks like someone has dipped a claw in an ink well and used it like a calligraphy brush!*

*Luckily I have a contact who was able to translate it, the results of which I enclose. I have no idea if there is any truth to them, or if Mowbray had anything to do with them, or really, who the original recipient of these notes was. As you know, the Dwimmerlaik lie, and while Taramis was once one of their strongholds, I don't think anyone has been there since the war ended. The place was thick with dust and some rather resilient spider creatures that proved almost embarrassingly difficult to dispatch.*

*In any case, I offer them to you, that you might make of them what you will. Any information on the arrogant horned bastards could be potentially useful after all. I have no doubt you are more than capable of making your own decisions about the veracity of such documents.*



*Mowbray,  
the Pale Hierophant*

*Yours  
Veronique, Lady Mistwalker*

*P.S.- Please remind Calais he still owes me for the bet we made on Celedos.*

## **Remembrance**

***Being the thought record of Lord Mowbray, the Pale Hierophant***

Let us begin with the lies. They are, after all, sweeter and so much easier to swallow than the truth. When you ask me of the old times and my people, all you are really hoping for is that I will confirm your prejudices and send you on your way safe in the knowledge you were right all along. So this time I think

not. This time I think I shall offer you the truth and enjoy seeing that arrogant spark fade from your young eyes.

Of course, I could still be lying because you are still not worthy of any truth, even mine.

## Caliban

All things begin somewhere, and we trace our origin to the world of Caliban. Caliban is a primal world, a place of stone and fire bordered on all sides by great volcanoes. But it was not always as it is now. It is said that in the ancient times it was verdant and filled with forests. There, the old ones would hunt across its vast woodland and live in cities built in the trees. We knew peace then. Our magic enhanced the forest, which teemed with life. We surrounded ourselves with art, carved into the trees that made up our homes. We were not called Dwimmerlaik then, for it was a name we had not earned. The legends say we were known as Dallaik, a name we still use, but only for those who have failed to prove themselves.

Our mental powers were strong, even then, and using them we found a way to reach out to other worlds. Unfortunately, at this time we understood nothing of the Grand Stair itself. The doors were doors of the mind. Those who travelled the worlds in their imagination were seen as lunatics before we truly understood what we were dealing with. However, in time we came to see these dreamers were visionaries not madmen. They brought back the secrets of a hundred worlds and we

came to understand the terrible danger and potential riches that might lie beyond.

We built an empire of secrets, and those secrets led us to the Typhonians from whom we stole our birthright. Using what we took from them we found our way to the Grand Stair. We considered its very existence a challenge from the universe. We had found peace on Caliban by taming it. Now millions of worlds lay before us to test us. A billion enemies waited behind the myriad Doors to take what we had wrought.

## From Dallaik to Dwimmerlaik

While we could not initially travel physically to the Gossamer worlds, the information we discovered and the lore that we learned gave us treasure enough. We found dark places and darker entities that we bargained with for more secrets of power. We snuck into the dreams of the masters of countless worlds and convinced them we were demons or angels. For this reason our appearance brings terror or worship from many worlds. We have become legends and nightmares to so many beings that our reputation has spread further than our empire.

Over many years we gained great power, but we had no desire to rule as ghosts. We focused our efforts on finding a way to truly walk across the worlds. Unfortunately we had to steal that lore from beings more powerful than we, an act that would prove our greatest achievement and perhaps also our greatest mistake.



### **New Aspects for Exalted Channeling:**

**Projection [5 points]** - This higher form of Far Sight allows the practitioner to project a ghostly 'astral form' to other worlds without the need to possess any other sort of ability to cross the borders or walk upon the Grand Stair. Upon entering a deep meditative dreaming state, the Channeler is able to project their mind rather than their body through the void of Shadow and into any of the Gossamer worlds to walk where they will. While this image appears solid it cannot be touched or exert any form of physical presence. It is not actually an illusion though, being a projection built from the will of the Channeler. While the projection cannot interact physically, it can socially interact with anyone it meets. It can also pass through any doors or walls it pleases, unless they are protected with magic or another power. In which case, the Channeler must use their Psyche to force past the defence.

The Channeler may cast spells and use cantrips and True Names through the projection. Any other powers (such as the Eidolon and Umbra) require too much concentration to use in combination with concentrating on maintaining the projection.

While this power allows the practitioner to travel to other Gossamer worlds, it grants no access to Doors or the Grand Stair. It does grant a familiarity with Shadow as the Channeler travels through it to reach their destination. While the projection moves around the worlds the Channeler remains in a meditative state, but is aware of their surroundings. They can

cancel the projection at any time by ending the trance, at which point it vanishes. The projection can be attacked psychically, which may also cancel the projection if the Channeler loses the combat.

**Marking [5 points]** - While a projection cannot manipulate anything it finds among the Gossamer worlds, it can leave a psychic mark on objects and even people it comes across. This 'mark' is the equivalent of a tracing beacon, and can only be applied through a projection (and not through an Icon, for example). The Channeler may mark several items, but the more that are marked, the weaker the connections. Many early Dwimmerlaik used this ability, coupled with Projection, to navigate between worlds they had discovered. The Channeler will always know how to find any marked objects unless they are protected by magic. Intelligent beings may also be marked, but if they are unwilling the Channeler must succeed in defeating them in a test of Psyche. Intelligent beings with a Psyche comparable to the Channeler (equal to or greater) will notice a psychic mark, and may attempt to remove it using a variety of powers (Eidolon, Umbra, a spell, etc). An Invoker that knows the True Name of a marked item or being will automatically know it has been marked, and may invoke the True Name to erase the mark, essentially purifying it. If the Channeler is also an Invoker, then marking the item or being will assist in divining the True Name of that item or being (reducing the research time by 25%). The Channeler will immediately know when (but not necessarily how) a mark is erased.

In our dream travels we heard of many beings, elder species and even gods, but all turned out to be false. Those we found proved unworthy of the name, or unaware of how fatally outclassed by our people they were. So when we heard of the Typhonians we arrogantly assumed they would prove just as simple to conquer. We had heard rumours of such a race but it was many years before we managed to actually find one. In a cave of dreams, far past the Scarlet Rift and the chasm of Delphos, more by luck than skill, eight of our greatest found the sleeping form of a Typhonian called Eos. He rested in a slumber so deep he knew nothing of our presence.

Eos was a marvel to those who discovered him, instantly recognisable as something truly ancient and god-like. We regarded him in awe. Here was finally a true power we might learn something from. It soon became clear he was more than physical; his form was built of dreams as well as flesh. So while we both adored and even worshipped this new discovery, we tore the heart from his sleeping form and consumed it.

The essence of the Typhonian melded with those who shared his heart. They named themselves 'Dwimmerlaik' because in that moment they understood they had become something new, something greater. The word means 'that which is superior' and implies a greatness that cannot be conquered. The new Dwimmerlaik were granted immense power by the stolen Typhonian essence. Veils they had never noticed fell from their eyes and the Grand Stair opened to them so easily it



*Dalliak*  
*Shallain, the Watcher of Caliban*

was a wonder such passage had ever been barred to them.

Unsurprisingly our attack awoke Eos from his slumber and his screams echoed across the universe. In some worlds cities fell and in that moment a billion souls awoke with nightmares so terrible it drove many of them mad. Something unthinkably ancient had been murdered, and we knew that one day we would have to pay for our theft. In preparation for that day we took not only the heart of Eos but tore apart his entire essence, fashioning great artefacts from his flesh, bone and spirit. We fell upon him like jackals and rendered part of his carcass for its power. My staff Omphalus was one of those artefacts we created, as is the great sword of the Suzerain. They are some of our most holy and potent weapons.



Those who had eaten the heart of Eos used their newfound power with enthusiasm. They set out upon the Grand Stair and raided the worlds of so many people. Each became a prince or princess of several worlds. They each founded their own dynasties, the eight great houses of the Dwimmerlaik. Their descendants also inherited the power of Eos and as time passed all Dwimmerlaik were born with the ability to gain access to the powers of the Grand Stair. In time, the Dallaik were gone or forgotten, and only the Dwimmerlaik remained. There was no concerted attempt to be rid of them; they simply fell naturally to the bottom of our empire, superseded by the power of the Dwimmerlaik. It is said some Dallaik remain, the pitiful remnants of a bygone age. If they do exist, and bare any ill will, it is no matter for they would be too pathetic to be any threat. These days we use the term Dallaik to refer to an exile, one who has failed to prove worthy of the name Dwimmerlaik.

We began a crusade to build a great empire so that none might stand against our power, knowing that one day we would have to pay the price for what our ancestors had done. An Empress called Suliss was crowned to lead this new crusade. We chose only the best of us to lead and named her 'First of the Dwimmerlaik' the greatest of the unconquered. Since this time only the best of us has been allowed to take the crown, and they have all shown mastery of sorcery, steel and intellect. We claimed dominion and took spoils from every world we found. Our crusade brought tribute from worlds beyond our

own and with each new conquest we sought only more. We became as gods and demons to a billion peoples and made ourselves legendary across thousands of worlds.

## **Typhonian Weapons**

Each of the eight warriors who consumed Eos took something of his essence to fashion weapons and tools with. Many have been lost over the ages, the rest are considered the most revered items in Dwimmerlaik society. Even though only eight have entered into legend, many smaller artefacts claimed to be crafted from some tiny part of Eos are also held by some Dwimmerlaik.

Each of these eight was crafted by the first Dwimmerlaik, the greatest of the ancestors, and merely touching one connects you to these warriors in a unique way. Due to this connection, while they are traditionally held by the rulers of the eight houses, they are considered the property of all Dwimmerlaik, and best left in the hands of the strongest.

My sceptre **Omphalus** and Krovaliss' **ancestral sword** are two of these artefacts. The other six artefacts are detailed below:

**Tarius – the orb of sight.** Made from the eye of Eos, this orb allows the wielder to gaze anywhere in the Gossamer worlds; few powers can block its vision.

**Mariel – the knife of silence.** Those struck by this bone dagger lose the

power of speech, and sounds are muffled around the wielder. They are unable to cry out and it is said the knife holds the screams of those it kills locked inside.

***Callus – the circlet of domination.*** This circle of bone granted great presence to any who wore it. So much so, that their orders became almost irresistible. Many battles were fought over the ownership of Callus, although no one knows who finally managed to claim it.

***Zabriel – the bonesword.*** This blade passes through bone as if it doesn't exist, allowing it to do devastating wounds to those it hits. Its razor sharp edge has been known to slice apart lines of enemies in a single cut.

***Bhalgharath – the tearing knife.*** Using this long fighting knife, the wielder can cut open a portal from a Gossamer world to another Gossamer world, bridging them together through the void of Shadow. Which world depends on where you are and the wielder has no control over where they cut a path. These wounds close very slowly, and bleed a mauve ichor that has granted visions, or death, to those who drank it.

***Mollias – the box of eternity.*** This small bone box is currently lost, and many Dwimmerlaik sorcerers have searched in vain for it. It seems to have an almost limitless capacity for hanging spells.

## Houses of the Dwimmerlaik

Originally, the Dwimmerlaik were formed into eight houses (listed below), one founded by each of the original Dwimmerlaik. While they all consist of warriors, politicians, rogues and sorcerers, each is known by a particular reputation. Time and politics may have left some ascendant and others lost and forgotten. Since the war with the Gossamer Lords, new houses may also have arisen and either claimed the power of those they replaced or carved out a new domain.

**House Perita:** Shrewd politicians, the Perita usually have representatives behind the throne, even if they rarely have one upon it.

**House Cavalarn:** Dedicated to exploration as well as conquest, Cavalarn warriors have ranged further than any other Dwimmerlaik.

**House Rantesh:** A house of warriors, Rantesh has one some the most skilled and disciplined fighters.

**House Devish:** While Rantesh produces great warriors, Devish produces great killers. Their assassins are without peer, and it is rumoured they have a bargain with shadow itself to hide them.

**House Sural:** The Sural produce the greatest artists, even though many have also helped forge the empire. Most of the Master artisans are brought up in this house.



**House Ballgoth:** It is said the Ballgoth have a deal with the wind to whisper every secret it hears to them. They are master spies and often cultivate contacts across the Gossamer worlds.

**House Zepharus:** Where Rantesh usually fight, the Zepharus usually lead. This house has produced some of the finest generals of the Dwimmerlaik and their tactical and strategic ability is legendary.

**House Malkesh:** The cursed house is known primarily for its powerful sorcery. However it is said its founder took too much power from his Typhonian essence and it drove him mad. Malkesh sorcerers know dangerous secrets and make extremely potent magicians, but they are unpredictable and dogged with ill fortune.

## *Awakening the Giants*

Whether it simply took them so long to awaken, or that our heavy footfalls across countless worlds over countless centuries had echoed across the universe, eventually the Typhonians came looking for vengeance. They were only two, the son and daughter of Eos, Helios and Selene, but those two almost destroyed us.

Even from the first encounter we were forced onto the defensive. We fell back from our holdings, turning the land to ash with our conflict. As they closed on our world of Caliban we became desperate. We gave up all hope of managing the battle and threw all our

power at the invaders, no matter what the cost or damage. It was enough, and by focusing our power on Helios, we defeated him and fell upon him like vultures.

Selene turned to see what we had done, her anger alone burning whole worlds, and we realised this was a battle we could never win. We had little left; defeating Helios had taken almost everything. Selene stood poised to wipe even the memory of us from existence itself. However, something briefly stayed her hand: it was the heart of Helios. While we had torn his body apart, the Emperor (Vesterlay, as Suliss had long since passed) had claimed the heart for himself. In that moment we realised the heart was the true essence of a Typhonian and until that was destroyed, nothing was truly lost.

Many Emperors might have destroyed the heart to prove their power. Instead, Vesterlay attempted to use it as a hostage, thinking that Selene could not attack us while he held the heart, for fear it would be destroyed. Our Emperor believed he had forced a stalemate. Unfortunately he had underestimated Selene's wrath. Giving in to her rage, she summoned all her power to utterly destroy us. The day was lost and we could do nothing but stand proudly and await our fate. We readied ourselves to throw all we had left, that we might at least fell our enemy with our last breath.

However, the Grand Stair itself intervened. Perhaps such power would have destroyed it, or maybe it simply sought to end this squabble by its

itinerant children. Whatever the reason it burned with a power none have seen since. The Doors slammed shut with an echo that reverberated across the cosmos. Flame tore apart the steps themselves, casting many into the void. Around Selene a great typhoon erupted, shredding her into fragments and ripping holes in reality itself. Awful screams issued from these voids and ghastly beings sought to tear their way through. Some of us fought, some burned, some fell into the abyss, but most simply did their best to hold their ground as Selene was consumed and cast into the deepest reaches of the universe.



### *The Cost to Caliban*

So we returned home, reprieved from our annihilation. We carried the heart of Helios as a last talisman against reprisals. We have not seen Selene again. Perhaps she was cast so far she still journeys towards us. Perhaps the fact we still hold the heart, and would destroy it should she attack, is enough to give her pause now. Perhaps she awakens the other Typhonians that they might wreck a vengeance so swift we will be slaughtered before we even know it has come for us.

As we drew home we felt proud that the Grand Stair had somehow saved us. Perhaps we were more important than we realised. Maybe we had proved our power so well that even the Grand Stair recognised our sovereignty. We thought we had paid our last debts on the battlefield, but as the Grand Stair had burned, so had Caliban.

### *Caliban*

Where other worlds had simply vanished in the Grand Stair's conflagration, Caliban had been close enough not to escape unscathed. Great volcanoes erupted across the length of the world. The swathes of forest were covered in magma and ash. Villages and towns were washed away in white-hot lava. We lost millions of our people, hundreds of cities were devastated and thousands of years of art, tradition and majesty were turned to ash in moments.

But we had survived, and we rebuilt. In the very centre of our world, only one forest remained untouched. We surrounded it with thick stone walls, warded with powerful runes and sorcery. A great citadel rose above it, a reminder that we had prevailed even at great cost. We shaped our world once more in stone rather than wood. The citadel remains today, as magnificent as



it is ancient, a reminder of who we are and what we have lost. It is so tall few places on Caliban cannot see its spires; it became our fortress and our watchtower. The rest of Caliban is a wasteland, surrounded by huge volcanoes which still blast fire and ash into the sky.

So we rested, recuperated, and rebuilt. Undaunted, we set out to conquer back what we had lost. While our land was blasted, the tribute from our empire provided us with what we needed. We enslaved those worlds nearby that they would toil for our luxury, and the outlying worlds were fortified that we might never be taken unawares again. While we had once been wild creatures of the forest, our hearts had hardened and become like the stone we now resided in.

## *The Gossamer Lords*

Since our battle with Selene we have been ever watchful of a new threat. Ah! Do you think now I will speak of how the Gossamer Lords challenge our dominion? Pathetic. When we have faced enraged Typhonians do you believe for a moment the recent conflict with these young Lords and Ladies is anything more than a distraction? How presumptuous.

This is not to say we were not careful. During our first encounters it was clear the Gossamer Lords were a new potential threat, however naïve and inexperienced. They had the potential to rise to power, simply by virtue of being able to traverse the Grand Stair. So we

tested them in a few encounters. We showed little of our power and retreated quickly. The idiots believed they had actually won such encounters rather than provided us with what we needed to know, and became arrogant and sloppy.

Interestingly, while our investigations proved any individual Lord or Lady was no threat, especially as they understood so little of even their own potential, they proved intelligent and able to work together. It became clear that there was a possibility for them to be both dangerous and numerous, so we decided to take action before they could form a stronghold. We set out with relish to put down these upstarts and, if only briefly, challenge ourselves against a reasonably challenging adversary.

Unfortunately, stamping out these interlopers on our Grand Stair has proved trickier than expected. They are like cockroaches. As soon as one is stamped out another infestation appears. What makes things more difficult is their dissonance. There is an organisation to them, but almost all the Lords and Ladies refuse to follow orders as their leaders expect. Sometimes this rather maverick approach makes it simple to divide and destroy them. It also makes it very difficult to create an effective policy against their forces. What works on one group rarely works on another.

As the years pass and the conflict becomes more bloody, the war now shows no signs of ever ending. They have managed to adapt. As we were forced to use greater and greater power

to defeat them, they in turn have become more adept at fighting us. We have lost many worlds to the Gossamer Lords, but they are trivial losses to us, and we make them pay in blood for every footfall. Even now they have never come close to finding Caliban, so vast is our empire.

Eventually, though, something has to be done. We are preparing our most powerful weapons and are setting out to eradicate these troublesome creatures once and for all, no matter the cost to our Empire. We will assault the greatest stronghold of the Gossamer Lords, smashing past their outer defences and prepare to turn our full fury of spell, steel and will against their heart.

Lucien,

*Well, I shouldn't have to tell you what happened next. It worries me that the Stair turned against the Dwimmerlaik in their final battle with us. If we find ourselves fighting a new enemy in ages to come, will it turn against us too?*

*I've heard the Dwimmerlaik made a home for themselves in Shadow, somewhere called Khesteros. A home in Shadow itself? It is hard enough to survive there, let alone make a home there! I don't know anyone who has ever found this 'Caliban' but if someone has we should watch it. I think they'll return there one day and that will be the sign they have come to claim what we took from them.*

Yours  
Veronique, Lady Mistwalker

## Who are the Dwimmerlaik?

You asked me once who we are, which is a fatuous question. Those who have not made a mark in the world are obviously nothing, and those who have already displayed their skills make the question redundant. Nevertheless I suspect you actually meant to ask a more philosophical question about the nature of what we are. So with the usual caveat that I assume you can separate the lies from the truth, I shall offer my perspective.

## Culture and Tradition

*"What does not make us stronger diminishes all of us"*

While we are not barbarians, we Dwimmerlaik respect strength. However, in many ways, strength is simply a by-product of what we truly value, which is proving yourself the best. Our society offers little consolation for second place. Those who are not the most talented and experienced are often forgotten. This attitude remains the same whether you are an artist or a warrior. If you want a chance to live forever and be remembered, you must earn it.

You might think all this talk of strength makes us a military culture of warriors and chest beating barbarians. Not so, we recognise that strength comes in many forms, and understand that anything that improves us as a culture makes us stronger. We reward those who create great art as highly as



those who lead armies and master the secrets of magic. Often our fighters try their hand at academic or creative projects. But this is not just to make them well rounded as individuals, but to allow them an opportunity to become the master of another field. To be the greatest swordsman is as great an honour, as is to be our greatest sculptor. But to be both is truly legendary.

Lesser species think it cruel we offer so little, often nothing, to those who are second best. But to console those who prove themselves unworthy of taking the greatest rewards is patronising and insulting. It is to say 'there there' and gently insist the work is over and you have lost, never to have another chance to prove yourself. Anyone satisfied with second place is not worthy of being called Dwimmerlaik.

We offer the title 'Master' to whoever can prove themselves the greatest adept of any particular skill or ability. For martial prowess, simple duels are usually enough to prove who is worthy of the title. However, it is also reserved for those with artistic ability and such things are often more difficult to judge. Where there is no clear Master, we offer no title. However, it is often clear who the contenders for the title actually are. We can often wait many years for a Master painter or poet to appear, but during this time all those who work in such a craft are doing their utmost to prove worthy of the title.

What does not make us stronger diminishes all of us. Those few who have nothing to offer our society are excluded from it. We send them out from Caliban

to make their way among the lesser species. Our name for such exiles is Dallaik, that which is less than Dwimmerlaik. Some become kings and champions of other worlds, but to us they are ever failures. Only by challenging themselves against the power of our ancient and tempered culture are our people truly tested. We dominate lesser races, this is true, but it is no more impressive than a farmer dominating a field of wheat. You must do more to prove yourself worthy of being Dwimmerlaik.

You may ask why we do not slaughter such weaklings. In some cases we do, but it is still considered wasteful. While we only accept strength, we recognise that there is still potential in even the lowest of our own. Occasionally, some exiles prove themselves, out there in the worlds of the Grand Stair. Those who return to us with proof they are worthy to be a part of our society are welcomed back, for there is no shame once one has proved oneself. However, we are rarely wrong about those we cast out, and most find their fate in the wilderness of infinity upon the Stairs.

As we are speaking of strength and weakness, I should make special mention of truth. Truth and lies are important to us because they often prove the strength and weakness of those who use them. To seek comfort in what we think is only truth is a sign of weakness. Lies are a test for those who seek the truth, and as such show up weakness.

For this reason, we have been called a society of lies. We are duplicitous

because a truly skilled individual knows when he is being lied to and adjusts accordingly. To offer nothing but truth is to offer a weakness, implying your opponent requires a weakness in you to prove themselves. Such an insult rarely goes unanswered. So we stand by truth but offer it rarely, we hide it among the lies. Those who understand us usually have little problem with our traditions. Those who cannot keep up prove themselves unworthy of our attention and we shed no tears when they fall to our duplicity.

## Religion

*"We need no god because we have stood as gods."*

There are those who say we believe in nothing, but while it is true we are a people without a god, it is not true that we are a people without a faith. There are many people among the worlds who believe there is some deity who created them, and the Dwimmerlaik once shared such an idea. But the details of this ancient religion are long forgotten. It was the fancy of an underdeveloped species and we no longer pay it any heed.

But the thought of a god, an ultimate creator, who brought the Grand Stair into being, persisted to our earliest ancestors. Those of us who first explored the Stair fully expected to meet such a being, be he divine or not. We thought when we found him he would offer us the secrets of the universe and a place at his table. But we met no such being, though we met many who claimed to be



such and proved false. As we grew in power, we often became such false gods ourselves, impressing the primitive peoples of the Gossamer worlds with our power and sorcery. While we allowed ourselves much arrogance, we never truly believed we were as these lesser species believed, even though we could shape worlds. That we might be regarded as gods only proved the title was meaningless. We gave up our search and turned to more important matters.

However, we did not turn from the spiritual, and in a way we have found god inside ourselves. Having been called gods by many we came to understand the potential for godhood lies in all who have stepped upon the Grand Stair. We need no god because we have stood as gods. So we venerate both the potential in ourselves, and those that have brought us to where we are. We seek to prove ourselves great in mind, body and spirit. Our faith is one of purpose and



dedication, and our lives are led following the wisdom of those who have gone before.

To help us remember our past and our ancestors, each family chronicles the lives and feats of its forebears through memories implanted in ancestral horns. The detail in each chronicle varies from family to family. Some simply offer a lineage; others extensively interview their kin before they pass on. As with any religion, the faith of the adherent varies. However, none may record their lives directly. Each Dwimmerlaik's achievements are recorded only by those who think them worthy of memory.

I currently serve our people as the leader of this religion, the Hierophant. I have served many Emperors and Empresses in this role. Exactly how many I shall leave to rumour and speculation, you would probably not believe the truth anyway. Serving me are the Haruspices. The Haruspices have many duties, but they essentially study the lore of magic and ritual from the Hierophant and then bring it to the rest of the Dwimmerlaik. Males and females serve as Haruspices, but only females currently serve on my council as my chief advisors.

The Haruspices are seekers as well as teachers. A fully fledged Haruspex spends much of her time wandering the Gossamer worlds of the Dwimmerlaik empire seeking the wisdom of the ancestors. Those who keep the Chronicle of their family might find a Haruspex and tell her of the deeds of their ancestors, providing what evidence they can of their deeds and knowledge. When

the Haruspex returns from her travels to the Hierophant, she will offer these tales to him and he will decide what is worthy of inclusion in the Grand Chronicle.

The Grand Chronicle is a living library. While we have some paper records, we use the minds of lesser species as the repository of our lore. The more intelligent slaves we take from lesser worlds are brought to 'The Abbey'. In this place we use our mental abilities to burn the chronicle into their minds. We also use magic to bind them together into a vast hive mind that makes their memory capacity far greater than the whole. When one dies they are replaced and connected to the whole to share the burden placed on the others. Those who seek to consult the Chronicle need only look into the minds of one of its 'pages'.

You may wonder how this work does not become corrupt with lies and exaggeration from those who contribute to it. The first reason is respect. We respect the ways of those who have gone before and each of us is drilled in the importance of that respect for our ancestors from an early age. Also, no one may Chronicle themselves, not even the Hierophant. Someone else must always decide that either who you are or what you have done is worthy of recording.

Our use of living minds also makes each report harder to exaggerate or corrupt. The experiences are given to the Haruspices as living memories, which are placed in the Grand Chronicle. To access them is to experience these memories, which means there is no

reliance on the veracity of those who record these histories.

My own words and deeds have been entered into the Chronicle on occasion, although I sometimes lie as suits my whim. This is not uncommon, as even in our memories we can be duplicitous. The Haruspices record, they do not judge, and many of our greatest Masters often leave tricks and puzzles for those who seek to follow them. The Grand Chronicle is a learning tool as much as a history. To be able to simply follow a path to power would only make us weak and suggest such power is simple to come by. So we confuse and obfuscate, to make those who follow better than we.



## Birth, Death and Marriage

*"We are a passionate people..."*

We Dwimmerlaik usually see little point in empty ritual and ostentatious ceremony. Such glamour is a distraction from the truth and those who use it are seen as weak or lacking somehow and overcompensating with propaganda. However, we do like to mark the important rituals, and take time to honour that which we enjoy in life.

The birth of a new Dwimmerlaik is celebrated for obvious reasons, as someone new and full of potential has arrived to strengthen us. The family of the new child gather and in a special ceremony they each bestow a name upon the child. Each name relates to the life-path of those who bestowed it. Essentially, each ancestor gives the child

a new path and a promise to help them fulfil that potential. In time, the child will discover their true purpose and talent and begin a path towards (it is hoped) Mastery. They choose one of these names to mark their decision and set themselves upon their adult road.

During childhood, each Dwimmerlaik is offered as broad an education as possible, regardless of their gender or background. It is shameful to us to waste potential and we recognise that a new Master might come from anywhere. So we offer each child as much opportunity to find their true talent as we can. However, our teachers do not simply instruct their students. It is up to each Dwimmerlaik, even our young, to seize the opportunities they are presented with. Nothing is ever given, it must be taken.



This does not mean the student must hold their teacher at knife point (although it has happened). Instead they are expected to realise that each person they meet is someone they might learn something from, and go about asking them the right questions or seeking their patronage in a physical or artistic endeavour. The teacher rarely dismisses the student, and is usually always available to answer questions. While this means some Dwimmerlaik fail to learn all they can from their teachers and family, many learn something from a teacher that even the teacher was unaware they were able to impart. In this way each student and teacher continues to grow and learns the first lesson of the Dwimmerlaik: that you must take what you want. It also means our people gain a varied education, making us highly educated, skilled and adaptable.

Our education consists of learning not only from books and instruction as other simpler races. We make use of our mental powers to infuse memories into items like stones, and pieces of ancestral horn and bone, which students then access. It is possible to directly impart students with knowledge and this is more expedient, but it is also too easy. Knowledge is important and we value the work it takes to acquire it. However, some things must be experienced to be truly understood. Many families hold deeper memories of learning from one of their ancestors in their chronicles, which a student may experience. These might be a memory of watching a sculptor work, or standing in battle with a great warrior. They offer valuable insight and grant a connection to the

ancestors, which is such an important part of Dwimmerlaik culture.

Marriage is celebrated because we enjoy the excuse for festivities. We are a passionate people and enjoy, at times, quite bacchanalian occasions. To us, ceremony is only worthwhile if there is heart and power in it. When we celebrate marriage we celebrate love, a power that makes two Dwimmerlaik more than the sum of their parts. We have witnessed the power of love to grant endurance and strength when all hope is gone, be it love for a partner or for a country or species. So when it is found we mark the occasion with joyful abandon.

Death is a time of sadness as you might expect. While we celebrate the life of those who have passed, we are full of sorrow that we are diminished by their passing. But we are also strengthened in the knowledge that they live on in their family chronicles, as well as the Grand Chronicle, and may still impart their wisdom to the living for eternity. While we have in the past had many forms of funeral, where we can, we burn the remains of those who fall. It is simple pragmatism, as the bodies otherwise might be found by our enemies. While we are not always able to claim the bodies of those who fall, especially against the Gossamer Lords, we can usually put what we leave behind to the torch. Better to let something burn than let it be taken.

At a funeral, the deceased's possessions and titles are brought out for the assembled guests to take. Each guest can take whatever they feel they

have earned. Usually these guests will only be family, as funerals are a private affair. However, sometimes friends of the family or those who the family wish to honour are invited. Possessions that might be shared (such as a couple's home when one in the union passes on) are not offered, they simply pass to those who have the other share. However, weapons, titles, magical items, books, anything else they owned are taken by the assembly. It is a way to pass the spirit of the deceased on to their descendants, and to ensure the strongest take the best of what is on offer. In deference to the deceased, these ceremonies are not a greedy 'free for all'. As most attendants will have investigated beforehand which powerful title or item their rivals are interested in (and negotiated accordingly) the actual picks have usually been quietly decided long before the ceremony.

## Recreation

We do not only concern ourselves with conquest and self improvement. We have many games and recreations to occupy ourselves. After all, what would be the point of having an empire if we could not take our ease occasionally? Games of strategy remain popular and the game you know as chess has been played by the Dwimmerlaik since the ancient times. As I've mentioned before, the nobility enjoy hunting. While there is only one forest left on our home we have conquered whole forest worlds for our sport. We also enjoy the contests of arms and athleticism that are common among the lesser species.

Our most popular recreation, as you might imagine, is one that combines power and strength in a most dangerous challenge. We call this sport 'Shayde' and the rules are simple. The winner is the first person to strike his opponent with his blade. However, this is not just a physical activity; the real battle takes place in the mind. Both combatants are usually skilled Channeling adepts and they use the power of their will to hold back the blade of their opponent. So, each fighter needs to not only overcome his opponent physically, but also mentally. To most observers the two combatants stand locked in place, weapons raised, for hours. To those who can feel the patterns of mental power rippling between them, the game is a complex series of mental parries and ripostes. Only a Channeler can actually see the shifts in concentration and will between the opponents, but some with sensitivity have been known to see it without training.

Usually a Shayde Duel takes place between only two contestants. However, multiple duels often take place for the truly advanced. Here there are no teams, and no combatant is likely to have the mental will to hold off all the other contestants. So instead they must watch for the intentions and brief alliances between their opponents to know who to target and defend themselves against. Given that some contestants fail to analyse their true enemy quickly enough, and such enemies use all their physical force in case they are mentally parried, dangerous, even fatal injuries are very common.



Calligraphy is another popular pursuit among the less martial Dwimmerlaik, and elegant writing marks you as one of distinction. Our writing is based on the most ancient forms of communication used by our oldest ancestors. They used their claws to mark pieces of wood which were used to record their thoughts and ideas.

So, in honour of our ancestors, we write with our claws, dipping them in ink before we sweep them across a page like a quill or calligraphy brush. It is a difficult skill to master as a claw dripping with ink must be used quickly and adeptly to make clean characters. Those who can write our script properly are respected for their skill as well as the beauty of their characters. It is also appropriate that we should use our most primal weapon, the claws on our hands, as a tool of art. In this way, our writing is a metaphor for our species as a whole.

*Lucien,*

*You will have to excuse the blood smears on this missive, but I have little time and this letter may prove more important than my current injuries. I have reason to warn you those documents I sent might have a kernel of truth as I was recently set upon by two Dwimmerlaik assassins.*

*Now you know I am not generally modest about my fencing skills, but I have to say these guys were good. Really good. Somehow they knew how to find me, and that I'd seen the documents. Had they been less arrogant about their skills I might not have been given the brief opportunity I*

*took to escape. Make no mistake, I did not leave either of them unscathed. But had I forced the engagement I would not be writing this letter.*

*It is not beyond Mowbray to send assassins to suppress a document full of lies just to make us think it was true. But I suspect there is something very important here they don't want us to know. As you might imagine, I intend to take the scenic route home, but if I don't make it you need to know they are coming for the document. Then, I suspect, they are coming for the rest of us.*

*Yours, as ever*

*Veronique, Lady Mistwalker.*

## Dwimmerlaik NPCs

### Veronique, Lady Mistwalker

*It's always been fun to be with Veronique. There is something in her eyes that evokes mischief, as if she's been waiting for a suitable partner in crime to come along. Of course, in Veronique's case, fun always seems to mean danger and dueling. I don't think I've ever managed to avoid a fight when we've been together.*

*You wouldn't think she was capable of such trouble to look at her. She's built for speed not strength, and damn she's fast. She's a slip of a girl, but with an athletic figure, always dressed for a duel with boots, riding trousers and a loose shirt. With her blonde, bobbed*



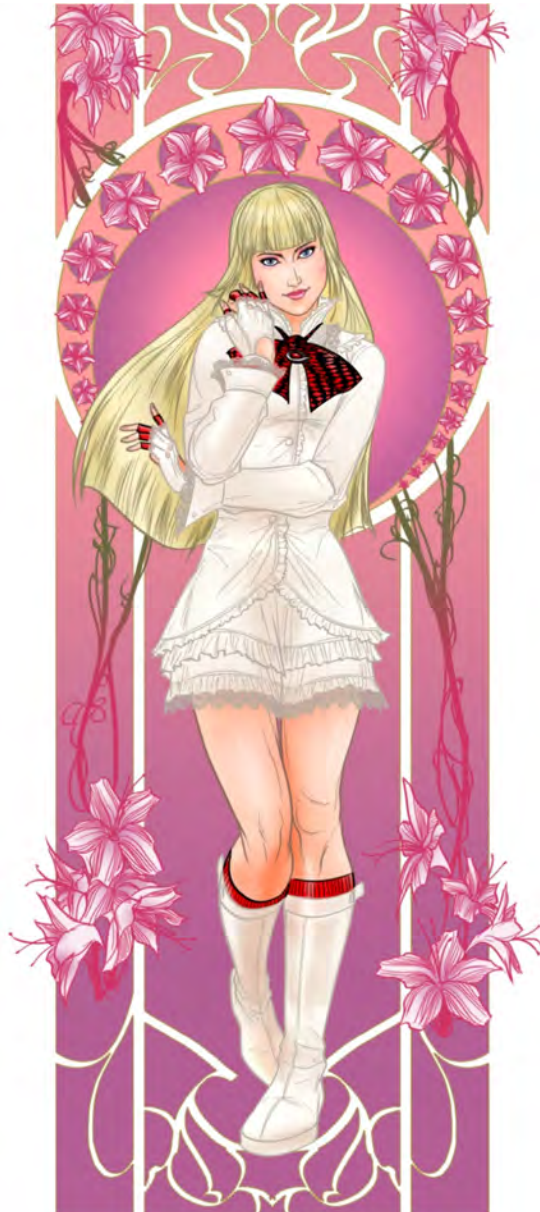
*hair she cuts quite a boyish figure. Underestimate her to your cost though, for she may not hit hard but she knows where to hit. I've seen her drop ten men in as many cuts.*

*She loves the sun. I've never seen her in a cold world. So much so, that there are some places where she is known as the herald of summer, a princess of the springtime. As many times as we have fought we have lain on summer hills watching the clouds pass by together.*

- Cal's Journal

Veronique is a minor Gossamer Lady, but one who has already distinguished herself as a swordswoman of rare skill and talent. Her speed and precision with a rapier makes her deadly, even though she may not appear as much of a threat. Many enemies have made the mistake of thinking she is some untrained girl out of her depth playing with her father's sword.

While she has too little skill at deception to be a spy and is not cold enough to be an assassin, Veronique is a great scout among the Gossamer Lords. Being fast, athletic and able to take care of herself, she is able to slip in and out of worlds before anyone can waylay her. Something of a thrill seeker, Veronique loves nothing more than to make a dangerous run through enemy territory and prove that few can catch her. It is an attitude that has got her into trouble on more than one occasion. Luckily her skill with a rapier has got her out of that trouble.



*Veronique,  
Lady Mistwalker*

If there is one thing Veronique abhors it is the cold. She rarely even enters a world in winter and spends her time only in warm pastoral places. While she never misses an opportunity to test her skills, she also loves to enjoy the peace of a summer day in the countryside.



### Attributes

Psyche – Paragon Rank  
Strength – Paragon Rank  
Endurance – 15 Points  
Warfare – 50 Points

### Powers

*Warden of the Grand Stair* [10 Points]  
*Cantrips* [10 Points] - Dim, Focus, Fracture, Glitch, Jam, Loosen, Mana, Numb, Pain, Stun

### Artifacts and Creatures

*Elegance, Veronique's rapier* [6 Points]  
– This rapier was forged from one of the strongest and lightest metals found among the Gossamer worlds. It weighs almost nothing, allowing the wielder to strike very quickly. In anyone's hands it is dangerous, but in Veronique's it is deadly. The sword itself is obviously fine quality with an elegantly worked hilt and guard, but has little decoration or jewelry.

- Deadly Damage [4 Points]
- Danger Sensitivity [2 Points]

*Veronique's Armor* [2 Points] – While it appears as if she doesn't wear armor, Veronique is not so naïve as to think she doesn't need it. Her cotton shirt is woven with enchantment, making it actually as tough as leather but supple as silk. It is almost impossible to cut or damage, protecting her from most piercing blows.

- Resistant to Firearms [2 Points]

### Domain

**Summerfall** [1 Point] – Veronique has laid claim to a peaceful but idyllic world of rolling fields and long summer days. The place is populated only by small villages, which are quite far apart.

Veronique maintains a small cottage in a village populated by her soldiers who spend most of their time training. Veronique keeps them mainly for protection and to maintain the beauty of Summerfall. While she trains and spars with her soldiers daily she loves to spend time running across the hillside or just sitting quietly enjoying the view.

- Personal Domain [1 Point]

### Allies

*Gossamer World Allies* [4 Points] – Veronique has four allies across four different Gossamer worlds that she normally frequents (for the gamemaster to name).

### Stuff

*Good* [+2 Points]

### Veronique as an Ally

As an ally, Veronique is a lot of fun, albeit dangerous fun. She knows most of the good bars across the worlds, both as good ale houses and as places to fight in. However, she does not play well with others, as they tend to slow her down. For all her outgoing nature, she prefers her own company in most cases. So if you need a mission done she'd rather do it alone, but if she has to take others along and the mission serves the cause of the Gossamer Lords, she will not hesitate to do as she is asked.

### Veronique as an Enemy

Veronique has few enemies, as she either ignores them or kills them. She has no time to waste plotting the downfall of those she doesn't get on with. Revenge is just another macho pissing contest she has no time for.

However, if her enemies refuse to leave her alone, she has no problem with ending the conflict terminally. She simply finds them, challenges them, and if necessary, kills them.

### Objectives

While she is loyal to the Gossamer Lords' cause, Veronique has done her best to avoid responsibility wherever possible. All she wants to do is have fun, which for her is usually testing her skills with a blade against a new opponent or running through a world she's never been to. She has little opinion of her enemies, but will fight as hard as any other lord or lady to protect her people. She has picked her side and knows that comes with certain commitments, but she has no desire to lead others or fight a war any longer than she has to. She is a duelist not a soldier.



*Cicarus,  
The Witchknife*

### Cicarus, the Witchknife

*I almost didn't realize I was looking at Cicarus when I first saw him. He sat alone in the corner of the inn wearing a plain black cowl, his horns unadorned of jewelry, eating the simple fare they offered. What gave him away was the way he was watching the place so intently. Every movement of every patron was being recorded and analyzed, including mine.*

*When our gazes met I realized I was looking into the eyes of the Dwimmerlaik's chief assassin. I made the slightest of movements towards my sword, convinced that we would cross blades any moment, but he just slightly shook his head. I was not his target so*

*he simply had no interest. I have no doubt who might have won such a conflict, but at that moment a fight would have got in the way of his mission and he was professional enough to have no time for such frivolity. This was neither a game nor a thrill for him, it was simply business.*

- Lieutenant Peren, a scout from Drake's Legions, notes from his personal journal in the years before the war with the Dwimmerlaik.

Cicarus is one of the Dwimmerlaik's best assassins from the time before the war with the Gossamer Lords. While many Dwimmerlaik prefer the warrior path, some are clever enough to see that more indirect action is sometimes necessary. When the Dwimmerlaik need someone removed quietly and quickly,



they send Cicarus. It is said he has served for centuries, and that it was Lord Mowbray who taught him sorcery. It is evident that he has a close friendship with the Hierophant, and some suggest he has carried out a few “errands” for him that even the Empress knows nothing about.

Unlike many assassins, Cicarus is a sorcerer not a fighter. While his skill with a knife is renowned, he prefers to use magic to complete his missions. This is because he believes weapons can be taken away but sorcery is hard to remove, and sometimes harder to protect against. He never uses the same trick twice, making him difficult to predict. He is also extremely skilled at staying out of sight, often observing a target for weeks or even months before making a move.

When he is on a mission he doesn't allow anything to disturb him, although he bears no ill will to those he hunts. It doesn't bother him if a mission is called off, and he does not let ego or thoughts of revenge cloud his judgment. He retains an unemotional clarity at all times, which is one of the reasons he is so good at what he does.

What does make Cicarus different from many Dwimmerlaik is that his services are for hire even to Gossamer Lords. While he will never take a contract on another Dwimmerlaik, he accepts contracts from anyone on anyone. After all, the Empress cares little if the Gossamer Lords decide to kill each other.

### **Attributes**

Psyche – 125 Points  
Strength – 30 Points  
Endurance – 40 Points  
Warfare – 75 Points

### **Powers**

*Warden of the Grand Stairs* [10 Points]  
*Sorcery* [15 Points]  
*Invocation* [20 Points]  
*Channeling* [40 Points]  
*Cantrips* [15 Points] – Dampen, Dim, Eidolon Negation, Focus, Fracture, Glitch, Jam, Loosen, Mana, Nullify, Numb, Pain, Paralyze, Stun, Umbra Negation

### **Artifacts and Creatures**

*Tooth, Cicarus' knife* [4 Points] – This bone knife is usually the only weapon Cicarus carries, apart from a few charms to hang spells on. He generally believes anything that can be taken from you is useless. However, he has made an exception for this bone dagger.

- Deadly Damage 4 Points

*Cicarus' Bones* [12 Points] – While he carries several trinkets he can use to hang spells on, his most useful spells are carried on his own bones. Long ago he cut open his flesh and carved runes on his very bones to enchant and hang spells on them. This way, he is almost impossible to disarm without killing. He keeps this ability secret, which has made his enemies all the more confused when they have removed everything he has and he has still escaped and killed his target.

- Capable of Hanging Named & Numbered Spells [2 Points]

- Transfer Capable of Hanging Named & Numbered Spells Power [10 Points]

*Cicarus' Trinkets* [6 Points] – Cicarus has about a dozen of these, hanging from belts, and pouches, and hidden upon his person. He tends to keep his horns unadorned.

- Capable of Hanging Named & Numbered Spells [2 Points]
- Named & Numbered [4 Points]

*Cicarus' cloak* [24 Points] – Cicarus usually foregoes armor, believing that if you are in combat with a target you have already lost. However, his cloak is enchanted to offer protection from many forms of attack. More useful though, it allows him to merge with the shadows and stalk his victims unseen.

- Mold Gossamer Reality [4 Points]
- Invulnerable to conventional weapons [4 Points]
- Danger Sensitivity [2 Points]
- Regeneration [4 Points]
- Regeneration Power conferred [10 Points]

### **Domain**

None.

### **Allies**

Dwimmerlaik Ally [4 Points] – Mowbray

Dwimmerlaik Ally [4 Points] – Empress Ayasha

Partisan Support [3 Points] – House Devish

### **Stuff**

*Good* [+2 Points]

### **Cicarus as an Ally**

If you think Cicarus is an ally you are wrong. He is loyal only to the Empress, Mowbray and the Dwimmerlaik. However, his allegiance can be bought briefly in the form of a contract. He is true to his word and will assassinate almost any target. However, he also reports who the target was and who hired him to the Empress, which can often be quite enlightening.

### **Cicarus as an Enemy**

Cicarus has no enemies, only targets. All his current targets are dead.

### **Objectives**

Cicarus is a servant and seeks only to serve his people. He wishes to see the ascendancy of the Dwimmerlaik and for the Gossamer Lords to be put in their place. However, he is also willing to play the long game and realizes this will not be done in a day. His purpose among the Dwimmerlaik is to be the person who does what needs to be done, and if that means making connections with his apparent enemies, he will do his duty.

### **Shallain, the Watcher of Caliban**

*I heard a story once of a hornless Dwimmerlaik female who waits on the shores of a dead lake in a dark world called Caliban. They say she is old, older even than many worlds, and that she waits there for the last days. There will come a time, they say, when those who once lived in this Caliban will return, and on that day, worlds will fall. It is whispered that she is both the first and the last of her kind, and as such it is her duty to see the last of her*



*race fall as she saw the first rise. On Caliban she lives in a cave that overlooks a vast and empty citadel. A river runs past her cave, constantly warm from the volcanoes that surround the land. It is in this bare cave she waits, that she may bear witness to the end times.*

- from the diary of Dayle, the Eternal Seeker

As no one has been to Caliban for a very long time, no one really knows if the rumors are true, about the old female living there who is not a Dwimmerlaik, but a Dallaik. She does not have the ability to walk the Grand Stair, but she is a powerful Channeler. There are many among the Gossamer worlds who say they have met an almost ghostly Dwimmerlaik female who seems somehow different from the others. Her name is always given as Shallain.

It is unclear why the Dwimmerlaik allowed her to live, as some records suggest they purged or exiled their lesser ancestors who were unable to walk the Stair. Shallain may be the oldest of them all, ancient even by Mowbray's standards, but this has never been proven. Why she lives alone on Caliban is a mystery, although some say that she watches and waits to witness the passing of her race.

From her cave she sends her mind out across the worlds. It is said she watches for the signs of the end times and the rise of the beings that, for good or ill, will finally bring an end to all the Dwimmerlaik have wrought, and when the last Dwimmerlaik falls she will

record this last thought memory and the chronicle of the race will finally be at an end.

### **Attributes**

Psyche – 100 Points

Strength – Average Rank

Endurance – Paragon Rank

Warfare – Average Rank

### **Powers**

*Exalted Channeling* [85 Points]

*Sorcery* [15 Points]

*Cantrips* [10 Points] – Clarity, Eidolon Negation, Focus, Grasp, Mana, Nullify, Quicken, Reveal, Sureness, Umbra Negation

### **Artifacts and Creatures**

*Fenrial, the Guardian Wolf* [34 Points]

– Shallain's only companion is a huge wolf called Fenrial. It is unclear if this massive creature protects her or keeps her prisoner, it may even do both. The beast is agile and strong, with claws capable of tearing through even magical armor. If killed it rises again at dawn.

- Immense Vitality [4 Points]
- Combat Mastery [4 Points]
- Engine Speed [4 Points]
- Deadly Damage [4 Points]
- Danger Sensitivity [2 Points]
- Tireless Stamina [4 Points]
- Invulnerable to Conventional Weapons [4 Points]
- Psychic Barrier [4 Points]
- Regeneration [4 Points]

### **Domain**

**Caliban** – While Shallain may live here, the world is not truly hers. She may wander anywhere but the citadel, for only a Dwimmerlaik may set foot there.



### **Allies**

None, for no one visits, and she never leaves.

### **Stuff**

*Zero Stuff* [0 Points]

### **Shallain as an Ally**

Those who walk the Grand Stair have sometimes seen Shallain appear to them in the Gossamer worlds they visit. Her knowledge of the worlds is vast as is her experience. However, she rarely gets directly involved in the affairs of the Gossamer Lords.

### **Shallain as an Enemy**

As she knows so few people intimately,

Shallain makes as few enemies as she makes friends. Those who become her rivals she simply ignores, and as few have found the way to Caliban, that is usually the end of the matter.

### **Objectives**

As potentially one of the last of the Dallaik, Shallain is more loyal to the Dwimmerlaik than she is to anyone else. Even so, she has little love for the race that evolved to destroy her own. However her task is to watch not interfere. She has been known to nudge fate one way or another, but it is unclear if she is simply seeing an opportunity, working to a plan, or simply passing the time.

