

# CALIDAR

CAL2

## *On Wings of Darkness*



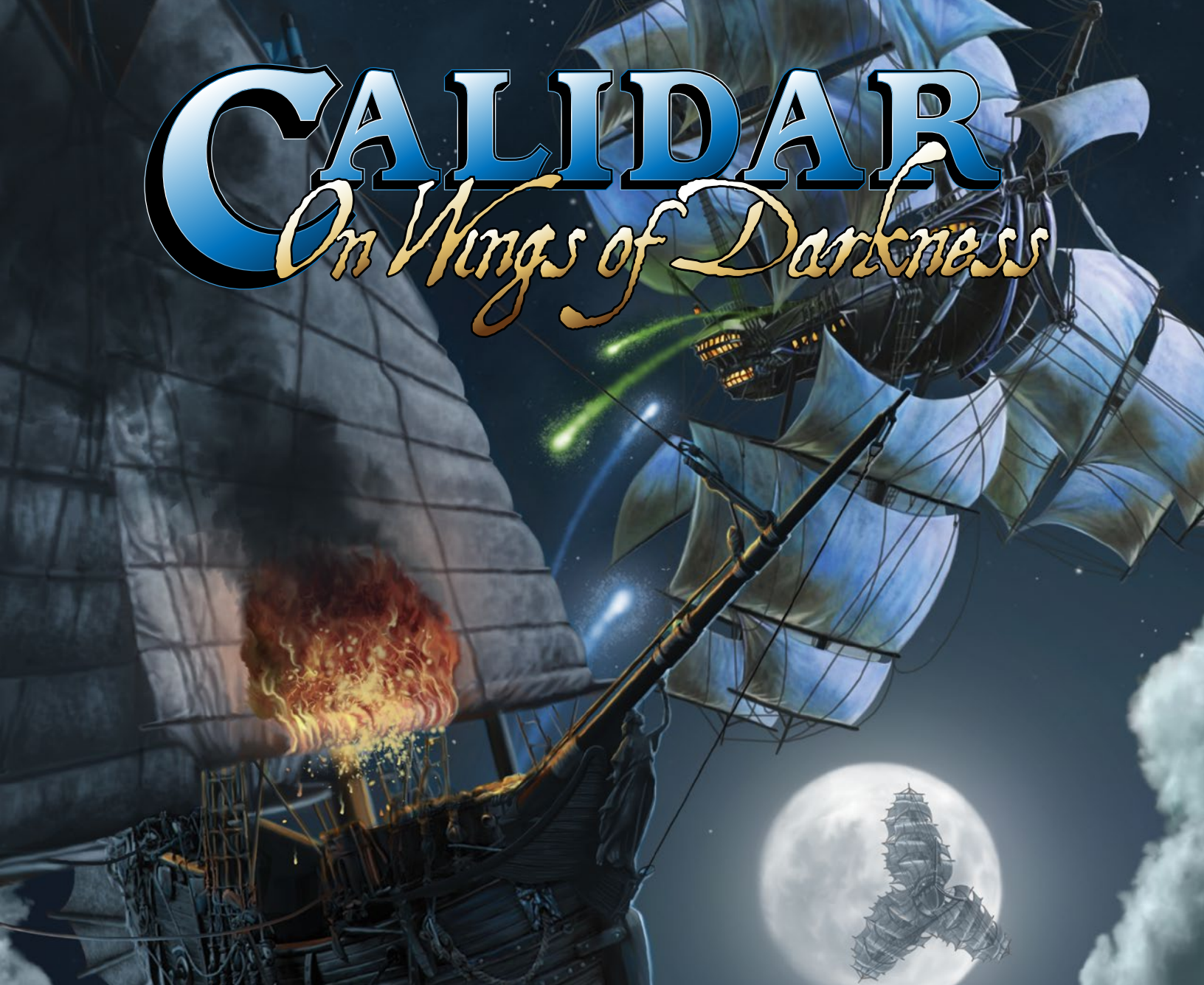
Calidar Publishing

BRUCE HEARD



# CALIDAR

## *On Wings of Darkness*



### Credits

**Author:** Bruce A. Heard

**Editing:** Janet Deaver-Pack

**Proofreading:** Janet Deaver-Pack, Hervé Musseau, Thorfinn Tait

**Cover Illustration:** Brent Chumley

**Interior Illustrations:** Steven Cummings, Joe Garcia, Eric Lofgren

**Cartography:** Thorfinn Tait

**Floor Plans:** Bruce A. Heard

**Internal Layout:** Thorfinn Tait

**Stock Art & Textures:** Bruce Heard, Dreamstime.com,

DepositPhotos.com, Pro Fantasy's *Campaign Cartographer*,  
Inkwell Ideas' *Dungeonographer* and *Coats of Arms*, artists  
Robert Altbauer and Keith Curtis.

CALIDAR, the CALIDAR logo, and the CALIDAR PUBLISHING logo are trademarks owned by CALIDAR PUBLISHING.

©2019 Bruce A. Heard. All Rights Reserved.

All characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by CALIDAR PUBLISHING.



Calidar Publishing  
PO BOX 625  
Burlington WI 53105 USA



# Honor Roll

*Azure Admiral*, Giampaolo Agosta, Roger Ashton-Winter, Gregg D. Baker, Jean-Luc Barbera, Brian Barcus, Gojko Barjamovic, Davide Bascetta, Fearchar Battlechaser, Stefan Beate, Maxime Beaulieu, Ted Berg, Trentin C. Bergeron, Thor Biafore, Isa Bilal, Anthony Bird, Dorsey Bisel, Christopher Bishop, Thomas Biskup, Svein Gunnar Bjørke, Shane Blake, Michael D. Blanchard, Jean-Jacques Bocquet, John H. Bookwalter, Jr., Julian P. Bosniak, Nathan J. Bouvier, Brett Bozeman, Shane C. Bradley, Timothy S. Brannan, Matt Bridgeman-Rivett, Ian Brockbank (Melestrua), Ray Brooks, Mason Thomas Brown, Robert Burr, John Calvin, João Cartaxo, Henry O. Castle, Fenric Cayne, Christian, Andrea Ciceri, David Cinabro, Matt Cockburn, Filipe Passos Coelho, William Z. Cohen, *Combatmedicbush*, Ace (Rod) Corun, Jason Criscuolo, James R. Crowder II, Lewis Crown, Anthony Cumming, Hans Cummings, Bruce Cunningham, Trimus D'Alberon, Thierry De Gagné, Jenevieve "Tasha" Defer, Francesco Defferrari, David Derocha, Samuel "DMSamuel" Dillon, Brian DiTullio, Ann & Paul Dupuis, Andrew & Heleen Durston, *Evil Midnight Lurker*, Heath Farnden/*The Antipodean D20*, Delnurfín Feadiel, David M. Finch, Ken Finlayson, Frederic Fiquet, Ashran Firebrand, Brad Fonseca, Abraham E. Frank, Geoff Gander, Luis Santana Garcia, Fito García, Simon & Emma Gelgoot, Patricio Gonzaga, Clifford J. Gould, Noah Green, *Thieves Guild*, Jack Gulick, Eric Hackworth, Bill "Bilbo The Dungeon Master" Hart, Dave Harter, Håvard, Lance Hawvermale, Morgan Hazel, Katrina Hennessy, Terry Herc, Grant Bruce Hewitt, David A. Hill, Robert Hohman, Lars Holgaard, Robert H. Hudson Jr, Alan Hume, Shawn Hurst, Nancy Hutchins, Idilio, Brian Isikoff, Scott Jones, Serena Jordan, Sir John Starhawk Kadolph, Matthew Kane, Alex Kanous, Christopher Kearney, Scott Kehl, Br Kelly, David Keyser, Stephen Kissinger, Didier Kurth, Julien Lacambre, Jon Lamkin, Francois Larouche, Christopher Larson, Grégory "Lenaïanel" Le Louette, Nurthor LeNoir, Diego Leonardi, Allen H. Leung, Carlos A.S. Lising, Stokley Lloyd, Darren Long, Wendy Lord, Andrew Lotton, Paul MacDonald, Allan MacKenzie-Graham, *Chimera Magazine*, Malcolm Mallardi,

Daniele Mancosu, Andrew Marrington, Wesley E. Marshall, Steven Martin, Scott Maynard, Mike McCain, Gordon McCormick, Christopher McGavin, M. McIntyre, Scott McKinlay, Jim McLaughlin, Luke Mercieca, Jenni Merrifield, Matthias Mertens, Roberto "Sunglar" Micheri, Sverre Midthjell, Robert Miklos, *Effincool Miniatures*, Brian Mønster, Patchen Mortimer, Laura Murin, Hervé Musseau, Charles Myers, Jarno Naukkarinen, Wolfgang "Sonnenschatten" Neckel, Eric Netteberg, Luke Niedner, Diogo Nogueira, Aaron Nowack, Paul Nyitrai, *The Nyne*, William Oberry, Giovanni Ocampo, Barry O'Leary, Fabio Milito Pagliara, Loïc "Jester" Paillotin, Cameron Paine, Allan Palmer, Michael G. Palmer, Giovanni Paniccia, Darius Pearce, Charley M. Phipps, *Phoenixmcl*, Ezio Pignatelli, Amos Pons, Erik Poortman, Dave Poppel, Sander Posthouwer, Kevin Powers, James Pozzetta, Jeremy "Meatsweats" Price, Eric S. Pulley, David Rache, Roberto "B2K" Ravoni, Bill Reger, Ricky Rimkevicius, Philip W. Rogers Jr, Friedrich Röhrer-Ertl, Sam Rosenthal, Steve Rouse, Andre Roy, John "Johnkzin" Rudd, Paul Ryan, Lorenzo Santini, Thibault "Clenarius" Sarlat, Alessio & Andrea Sbarbaro, Leland Schaidle, Jeff Scifert, Nathan Seidenberg, Keith Senkowski, Sebastiano Sitran, Mike Sixel, Erin D. Smale, C. Ryan Smith, Randy Smith, Robin P. Smith, Marzio Spairani, Hauke Stammer, Shawn Stanley, Jackson Starky, David Stephenson, Rob Stone, *Lady N. Duchess Of Urnst/Rachael* Strange, Maciej "Dark Sage" Szydlowski, Thorfinn Tait, *The Old Dragoon*, Andrew Theisen, Chris Thomas, Jeff Thomas, Hamish Thomson, Brother Tom, *Tom3W*, *TomdAvignon*, Greg Traeger, Joseph Tripplett, Iacopo "Dragonero" Trotta, Rob Trottier, Tylis & Zath, Raffaele Valinor, Diederik Van Arkel, Jason "Hierax" Verbitsky, Grady Victory, Alessandro Viola, David Vitchner, Oliver Volland, Tori Vorwerk, Matt "Catapult" Wang, Delmar Watkins, Tammie Webb Ryan, Mike Wert, Joe Wetzel, R. Whitehead, Shamus Williams, Benton "Lord Gadigan" Wilson, Chuck Wilson, Lin Wyeth, Yeom, Terayama Yo, Wu Yungshun, Loris Zanotto, James J. Zecca, Douglas Zielsdorf, Nicola Zucchetto.

# Map Directory

## A MAGE'S CONUNDRUM

Star Phoenix Aerial Battle..... 12

## LAY OF THE LAND

Caldwen Climate Map..... 28  
Caldwen Hex Map..... 30  
Province of Abyzael, topographical..... 32  
Province of Anzael, topographical..... 33  
Dominion of Arcanial, topographical..... 35  
Province of Balthezul, topographical..... 36  
Province of Incubael, topographical..... 38  
Garamial & Lamerith, topographical..... 40  
Meggidon & Nygardae, topographical..... 43

## BLOOD OF THE WORLD SOUL

Caldwen Topographical Map..... 96

## SKY CITY OF ARCANIAL

Redoubt, top view.....101  
City of Arcanial Upper District, top view.... 102  
Upper District Streets, floor plan..... 105  
City of Arcanial Cross Section..... 107  
City of Arcanial Middle District, top view.. 109  
Middle District Street Layout, floor plan..... 111  
Temple of Ashgaddon, floor plan..... 119  
Sphinx Theater, floor plan..... 120  
Middle District Design Template..... 122  
Lower District Intersection..... 123  
City of Arcanial Lower District, top view.... 125  
Flea Market, floor plan..... 130  
Port Arcana, top view.....131



# Table of Contents

## **A MAGE’S CONUNDRUM .....4**

Azfael .....	4
The Plan .....	5
Into the Dark .....	6
A Fateful Encounter .....	8
Trouble in the Sky.....	9
At Death’s Door.....	13
Of Chicken Feet & Bad Blood.....	14
“You Need a Divorce!” .....	15
A Rude Awakening .....	17
A Quiet Entrance.....	19
“Ahoy, the Star Phoenix!” .....	20
A Fine Party .....	20
The Masks Come Off.....	21
Onward to Glory .....	23

## **HISTORY OF CALDWEN ..... 24**

The Origins.....	24
Gandaria’s Dark Ages .....	24
Colonial Era.....	25
Civil War .....	26
Independence.....	26

## **LAY OF THE LAND.....28**

Province of Abyzael.....	32
Province of Anzael .....	33
Dominion of Arcanial.....	34
Province of Balthezul.....	37
Province of Incubael .....	37
Province of Garamial.....	38
Province of Lamerith .....	39
Province of Meggidon.....	41
Province of Nygardae.....	42

## **INTRIGUES OF THE MAGI ..... 44**

Provincial Authority .....	44
Wizard Estates .....	44
Forms of Address .....	44
Inheritance Laws.....	44
Governance.....	45
Leagues and Alliances.....	45
Armed Forces.....	45
Sample Military .....	47

## **BEHIND THE CURTAIN..... 48**

Factotum Fellowship.....	48
Falconers’ Guild.....	48
Fifth Column.....	49
Habrith .....	49
Hand of Haddan.....	50
Jiyū-kai .....	50
Maghia.....	50
Proctors of the Halls .....	51
Shebbai, Order of.....	52
Spell Hackers’ Cabal.....	52
Other Associations.....	53

## **A CAST OF MANY ..... 54**

## **MASTER & SERVANT ..... 60**

Documentation.....	60
Licensing.....	60
Repossession .....	60
Liabilities .....	60
Usage .....	60
The “Black” Market .....	62
Tools of Lordship .....	62
Notorious Demons.....	64
Game Statistics .....	65

## **BEASTIES IN THE DARK ..... 66**

## **AT THE HEART OF MAGIC .....70**

The Games .....	70
College of Abjuration.....	72
College of Alteration.....	72
College of Conjuraton .....	73
College of Divination.....	73
College of Enchantment .....	73
College of Illusion.....	74
College of Invocation.....	74
College of Necromancy.....	74
College of Grand Wizardry.....	75

## **Academic Circles.....76**

First Circle .....	76
Second Circle .....	76
Third Circle.....	76
Fourth Circle .....	77
Effects on Spellcasting .....	77
College Life.....	78
Career Paths.....	79
College Organization.....	79

## **SECRETS OF THE CABALS ..... 80**

<b>Cabal of Alchemy.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Cabal of Demonology .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Cabal of Dracology .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Cabal of Elementalism.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Cabal of Necromancy.....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Cabal of Skymastery .....</b>	<b>91</b>

## **BLOOD OF THE WORLD SOUL ....94**

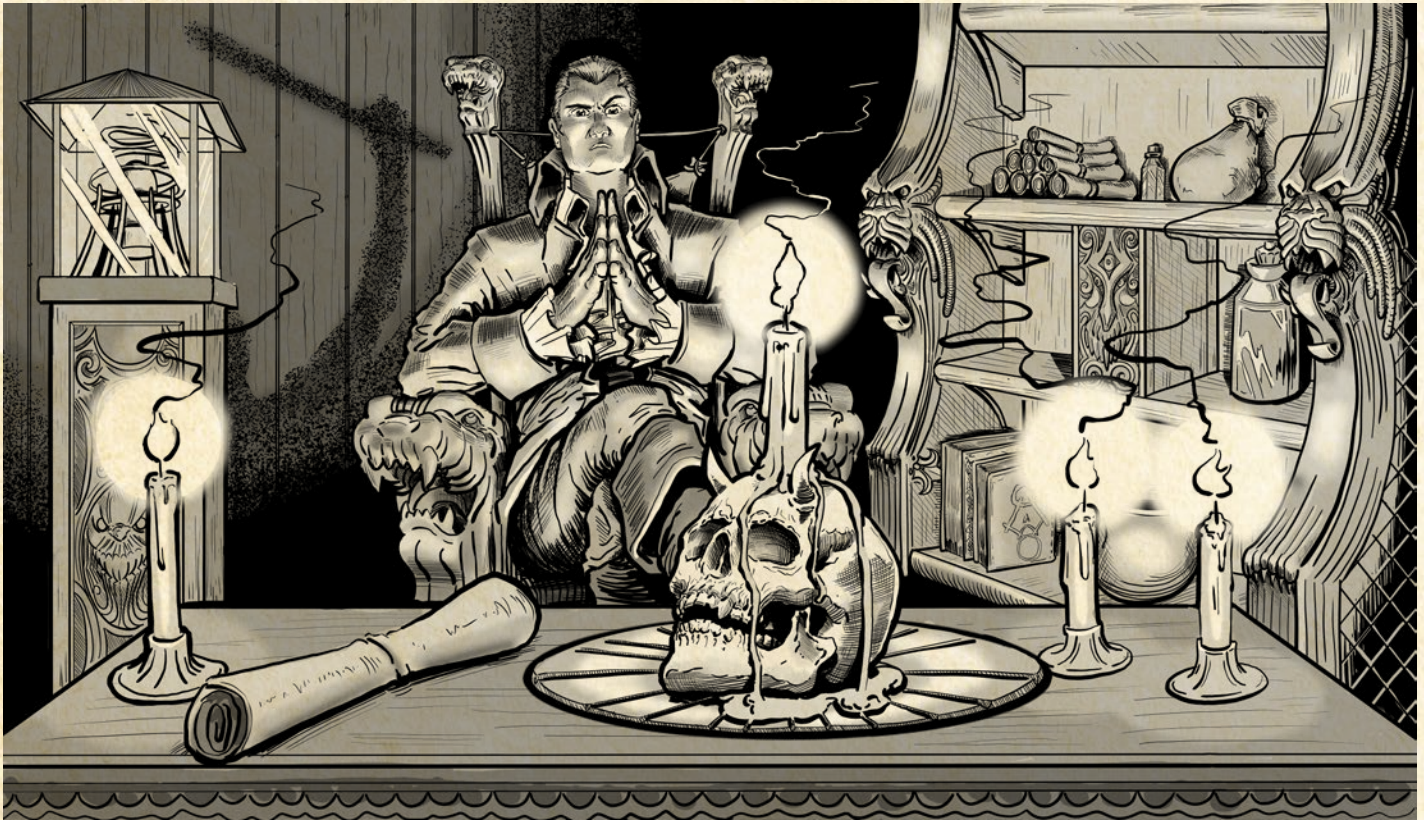
<b>Et Mana Fuit .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Mana Power .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Mana Sickness.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Shebbai Magic.....</b>	<b>98</b>

## **SKY CITY OF ARCANIAL .....100**

Levitium .....	100
Historical Summary.....	101
<b>Upper District.....</b>	<b>101</b>
Redoubts.....	101
Lord High’s Palace.....	101
Outer Quarters .....	105
<b>Middle District .....</b>	<b>108</b>
Streets and Avenues.....	108
Above & Below the Terraces.....	110
Blank Template.....	123
<b>Lower District.....</b>	<b>123</b>
Above & Below the Decks .....	124



# A Mage's Conundrum



## Captain's Log

13<sup>th</sup> Day of Deirdea 1512, first dog watch.

Three months past the great battle of Kragean 8<sup>th</sup>, the Star Phoenix has been repaired, her crew rested, and new recruits brought aboard. Glorathion has proven a welcoming home port, and those of my crew who'd emerged from the Vortex seem to have embraced their new existence under the stranger skies of Calidar. The Living have come to terms with the oddity of the Fallen still walking the decks. Meanwhile the true nature of our skyship and the crew's origins haven't as yet come to light. This remains a concern and a mystery to all aboard.

The stores have been replenished, and departure from Meryath completed without trouble. The Star Phoenix flies once more, on a discreet diplomatic mission to the Magiocracy of Caldwen's head of state, Lord High Vardalas.



The rectangular pupils in the old man's eyes were oddly mesmerizing and more ovine than truly human. Wooly gray hair and an overly broad aquiline nose dominated his features. He hunched forward while considering what Isledemer had just said. Leering gazes from a dozen woodcarvings adorning the crowded bookshelves behind him added to the study's disturbing atmosphere. The captain could have sworn that one had stuck out its forked tongue at him. Something Isledemer could not quite discern scurried across the sallow dimness.

Annoyed, he returned his attention to Azfael.

"Captain d'Alberan, your visit to Caldwen may not be what you think," said the old man. "You should know that nothing in this magiocracy of ours is what it seems. In truth, it's a scorpions' nest."

"What do you mean?" Isledemer asked. A nagging feeling had crept into his mind that his audience with Lord High Vardalas had gone suspiciously well.

"Perhaps you should ask yourself why Queen Shardwen didn't dispatch an ambassador," Azfael said. "Why send a newcomer, an adventurer more at ease on a skyship's deck than on the polished marble floor of a grand wizard's palace?"

"I say, Her Royal Majesty may trust me more than her court of strutting peacocks."

The old man winced. "I hardly ever go to Arcanial, let alone to His Excellency's palace, and yet, somehow, we met there. Neither you nor I believe in coincidences and thus not in the notion that our paths crossed by accident." Azfael pointed a gnarled finger at the captain. "The queen of Meryath knew I would want to chat with you, and I can see why."

Isledemer raised an eyebrow, and straightened in his seat. "See what, Sir?"

"The darkness in your heart," answered the old man. "It is given to my kind to sense the seed of demons. Clearly, you are human, Captain d'Alberan, and yet you bear within yourself part of another spirit, one ordained to you by an otherworldly will, while a fragment of your own lies elsewhere."



# A Mage's Conundrum

The red candle's flame on the small table between them flickered at the revelation. As bloodlike wax slowly dripped down the taper and the skull on which it stood, the bony remains' eternal rictus seemed all the more scornful and macabre.

"I assure you, Sir, I feel perfectly fine. If someone else had decided to move in, I would know." Isledemer didn't like where this was going. He feared he already knew what Azfael meant.

"Would you, now?" insisted the old man. "If your guest isn't fully awake, how would you? Shardwen was wise to send you here, to the realm where demons serve sorcerers. What lies inside you hasn't truly emerged and seized what I suspect it most desires."

An impish face among the woodcarvings winked at Isledemer and pursed its dusty brown lips in a kiss.

"Truly?" Isledemer's uneasiness grew by the instant. "And if I may ask, what exactly does my marvelous gift seek?"

"Only you can unveil its true purpose, Captain d'Alberran. For this, you need to release its consciousness. I shall help you in this endeavor if you wish, but first, tell me: is there an object that you own, a possession near and dear to you, or something that turns up when you least expect it?"

"I have more than one, as any self-respecting sorcerer should. What of it?"

A short pause and the hint of a frown betrayed Azfael's annoyance at the captain's coyness. "Whatever it is, you must ensure never to lose it or allow it to be harmed. It may very well be the receptacle for the remainders of your life force and your guest's. Damage to one will pain the other. The death of either will doom both, of this I am certain."

The old man's words confirmed what Mama Goo had told Isledemer months earlier about his bond with the *Star Phoenix*. He'd experienced his ship's pain keenly enough. However, he loathed the idea of any foreign will mucking about in his head, and even more the notion it was demonic. "Can this bond be undone?"

Azfael recoiled at the question and lifted an eyebrow. "Why would you wish to, Captain d'Alberran? The severing of spirits may result in death to both. Please do not misunderstand me: that with which you have been endowed is priceless, should you learn to assert your will upon it. Therein lies your challenge. If you fail, madness and a life of sorrow await you. If you prevail, unusual powers will be yours as well as a greater understanding of the world around you. It may help in your endeavor to unveil wherefrom you and your crew hail."

The sage's last point compelled the captain to find out more. "Well then, what now must I do to perpetrate this awakening? I much prefer knowing to whom I have the pleasure, as it were."

The old man drew a breath to respond when his eyes widened, a steel blade tearing through his robe. Crimson welled on his chest and, after an unintelligible gurgle, Azfael fell forward, taking with him the table, the skull, and its candle. Behind him, in a split second before darkness prevailed, Isledemer saw a masked man holding a bloody sword. Retrieving his wand from the sheath under his forearm, the captain rolled left from his chair, muttering a spell. "Luminesce."

A golden aura pulsed to life, revealing Azfael's study and the old man lying before Isledemer. Farther back, his attacker turned to duck out of the room. The captain rose to one knee, closed an eye, and aimed his wand. Not more than a few syllables got past his lips when something hard slammed the back of his head. Beyond the searing pain, his blurred vision, and the ringing in his ears, Isledemer heard the footsteps of someone else running away. He cursed. It was bad enough that he'd allowed himself to be ambushed by someone magically concealed, but he'd also wasted his spell, something any sorcerer abhorred—not to mention Azfael lying at his feet in a pool of blood. Isledemer reached for a potion at his belt, unstopped it, and forced its liquid into the old man's mouth.

Still dizzy and unsteady, Isledemer got to his feet and staggered out the door, past the woodworks' dismayed faces staring down at their master. Hurried steps somewhere ahead spurred him on. The hallway led to an outside terrace. Bright winter sunlight felt like burning daggers stabbing his eyes. With a hand protecting them, he looked around. Rising into the sky, a small ship quickly sailed away. Out of spite, Isledemer cast a ball of fire that set its stern ablaze. He vaguely made out the words of a familiar spell cast immediately thereafter that smothered the flames. Another followed, peppering the captain with an array of magical projectiles that stung like angry hornets. For a brief instant, Isledemer hesitated between returning to Azfael and giving chase, as he too could fly if he wished. He chose the former.

Retreating inside, he knelt and examined the old man. Life barely lingered within him despite the potion. The magical brew had not dispelled death's pallor on his face. With unexpected strength, Azfael grabbed the captain by his shirt and pulled him closer. "Find the twin fangs at Lix Tetra's mouth," he rasped. "Search deep... In a bronze urn lie the ashes... Take them before someone else does. Flee now. They are coming for you." His eyes stared into a vague distance with the finality of death while the animated carvings grew still at last, their grotesque, sneering expressions forever frozen.

"Lix Tetra," Isledemer whispered pensively. Whatever did he mean? Frustrated, anger twisting his guts, the guilt of failure weighing his shoulders, he closed Azfael's eyelids. The blue coloration on the old man's lips suggested poison had been involved. These killers certainly had ample opportunity to murder both of us, he reasoned. So why didn't they? Suddenly realizing how much worse the situation truly was, Isledemer cursed and ran from the study. He had to get back to his ship at once.

## Captain's Log

*23<sup>rd</sup> Day of Deirdea 1512, forenoon watch.*

*Following an ill-fated tête-à-tête with Master Azfael, recent guest at the lord high's palace in Arcanial, suspicion runs high that I, Captain Isledemer Drake Hieronymus d'Alberran, may be accused of murdering the elderly sage at his residence in the town of Alamir. No clear motives emerged after his two killers fled the crime scene, ignoring an opportunity to slay me as well. Therefore, my assumption remains that had been*





# A Mage's Conundrum

*their plan. As the Star Phoenix heads southeast toward a deserted area in the Arm of the Magus, a foray ashore will be needed to elucidate Master Azfael's last words. Partial cloud cover may help mask our journey across Caldwen's heartland.*



"Looks like someone wanted to set you up for the old man's death," the first mate commented. Sitting at the table with their captain, Enna, Arabesque, and Yuntai showed concerned expressions. "Any idea why?" she asked.

"He did describe Caldwen as a scorpions' nest," Isledemer answered somberly.

"As a diplomat, you should be protected from such accusations," said Yuntai.

Isledemer winced. "I wouldn't bet my ship or my crew on it."

"Leaving so abruptly could make you appear as if you fled the scene," risked Arabesque in an embarrassed tone.

"I *did* flee, so to speak," he answered. "Someone planned this murder, and I doubt staying would make a difference." The captain gazed through the great cabin's stern windows. "Best we make sure no one catches up, as I am certain there will be the devil to pay down this path. Besides, I need to investigate something of importance that the sage brought up before passing away. Mister Wu, please hand me the *Grand Atlas*, which Her Majesty so generously proffered from her library. It's the large tome with the gray-blue leather binding behind you on the middle shelf."

Despite Yuntai's careful grip, the tome landed on the table with a heavy thump. Its cover creaked when Isledemer opened the book. He glanced in the back, hoping for a geographic index—a vain effort, which he greeted with a frown before turning to the table of contents.

"The sage referred to Lix Tetra's mouth. I must assume he meant a river's headwaters somewhere. Any of you ever heard of it?" he asked without lifting his eyes.

"Did he say in which realm to look?" asked Enna.

The captain muttered an unintelligible answer as he flipped through endless pages and perused insets, scroll-like flaps, and accordion-style foldouts expanding this way and that. Frustration mounting at his futile attempts to fold oversized maps back into the book, he leaned against the back of his chair and sighed. "This will not do," he finally declared before pulling out his wand. A few arcane words later, he began tapping each map while paging through the book, causing a continual flurry of much enlarged illusory images to appear in midair and dance about the great cabin.

"Sorry for the mess," Isledemer added. "Do bear with me, if you please. It won't be much longer before all these *phantasmally displayed figments* can be sorted out." After much of the book's contents filled the chamber, Isledemer shut the tome and slowly spun his wand at the glowing images.

"Locate Lix Tetra."

All but one figment vanished. The remaining image levitated to the center of the table for the officers to behold more clearly.

"There!" said the captain, pointing at a label glowing on the

map. "It's actually not far from here." He leaned over the side of his chair and called out, "Newsbickle!"

A midshipman standing outside the great cabin's door stepped in. "Sir?"

"Please tell the helmsman to set a new heading to the northeast, and smartly, boy."

The adolescent promptly disappeared as Enna pointed at the map. "What is it that we are supposed to find there, Captain, and why are we going?"

"The sage alluded to something concerning this vessel, how it was conceived, and the manner in which it was bound to me. The information I seek is buried beneath two fangs—I presume a pair of standing rocks near the river's source. I dearly hope that further investigation will shed light upon our existence in this world."

Enna stood from her chair while Isledemer dispelled the map. "Very well, Captain. With your permission, I'll return topside. I'll find that place for you."

"Thank you, Mister Daggart," responded Isledemer. "Mister Wu, you shall accompany me during the away mission, if you please."

Arabesque lifted a hand. "I beg your pardon, Mister Wu," she interjected. "I need a moment in private with our captain."

Yuntai responded with a nod, and stepped out after the first mate.

Without waiting, the ship's master explained herself. "If this has to do with the ship's magic and how it affects you, I believe I should be the one accompanying you."

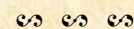
Isledemer hesitated. "The place I intend to visit in all likelihood is a dangerous one. My captain-at-arms stands as a good choice."

"He does indeed, but please understand: the goddess Istra, my celestial liege, imbued the *Star Phoenix* with this bond. It is therefore my duty to be present. I may also be better suited than Mister Wu to deal with what I presume guards what you seek. It may not be of this world."

Concern barred the captain's forehead. "You are right. If anything threatened the ship in my absence, I'd much prefer he be aboard. It's just that..." Isledemer paused, rotating his wand dubitatively between his fingers. "It's just that I couldn't bear something happening to you."

The elven maiden responded with a smile. "As you once said to someone in your crew: we're on the same boat, aren't we? I fear for you each time you leave. The last time you did, you could have been slain so easily. No prayer to Istra could ever soothe my grief. If it is your fate to perish, my love, then at your side I too shall fall."

Isledemer took Arabesque's hand and kissed the tips of her fingers. Then, feigning greater resolve than he felt, stood, adjusting his coat with a sharp downward tug. "Well then, it is agreed. You shall accompany me on this mission. Please inform Mister Wu of my concern regarding ship security in my absence. He'll understand."



"Well, I suppose this is it," Isledemer observed worn, weather-beaten stone steps descending into darkness. Behind him, Arabesque, and their flying skiff, stood two tall white stones tapered at the top. Amid large patches of snow, reddish bushes surrounded the vicinity, halfway



# A Mage's Conundrum

up the deserted mountainside. Nearby, a brook endeavored to cascade beneath cage-like icicles. Dead leaves rustled in a cold, gusty wind.

"I don't like the look of these clouds," the ship's master said, gazing at the sky.

Isledemer gave a dubious glance at Arabesque's armor, an elegant sheath of metal, or in his view a tantalizing death trap during a storm. He cautiously began climbing down between frozen brambles determined to interfere with the wagging plume on his hat. "Enna knows her business. We might just as well get inside and away from this blasted wind." He retrieved his wand and touched his belt buckle. "Luminesce."

Ages of grit and plant debris blown into the stairwell crunched under Isledemer's boots. A telltale-click halted his progression. He cringed when a rusted and worm-eaten remnant of a long-forgotten trap guarding the entrance failed to pierce cobwebs, caked dirt, and invasive roots covering the stonework.

"We may be in need of someone with a burglar's skills," said Arabesque.

The captain removed the dilapidated projectile and tossed it aside. "I'm afraid ours is a hopeless poltroon more likely to hide behind us than to scout ahead."

The two followed the spiraling stairs down to a landing with a large wooden portal. Much of its thick studded woodwork had rotted away, and its fittings hung as rusty testaments to what once had been a sturdy barrier. Isledemer cautiously peered past two crumbling gargoyles sitting in alcoves adorning the entry. The captain's light could only reveal part of a domed-chamber lying beyond. A damp and moldy smell prevailed despite the winter air.

"Think something lives there?" Arabesque whispered.

"I'd be surprised if nothing did," answered the captain, pulling a small mirror from his coat. With it, he verified that nothing awaited their entrance inside the chamber, just above the portal. Satisfied, he returned the mirror to its place and kept his wand in hand. "Follow me. Watch your stern, if you please."

"I'd rather you did."

Isledemer stopped and glanced at Arabesque. He started to respond, then slightly shook his head, and forced his attention to the mystery ahead. Out of the dark came a spider the size of a house cat. It clicked its fangs ominously at the intruders.

"Oh, come now," said Isledemer, casually crushing the beastie under his boot. "You'd think they'd come up with something better!"

The ship's master observed the arachnid's smeared remains still twitching on the stone floor, and gave the captain a blank stare. "They who?"

"Whoever created this place of course, who else?" It all seemed perfectly evident to him, until Arabesque cleared her throat and pointed at a crawling mass of the beastie's extended family creeping past scattered bones just ahead. "Oh, dear. Hold your breath."

Isledemer spun his wand over his head and aimed it at the approaching horde. "Inferno!"

A roaring ball of fire engulfed the marching forest of lanky bristly legs. The spiders writhed in agony, some bursting like corn kernels

in hot oil. A cloud of smoke heavy with the scent of burned flesh and other foul things filled the chamber.

"Nothing to it," he said proudly after a cough. He then noticed Arabesque's knowing smile, as she held her barbed spear pointing over his head. There, skewered on her weapon's business end, a bigger arachnid hung, its silk thread dangling from the darkness above.

"You're welcome, dear," she said, flicking off the dead beastie.

The two proceeded across the chamber to a second portal. Rather than a wooden door, an inky darkness masked the way, impervious to the magical light glowing from Isledemer's belt buckle. Its diffuse golden aura stopped there, as if it met a wall.

Without waiting, the captain uttered a few more arcane words. The shape and size of an egg and invisible to all but its caster, the dweomer levitated into the darkness. Isledemer closed his eyes and concentrated on his task, maneuvering the magical oculus and seeing through it despite prevailing dimness.

"Found anything yet?" whispered Arabesque.

The captain grimaced. "I say, a right nasty place. Round chamber... pit at the center... skeletons chained to the stone floor, aligned like spokes in a wheel, their skulls closest to the pit's edge. I see nothing else." He dismissed the spell and unsheathed his rapier, holding it in his left hand, wand at the ready in the other.

The ship's master tugged on a chain at her neck and pulled out her divine liege's symbol from under her armor, a wooden carving of a tropical flower so far as Isledemer could tell. She wrapped the chain around her wrist and readied her spear before giving the captain a brief nod.

The inky darkness felt colder than the wind-swept mountain slope. Isledemer heard Arabesque whisper a short prayer. He'd heard that one before and winced to protect his eyes from what he knew would follow. Pallid and stark, a gleam at the center of the chamber repulsed the unholy darkness, gradually revealing its contents. With the benefit of light, it appeared a blood-like substance filled the pit. The skulls at its rim each featured a hole near their occiputs, from which a crimson liquid dripped continually, draining into the pit along grooves carved into the stonework. As the edge of Arabesque's harsh radiance reached past the skeletons' feet, soul-wrenching screeches tore through the silence. Isledemer's old wound, the one he'd earned when he first confronted the draconic knights months earlier, flared wickedly in his chest. Eerie silhouettes rose from the red surface, glistening and twisted, and levitated above each skeleton.

At once, Arabesque brandished her symbol. "In the name of Istra, be gone, unholy spirits!"

Three of the undead immediately convulsed and collapsed upon themselves, as if sucked through a pin-sized hole in the universe.

"Some kind of vampiric haunts?" wondered Isledemer as two flew toward him.

"Blood wraiths, love. Don't let them touch you," Arabesque warned, while two remaining undead approached her. "They will weaken your spirit and blight your flesh." She then touched her armor's gorget, after which a steel helm swiftly unfolded and snapped into place to protect her head and much of her face.





# A Mage's Conundrum

"Classy!" commented the captain, as he parried deathly claws with his rapier.

"Found it in Meryath," she responded, lunging. Her spear impaled a wraith, causing crimson ripples around its wound when she yanked it out. "Knew you'd like it."

"Show off." Despite fancy footwork, Isledemer could not build enough space from his attackers to cast a spell. A master at two-handed combat, he was reduced to wielding his wand's enchantment to deflect the wraiths' grasps while inflicting wounds with his trusty rapier. "By the Stars, these ghastly wretches are hard to slay."

The one Arabesque skewered earlier vanished for an instant, only to coalesce anew above one of the skulls.

"I have an idea!" shouted the captain.

With skillful feints, clever dodges, and by dint of a seasoned swashbuckler's cunning, Isledemer endeavored to sidestep the slower wraiths. He maneuvered around the pit while Arabesque fought to keep her two assailants at bay. While he slashed his rapier across the odious amber-glowing eyes of his closest pursuer, he placed the heel of his boot against the desired skull's chin, pressed down abruptly to snap its neck, and kicked the grinning remains into the pit. At once, the resuscitated wraith convulsed and crumpled into nothingness.

"Aha! There's your secret. Away, you scurvy-blooded pall!" Isledemer triumphed. "I say, my dear, do take one side if you please. I'll take the other. Let us swiftly boot them out of their misery."

As the two methodically made their ways around the pit, skulls popped off and clattered away with encouraging regularity. Vile contents sloshed out their eyes and sinuses before bone and blood sank into the pit. One by one, the wraiths vanished. Out of breath, Isledemer and Arabesque observed the red surface descend until nothing but a hollow dimness prevailed in the shaft. When all seemed fine, a deafening roar blasted from the bottom, knocking the two off their feet. The pain was excruciating enough Isledemer thought his last hour had come. His chest wound felt like fire. A glance at Arabesque revealed she'd fared little better. Both reached for vials at their belts and quaffed their contents. Though the enchanted concoction dulled his pain, Isledemer knew it had but partially undone the roar's harm.

"That I did not expect," he rasped, staggering upright.

"We got someone's attention," answered Arabesque.

The captain sheathed his rapier, but kept his wand in hand. "A last line of defense, perhaps?"

"Let's hope, my love. Let's hope." She pressed on the gorget once more, and her helmet folded away neatly.

Warily eyeing the shaft's obscure depth, Isledemer added, "We'll need to go down there, you know. Come here, if you please. Wrap your arms around me."

Arabesque obliged, and as her face came close to his, Isledemer peered into her eyes. Nearly beguiled in the solace of what seemed like peaceful pools of moonlight, he forgot his spell. The elven maiden smiled and pressed her lips against his. In this brief instant, Isledemer felt worlds away. "I can think of a better place for this, my love," she said in his ear.

Isledemer blinked and cleared his throat. "Right you are."

He held her waist tightly and spoke his magic. Floating above the stone floor, the two hovered briefly above the shaft before descending into the abyss. Shortly before reaching the next level, the spell suddenly failed, as well as the light at his belt. Arabesque landed on her back, with Isledemer on top.

"I would prefer the comfort of the captain's bedchamber," she said with a pained groan.

"Begging your pardon. I've never been known to be finicky in this respect, though I do indeed find this place a tad unromantic," he answered, unfazed. "I can't see anything in this murk. What now do you sense?"

"Your wand, dear."

"My what? Oh, sorry." Isledemer rolled to his knees, removed the offending item, and suddenly realized: "Sadly, I'm out of luminescent magic."

Arabesque pronounced a short prayer to Istra that there be light. And there was light again. It revealed the shaft's opening in a circular crypt's ceiling. Painted scenes covered the walls. At the center, a few feet away from where the two had landed, stood a few concentric steps and a pedestal, on top of which sat a bronze urn.

Isledemer looked up, annoyed. "There must have been a magic-adverse shield in the shaft. It would explain the failing spells. I say, that is troublesome."

"I haven't brought a rope," said Arabesque.

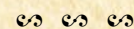
"I have one, but it's a spell. It won't work in that shaft. We may be trapped here."

Arabesque stood and observed the paintings on the wall. "Admittedly, the ship's poltroon might have proved useful for a way out," she said distractedly. "I'll check for secret passages."

Isledemer gazed at the bronze container. "I think we may have found what the old wizard described." Stepping gingerly to the urn, he examined the cabalistic writings engraved all over its surface. Altogether perplexed and absorbed by the strange script, he cast another spell to unveil its meaning.

"Interesting character you've dug up," Arabesque said, slowly pacing along the scenes depicted on the wall. The tone of her comment betrayed a twinge of irked cynicism. "I think it's the owner of the ashes inside that urn."

Isledemer was far too engrossed by the spidery sigils to heed what the ship's master alluded to, until she screamed in pain. He spun round, just in time to dodge a stabbing blade. Gripped with apprehension, he maneuvered to get a better view of what had happened. Unheard and unseen, three masked interlopers had climbed down ropes dangling through the shaft. Two attacked the captain while a third stood by Arabesque, wiping his sword. She lay face down at his feet, motionless. Isledemer's heart sank.



Feeling strangely detached from earthly realities yet unwilling to move on, Arabesque lingered in the crypt. Confused by the eeriness of the situation, she gazed at her body lying on the stone floor, and



# A Mage's Conundrum

then at the man who'd stabbed her. The bitter taste of poison still lingered in her mouth. Perhaps it was the mere memory of what had just come to pass. She could perceive her murderer's face despite his mask. Through his flesh and beyond the bones of his cranium, she peered deep into his spirit, one dark, blind, and remorselessly devoted to a single militant cause. He must have sensed the intensity of her intrusion, as he looked around uncomfortably, reached into the air before him, recoiled, and ran to one of the ropes in the shaft.

Numb and unable to call out, Arabesque watched her lover fight with a rage that only pain and desperation could conjure. No humanly skills could save his foes. Rushing from their corpses as soon as the last was stricken, the captain fell to his knees and held her lifeless body in his arms.

A voice echoed in the distance, vague, unintelligible, perhaps her liege calling her. It grew stronger, pulling her from Isledemer despite her efforts to stay at his side. The crypt faded while Arabesque sank into the Netherworld. The spirits of the two who'd died by the captain's rapier flew by and vanished into the gray-green void. The divine summoning became more imperious, tugging her through the astral immensity until a cold hand grasped her ghostly shoulder.

"Not so fast, fair maiden," uttered a dark and ominous voice.

As the hand spun her around, Arabesque faced a looming, overwhelming presence. Dull red to black, horned, with leathery wings, and shod in cloven hooves, it exuded staggering power and ineffable evil. "Bow before me, for I have need of you, servant of Istra. I am Maalzoth, Lord of Lust, and you are now mine."

## Captain's Log

*23<sup>rd</sup> Day of Deirdea 1512, last dog watch.*

*It is with great sadness that the passing of our ship's master must be recorded this day. Her demise occurred during a foray ashore. Two aggressors were felled and a third escaped. Evidence found on their bodies identified them as bounty hunters carrying a warrant for my capture, dead or alive, issued by the Justiciar General of Caldwen. I strongly suspect that the one who fled is the same individual who murdered Master Azfael, as the wounds he inflicted were identical and involved poison. Petty Officer Moffeecot conducted the funeral service in her own manner. All hands were present at dusk during the ceremony. She will thenceforth purvey spiritual guidance and healing duties until further notice. I'll pick up charting and navigating. Orders have been given to head back to Meryath.*



Isledemer gazed at the bronze vessel on his table, by the flickering light of a lone candelabrum. The urn embodied all the pain and grief swirling in his mind: denial, regret, feelings of betrayal, self-doubt, guilt, and helpless anger. What odious curse was this? What terrible price to pay, that one should lose half his heart for the sake of half his mind. The night wind moaning outside the stern windows peppered their glass panes with frozen pellets. The fateful storm had forced the *Star Phoenix* to climb above the clouds earlier that day, preventing

lookouts from seeing the killers land near the two white stones. The skyship's woodwork groaned under the gusting winter wind.

"How foolish of me," he whispered, "to think we'd gallivant across Caldwen unseen. I should have known better." What pained Isledemer all the more was that Arabesque had been taken from him while he had his back turned. The tone of her last words gnawed at him. Why hadn't he paid attention just then? She would still be at his side if he had. He closed his eyes for a moment, replaying interminably in his mind the sequence of events. He could see what had troubled Arabesque. The murals depicted the grave's occupant, a woman as beautiful as she was wicked, one with leathery wings and skin as black as the deepest of nights, one who toyed with the minds of men, and by those same tortured men was at last put to a fiery death.

The captain shook his head. "A succubus, of all creatures." The notion of a deepening conspiracy closing in filled Isledemer with dread and anxiety. He took a deep breath as if he could exhale all his woes and clear his mind. He returned his attention to the urn, and touched the vessel with the tip of his wand.

"Decipher."

Though largely unspoken, his spell's incantation echoed nonetheless in his mind, chasing away somber chimeras dulling his senses. As the magic took effect, Isledemer inched his fingers along the lines of script on the bronze surface, those he hadn't had the time to unveil in the crypt. Each sigil glowed briefly as he murmured them, as would those of a scroll used to cast a spell. He paused before the last word. He knew it would release an enchantment, but not to what end. He felt trapped. He wanted to unveil the nature of his bond with the *Star Phoenix*. Yet, the idea of tangling with a demon defied his own values. He was torn. Azfael had told him to seize the urn before someone else would. Who could that be? The Justiciar General? Isledemer didn't think so. Arabesque's killer? He couldn't have known about it.

Despite the burning urge to complete the reading and an unhealthy curiosity twisting his gut, the captain reached behind him for a book he hoped might shed some light. The familiar scent of old vellum and rare ink felt like a soothing balm. He could lose himself in the pages of its arcane language, which made sense to him. In them lay order and certainty. He located what he was looking for, about the ashes of fallen demons. A ritual did exist that could bring her back to life, ending his and dooming the *Star Phoenix*. Isledemer doubted that those who'd buried a demoness's ashes in the crypt would have included a way to revive her.

The notion that part of the script's intent was to prevent other demons from tampering with the urn dawned on him. Azfael's warning made sense. Isledemer needed to complete the binding that Istra had begun for him, lest someone else prevented it forever. Full of apprehension, he resumed speaking the urn's last sentence with greater resolve, and uttered its last word.

"...release."

The seal holding the bronze lid flared and vanished. When the captain opened the urn, ashes flew out and spun toward





# A Mage's Conundrum

the great cabin's overhead before blending into the woodwork. The ship groaned anew under the strain of another wind gust. The squeal of tortured timber deep within the ship followed. An unlit lantern jumped from its hook and crashed on the deck. Several planks buckled and cracked. A nearby window shattered, and sudden wind bursting in blew out the candelabrum's flames.

In the dark again, Isledemer raised his wand only to realize he could still perceive the great cabin, not through his mortal eyes but in a stranger, dreamlike manner. There was no great cabin—he *was* the great cabin. His senses drifted *extra corpus*, at first exploring an adjacent compartment, then a few all at once as if their bulkheads had turned transparent, the hold and scurrying vermin now hiding in plain view despite shadows, and at last the entire ship. He could see each member of the crew on watch, those resting, and Enna ordering them topside to scrape off ice that had begun forming on the deck. The captain could feel each plank, sail, yardarm, mast, and brass fitting down to the smallest dowel as if they were parts of his own body. At the helm, the ghost of Ol' Babbiejack slowly turned his head and gazed at Isledemer. He perceived the helmsman's inquisitive mind pondering his captain's newfound clairvoyance. Others who'd died during the previous months rose from the deck, ostensibly reporting for duty. Isledemer knew he was bound to them, and they to him. Arabesque, alas, wasn't among them. The living under Enna's command, now hard at work scraping the ice nearby, seemed oblivious of the scene at the helm. The ghostly crew made way for someone. He knew at once who she was when she stepped forward. Magnificent and yet unbearable, her impish eyes peering over a leathery wing masking her nudity, she fully revealed herself to her soul mate and grinned wickedly.

"Hello, handsome. I've been waiting for you."

Isledemer hesitated, at odds between unholy desires and the pain of his recent loss. All at once feverish and wracked with icy shivers, he struggled until his rational, methodical mind took over, like a well-written spell of old. He straightened up and raised an eyebrow. The voluptuous apparition seemed disappointed.

"My old flame was more fun, but we'll work on this, won't we?" she said with a smirk. "Thank you for awakening me. I so love being able to deal with you in the flesh."

Isledemer raised a hand. "Steady on, Madam. I know whence you come, and I will have you behave yourself."

"Madam! Madam?" The demoness's spirit laughed. "Is that a way of greeting an old friend? I saved your life at least once already, remember? Come on now. Call me *Star*. I'd like that."

"Granted, though I doubt very much *Star* is your name. What do you truly call yourself?"

"You don't honestly expect to discover all my little secrets on our first date, do you?" she answered with a sparkle in her eyes. "You'll have to work harder for that."

Isledemer cleared his throat as furtive grins materialized among the ghostly crew. "I say, we certainly are not on a date, Madam *Star*.

Spirit or not, we'll have to figure out a proper function for you on this ship."

"Oh, you are adorable!" *Star* performed an amused salute. "Aye aye, Sir, my Captain. I intend to do everything you wish, no questions asked. I'm *so* looking forward to this. And by the way, darling, we've got company."

Isledemer watched Rivven, the red-headed bosun, point at the darkness off to starboard. A light flickered through night clouds racing in the wind. Isledemer muttered a curse between his teeth.

"You lot, give sail, and smartly!" he commanded the ghosts. He then turned to the helmsman. "Mister Belzer, hard a-starboard, if you please."

After an odd instant when he regained his humanly senses, the captain stood from the table where he'd been sitting all along. Shivering from the wind blowing in through the shattered window, he picked up his rapier, donned his hat, and rushed topside. He could hear *Star*'s disembodied voice, "Go, my dashing hero! Show them who's in charge."

Enna stood by the helmsman, visibly flustered. "Who gave you that order, helmsman?" With a movement of his chin, Ol' Babbiejack indicated Isledemer approaching quickly. Neither the first mate nor any of the living crew within sight seemed aware of *Star*'s presence. Perched on top of the binnacle lid, a mischievous smirk on her face, she held her tail in a hand, casually spinning its pointy tip.

"Beg your pardon, Mister Daggart," the captain said, eyeing his succubus warily. "I'm aware we've got company. Our former hosts must have a way of tracking us. Prepare for battle."

The bosun's whistle sounded "all hands on deck". Yuntai and his marines took position at strategic points of the *Star Phoenix* while the remainder of the crew collected their weapons and snuffed out lanterns. Master artilleryist Hoyk and his teams prepared the ship's deck weapons.

"Another light off our starboard bow," hollered the dwarf. The ghosts in the sails toiled fearlessly, adding canvas to the main and outrigger masts despite the *Star Phoenix* rolling back and forth in the wind.

"Aye, Mister Pebbleborn!" acknowledged the captain. "Keep your eyes open. There may be others." No sooner than he'd finished his sentence, when a break in the clouds flooded the sky with moonlight, he and Enna sighted a third vessel, lower and astern their portside. They'd sailed into a three-way trap.

"There's no avoiding a fight," remarked Enna. "One way or the other, one of them is bound to intercept."

"She's right you know," interjected *Star*. "I want her job."

Isledemer almost dropped his spyglass. "Oh, go put some clothes on!" he snapped.

"Excuse me?" said Enna, glancing down at her winter outfit.

"Surely, you must be freezing," the captain answered while aiming his spyglass at the approaching skyship.

Visibly confused, the first mate gave an inquisitive look at Ol' Babbiejack nearby. After a surreptitious glance at the succubus, he answered with a coy shrug and ostensibly returned his attention to the task at hand. Broad reaching before the wind, it took little time



# A Mage's Conundrum

for the closest vessel to approach Isledemer's ship. She was a well armed quad-masted galleon.

"Ahoy the *Star Phoenix*," a spell-enhanced voice resonated for all to hear. "This is the Lord High's Warship *Darkwing*. Captain d'Alberran, you stand accused of murder. In the name of Caldwen's Law, heave to and prepare to be boarded."

The captain tapped his wand against his lips. "I shall do no such thing. I am no murderer and, as a duly-warranted legate from the Kingdom of Meryath, I hereby invoke our realms' safe way oaths. Stand down at once."

The response came as swiftly as it was abrupt. Four heavy harpoons glaring with blue flames flew from the *Darkwing*. "Mister Pebbleborn," hailed the captain. "Give her hell!"

The master artillerist signaled his teams, and as many projectiles shot forth, imbued with green halos. "Reload now or never," the dwarf hollered. "The last one gets the feel of my boot!"

"Mister Rugwittle, stand by for fire damage astern," commanded Isledemer.

"Aye aye, Sir," responded the ship's master artificer. The gnome proceeded abaft, his wand at the ready, while the blue and green projectiles crossed paths in the night sky.

"Mister Belzer, ease off the wheel and pull up steeply if you please."

Steady as one who no longer fears death, the helmsman nodded and executed the maneuver.

While two glowing blue projectiles flew wide of the *Star Phoenix's* aftcastle, the others erupted in great balls of cobalt flames amidships and astern. Woodwork crackled and buckled in the heat while Isledemer and Ebben cast spells to smother the blazes. Hoyk's green lances then ripped through the *Darkwing's* outrigger sails, shattering yardarms and burning canvas. Out of balance in the beating wind, she swayed askew.

Star stood up on top her binnacle perch, rubbing her arm while hissing angrily at the aggressor. "Fry, you frumpy harridan!"

The captain felt her pain searing through his arm and reawakening his old chest wound anew. He soldiered on. "Good shot, Mister Pebbleborn! Discharge at will."

The succubus turned to gaze at Isledemer with a sly expression. "You miss that pretty blonde, don't you?" she said. Isledemer heard her despite the ongoing battle's tumult. "She can never do for you what I can."

"Leave her out of this and get out of my head," Isledemer muttered with irritation. He knew she referred to Arabesque and chafed at the thought. After a quick look at the other two skyships, he turned to the helmsman, "Mister Belzer, proceed to roll over port-wise, one quarter if you please."

The master artillerist anticipated the maneuver admirably as the *Star Phoenix* overflew the *Darkwing* and leaned hard, her portside weapons pointing directly downward. It was a feat that only a vessel with enchanted decks could accomplish without everything topside tumbling overboard. The dwarf's rocky voice thundered once more, and another broadside of green lances tore at the Caldwen ship. The projectiles dug mercilessly through her deck, ravaging whatever lay

below. Hoyk's teams cheered at the sight of her crew scrambling to put out a raging fire.

Isledemer watched with concern the second man-o-war approaching ahead, close-hauling against the wind. Ol' Babbiejack, impervious to the odd sight of the inverted horizon, glanced at his captain and sensed his intent. Without another word, he sustained his barrel roll maneuver, steering wide toward the oncoming foe.

Star flew from her perch and landed near the captain. "It's too bad she'll never be part of your crew again, not even as a ghost," she said in a nagging, sardonic tone.

Isledemer faced her, glaring as if he'd just be stung. "What do you know about this? By the Blazes, I'll have you tell me here and now," he demanded as the *Star Phoenix's* starboard weapons came to bear on the next vessel. Hoyk roared, "Loose!"

A new broadside converged toward the second skyship as she climbed to intercept. One green lance crashed into her fore, while the others missed their marks.

"What? You didn't ask yourself why her spirit wasn't aboard?" taunted the succubus. "By now, shouldn't she be standing at your side like your helmsman friend, here?"

His annoyance growing, Isledemer observed a forward-mounted ballista respond to Hoyk's broadside. He quickly aimed his wand and cast a spell at the projectile racing toward the *Star Phoenix*. The harpoon's blue halo flickered and vanished seconds before its steel head stabbed deep into the ship's hull with a loud thump. Immediately afterward, the Caldwenner flew by, narrowly avoiding a collision.

Star and Isledemer winced from that last harpoon stinging them both. "If you really want to know," said Star, "your fair maiden is enjoying some quality time with my old flame as we speak, and he's not about to let her go."

"Wait. What?" Isledemer struggled to continue the discussion while focusing on the battle. In different circumstances, he might have felt jubilation while the *Star Phoenix* leveled off astern the intercepting vessel, speeding away in the opposite direction. "How do you know this? Tell me, damn you!"

As Star demurred, the captain glanced back at the third skyship. Last he'd checked, she was struggling to catch up. Her outline inexplicably faded from sight only to reappear dangerously close. Isledemer cursed. That man-o-war had special magic. Several grappling hooks shot forth from the pursuer and found their marks on the *Star Phoenix's* aftcastle.

"All hands abaft!" he hollered. "Stand fast to repel boarding."

Hesitating between the looming clash and his irksome succubus, Isledemer turned to Star once more. "Where's Arabesque?" he growled. "Speak, or I swear I'll let the both of us suffer the agony of this battle!"

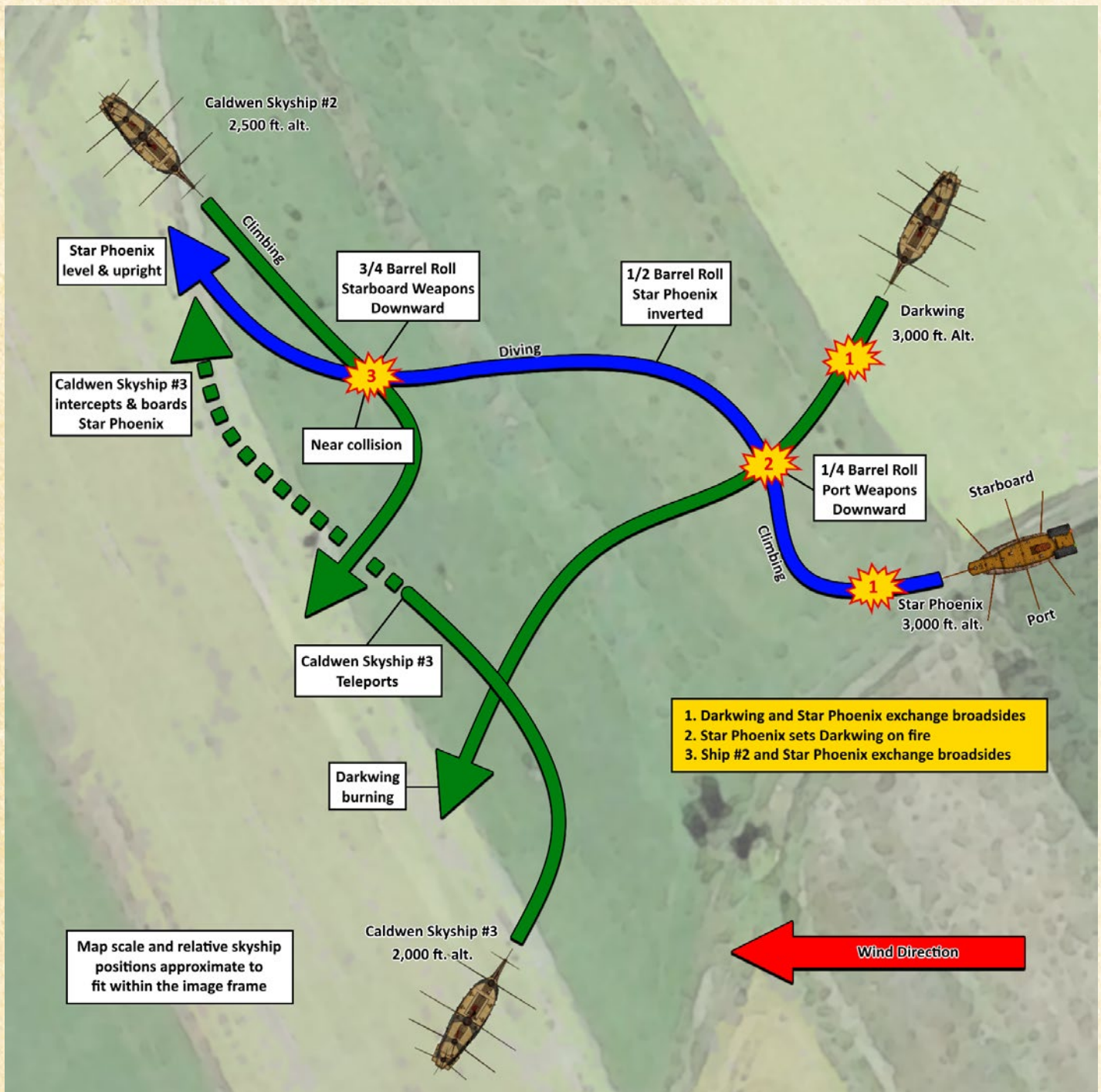
Star rolled her eyes. "Oh, fine. She's in the Netherworld, at Maalzoth's Iron Fortress."

Despite the efforts of Isledemer's crew, the pursuer hoisted herself close enough to enable her own to climb aboard. Yuntai and his marines formed an ad-hoc welcoming committee on the stern





# A Mage's Conundrum



deck. Knowing what was soon to happen, sailors dove out of the way when the master-at-arms pointed his sword at the attackers.

"Discharge!"

An array of bolts crackled ominously, tearing through the first wave of attackers and arcing past them. Howls of horror and pain rose as boarding sailors and marines fell to the deck or tumbled overboard.

As more of the boarding crew followed, the captain turned from the pandemonium astern. "How do you know she's there?" he insisted.

"My master awaited my return to this world," Star answered. "He didn't expect I'd be bound to this ship, but he can still whisper in my ear."

A storm of fiery balls shot from behind Caldwen's advancing line lit multiple fires. Yuntai and a handful of survivors retreated downstairs in a hurry to join Enna's defense on the main deck. The



# A Mage's Conundrum

captain looked up and angrily shot a flurry of magical darts at a sorcerer flying unwisely above his crew.

"He no longer possesses you," Isledemer said. "For better or for worse and until Fate do us part, you are mine and I am yours... that being said, I am your captain." He then hailed a midshipman using a nearby mast as cover. "Mister Grommets, fetch our cook, speedily now."

"Aye, Sir." The young man rushed below deck while a frenzied melee raged above, pitting Caldwen against Meryath's finest, and the living against the dead. A few demon-like creatures crawled aboard, snarling and clawing through the crowd, biting off mouthfuls here and there as they went. Amid the chaos, Hoyk's blunderbuss thundered; out of its billowing smoke, a severed demon's head flew back whence it came. From his vantage point on the fo'c'sle, Isledemer sniped away at his foes, casting magical projectiles or sticky web strands, and undoing their spells as needed.

When Mama Goo hurried up the stairs past the topside fracas, the succubus greeted her with a hiss. The native fellfolk bared her shark-like teeth and hissed back even more wickedly.

"You can see her," observed the captain with some surprise.

"Mama Goo, she see de spirits. She see many t'ings good an' true." Her response came with a frown and a wrinkle of her nose as disdainful as Star's. The two glared at each other.

"I say, that ought to simplify things," Isledemer commented with a smirk, offhandedly driving his rapier clear through a Caldwen sailor headed his way. The endeavor to convince his assailant to drop dead proving undeniably successful, he then asked the ship's cook, "Tell me now, has Mister Starward shown you the Netherworld spell?"

"Nay, but Mama Goo, she know de limbo magic. Mama Goo, she will cas' it fo' de Big Capt'n."

"Splendid!" Isledemer then looked at Star. "You go with her straight away, and smartly. You show her how to find that blasted fortress."

"I don't like her," grouched the succubus.

"Get used to her. Go, I say!" As the cook trotted down the stairs, Star vanished into the ship's planking. Satisfied, the captain placed his wand between his teeth, seized a dangling rope, and swung down to the main deck. Impaling at will on the way, he landed next to the ship's first mate with a swagger worthy of a swashbuckler.

"So kind of you to join us, Captain," said Enna, fighting three Caldwen marines.

Removing his wand from his mouth, Isledemer swished his blade for show before blending into the deck and reappearing behind the first mate's attackers. He promptly dispatched them and doffed his hat with equal flourish. "Glad to be of service, Mister Daggart." As another foe lunged at him, the captain vanished again, the offending blade stabbing instead a Caldwen marine in the back. Isledemer resumed his maddening dance, springing up this way and that like a Jack-in-the-box, and felling unsuspecting spellcasters who'd imprudently boarded his ship. Despair mounted in their ranks.

As he and Yuntai administered the coup de grâce to the last of Caldwen's demon war-beasts, the captain sensed Star and the ship's cook completing the spell below deck. Not a moment too soon, the

vessel astern the *Star Phoenix* and another fast approaching faded from view. The Netherworld's eerie glow at last replaced Calidar's night sky. Revitalized, the *Star Phoenix's* ghosts faced the last of the attackers, hungry for a final reckoning. Cut off from their ship, the attackers dropped their weapons at once.

"Mister Cripplegate," called Isledemer. "Throw this rabble in the brig. Mister Rugwittle, get this fire under control before it begets death to us all. Mister Daggart, so you know, we are headed toward a demonic fortress. See that everyone is ready for more trouble, if you please. Until then, you have the deck. I'll be in my quarters."

## Captain's Log

*26<sup>th</sup> Day of Deirdea 1512, morning watch.*

*Following an attempt from Caldwen vessels to intercept, the Star Phoenix dropped into the Netherworld, thus escaping capture. When hailed, the HLW Darkwing had declined to honor the right of safe passage to official envoys in a host land, and initiated hostilities. New information on the Star Phoenix's nature and on the whereabouts of the late ship master's spirit also warranted the speedy descent into the astral plane. Funeral services have been conducted for the recently fallen, and their bodies committed to the Netherworld's deep. Acting healer Mofsecot has excelled in her new sickbay duties. Commendations are in order. Ship repairs are being completed and the crew drilled in outer-planar combat while the Star Phoenix sails post haste toward the Iron Fortress of one Lord Maalzoth, a local demon tyrant.*



Reaching for the Netherworld's lurid, gray-green twilight, the somber stronghold loomed well above its surrounding forest. Though tarnished with patches of ruddy corrosion, its black walls glistened under a never-ending ectoplasmic drizzle. Scents of rusted iron and wet mold suffused the chilling atmosphere. From behind what could conceivably be defined as a living tree shadow, Isledemer looked up at silhouettes pacing with odious, twisted gaits along fang-like battlements. Callous caws responded to beastly screeches, just before a cacophony of tortured metal as walls and towers unexpectedly changed shape. Fending off the long claws of a branch investigating his presence, the captain cast a spell to further conceal himself. By chance, a bolt of blue-black lightning struck the ghostly skeleton of a fallen behemoth some distance away, momentarily distracting what lurked on the walls. He chose this instant to run to the foot of the fortress, struggling across the mossy, squishy soil that coated his boots with astral ooze.

Isledemer found easily enough a place that Star had revealed to him before he left his ship, a secret passage into Maalzoth's baleful abode. His crew had remained aboard the *Star Phoenix*, concealed behind a jagged outcropping and well prepared to defend themselves. He'd refused to take anyone else along with him, leaving orders to depart after a day by the ship's hourglass.

The captain stood against the iron parapet as close as his backpack permitted, whitish ectoplasm dangling from





# A Mage's Conundrum

the edge of his hat. A strip of monstrous metal figures adorned the entire length of the wall, among which Isledemer spotted what he was looking for: the head of a horned, bearded gibbon. Without waiting, he inserted a hand into its gaping mouth and dug elbow deep. Ignoring the bites and stings of untold vermin that dwelled within, he yanked hard on a handle. It revealed the outline of an entrance nearby. He shook his aching hand, as if that would rid it of the festering blisters now blemishing his skin, and slipped through the portal.

The iron door snapped closed behind him before he could spike it ajar. A diffuse red glow prevailed inside, radiating from all surfaces. A quick search failed to reveal a mechanism to open the portal again. What bothered the captain even more was the nature of where he was. With barely enough room for him to stand, he observed fur-like iron bristles lying flat against the floor, walls, and ceiling. As he took a few steps from the door, bristles behind him grew into sharp spines angling outward in such a way as to forbid retreat.

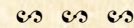
Isledemer noticed with mounting alarm that the passage was becoming tighter as he progressed. His hands and knees soon became raw from scraping past the iron bristles. In the back of his mind, he thought he could hear Star's mocking laughter. He wasn't sure whether it was his imagination or his bond with her. Had she led him into a trap? For what purpose? They could both perish. Perhaps the venom from the vermin's bites was making him delirious. He observed with a morbidly detached curiosity maggots slinking out of bloated pustules on his hand. He squeezed out those he could, and flicked them aside.

Fighting off a bout of nausea edging on claustrophobia, he resumed his slow crawl over an interminable distance. In despair, Isledemer pulled out his wand and muttered a few arcane words. Summoning his magic helped anchor his mind against the eeriness of his predicament. A magical eye formed before him, which he maneuvered down the narrowing conduit. At the very edge of the spell's range, he could see an intersecting passageway, one he could stand in. Alas, the access there was merely enough for a rat to get through. Facing the inevitable, Isledemer reached over his shoulder. His hand tasted multiple times the cruel stings of iron bristles before he succeeded in pulling his backpack over his head. From it, he retrieved a small flask, uncorked it, and sucked out its contents as best he could without stabbing his head against the bristles. He smacked his lips a few times while a vague taste of smoked bacon steeped with *aqua regia* lingered in his mouth. As the potion took effect, he watched his hands and the backpack he still clutched blend together into a purplish vapor.

At last free of the conduit's suffocating and painful confines, the captain floated in an awkwardly amorphous fashion past the bristles' final stretch. Polished as smooth as glass, the next hallway's multi-faceted metal surfaces reflected each other in spiraling infinities. Isledemer perceived his own reflections as multitudes of smoke puffs floating in midair. In the absence of specific visual organs, he could see them all at once if he wished. However disconcerting this ability, he felt emboldened by the thought that no one

would hear him come. His infected hand no longer ached either—a welcome silver lining of sorts.

All things considered, Isledemer retained his gaseous form and pondered which way to go next. Following the perhaps-unproven notion that always turning to the right inside a maze inevitably led to an exit, he proceeded toward his wand side—not that he could hold it or anything else given his remarkable lack of substance. Wafting along, the captain eventually came to the realization he'd gone in a wide circle when he approached the spiky conduit from its opposite side. Altogether perplexed and fascinated at the prospect of elucidating a new mystery, he retraced his path, paying more attention to the mirrors. Oddly, one of them failed to reflect his presence. Isledemer drifted closer, pressing against the metal as if he could touch it. The chrome-like surface rippled like water at first, until the captain felt his vaporous self being sucked through. The ominous sensation that Star cried in pain tore through his consciousness. This was no dream.



Mama Goo rasped and wailed, her eyes rolled up and white, while she stood outside a circle drawn in blood on the hold's deck. The diminutive cook, her shark-like teeth bared, dreadlocks partially masking her tattooed face, shook a chicken's foot at Star's spirit trapped within.

The succubus hissed and gritted her teeth. "Release me!" Her tail whipped wildly.

The fellfolk continued her ritual, convulsing and keening even louder. Star howled in pain. Candles positioned at the edges of a star-shaped figure inside the circle trembled, casting ominous shadows against the hold's wooden bulkheads. Darkness prevailed beyond the two outboard mainmasts running from the overhead down and out through the sides of the hull. A small heap of headless chickens lay behind the ship's cook, still twitching in the wake of their untimely deaths. Moonsail, her pet homunculus, peered over the hapless poultry, his clever gaze darting from mistress to captive, not missing the slightest of details.

Mama Goo suddenly ended her trance and cast a handful of chicken feathers into the circle. "Quiet now, demoness," she ordered. "De Great Spirit, she say be still or de magic, it will tear de demoness apart."

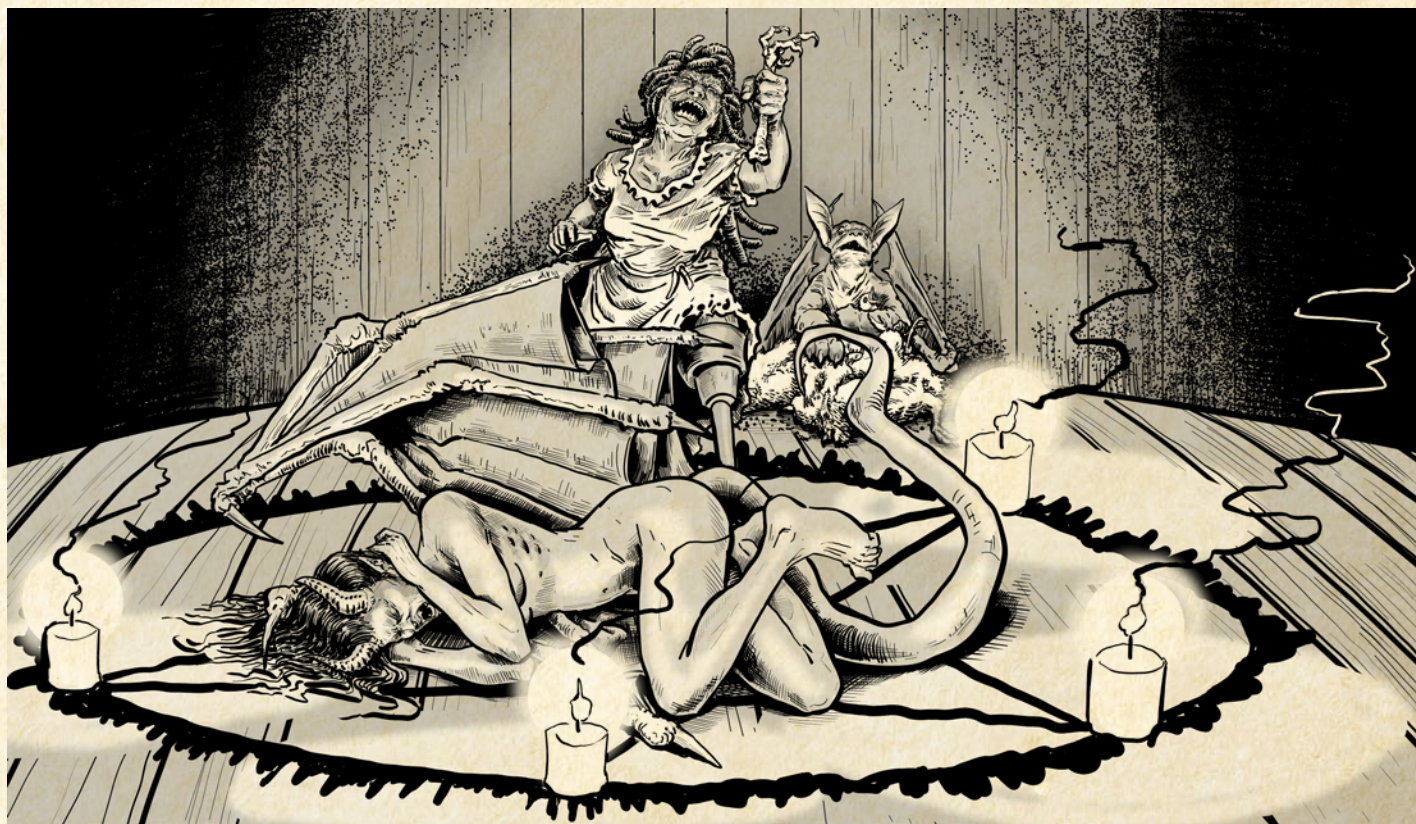
Star flapped her wings a few more times and finally grew silent, her arms resting alongside her hips. Hovering at the center of the circle, wings folded behind her back, she raised her face and closed her eyes. A vague clamor of the crew on the upper deck filtered through the oaken grating in the hold's overhead. Scents of tropical fruit and rare spices imbuing the woodwork mixed incongruously with whiffs of tar and brimstone.

The ship's cook listened carefully for what she knew was soon to come. She had little time to accomplish her deed. She looked up at the restrained spirit as it slowly spun above the pentacle.

"Mama Goo, she see good an' true," she finally said. "De demoness, she betray de Big Capt'n, and Mama Goo, she know why. De healin' of de spirit, it must come now." The fellfolk reached down and picked up a grimy skull filled with leftover blood. Dipping her



## A Mage's Conundrum



chicken foot multiple times into the skull, she flicked sanguine drops at Star and muttered in her native tongue. The crimson beads sizzled on contact and burned through the succubus's ghostly flesh.

Star shivered and moaned.

The ship quivered and groaned.

"Mama Goo, she summon de evil eye." She anointed the succubus with a few more heartfelt drops of blood, and repeated her mantra. Moonsail crept from behind the dead chickens and stood next to his mistress, looking up at her and aping her gestures with apparent delight.

The *Star Phoenix* rumbled again. Star twisted in agony. The muted voices of the crew reached the hold, more intense and pressing. Moonsail froze. The cook gave a worried glance off to the side from where she'd heard a scratch and a thump coming from outside the hull.

"De demoness, she tell Mama Goo de secret she know." Her voice grew edgier.

The succubus recoiled and gasped for air, as if showered in icy water. The cook's magic burned its way into the recalcitrant devilish mind, slowly but relentlessly. Without pity or remorse for the pain inflicted, it tore down walls, bored through depths, and scoured dim recesses, until a darker, more imperious will sought to block it. Mama Goo closed her eyes and shook the chicken foot ever more.

Screeches outside the ship confirmed her fears. Thumps and scrapes against the hull heralded callous caws and beastly grunts. Hoyk's voice thundered somewhere. The sound of the ship's deck weapons releasing their projectiles carried through the woodwork.

Bracing herself against her foe's mental onslaught, she called upon all her power and faith as a tribal shaman. She began another ritual, her full-throated wails overcoming the din of battle now raging outside the hold. A deep moan sounded throughout the ship. Star opened her eyes and screamed before dropping to her knees and promptly vanishing into the deck. A gleeful glare and wicked grin lit the cook's face.

"Mama Goo, she got you good an' true!"

Moonsail flew up and landed on her shoulder, leaning forth so his mistress could whisper into his pointy ear. A clawed hand suddenly broke through the hull and ripped out a plank. The Netherworld's putrid twilight shone into the hold like an unholy beam. As a twisted, monstrous presence struggled through the breach, Moonsail darted outside, dodging a set of fangs snapping shut like a bear trap, and raced away.

The fellfolk hissed and snapped her fingers, summoning a sturdy pan into her hand.

"Mama Goo, now she fight."

❧ ❧ ❧

After a dizzying instant when he spiraled through a drain, Isledemer emerged in a vast spherical chamber swathed in the same diffuse and ruddy halo. Serrated discs and giant barbed chains covered its concave surface, spinning in opposing directions like endless saws. Despite the sound of metal grating against metal and the deeper rumbling of unseen machinery, the captain perceived the



# A Mage's Conundrum

faint clamor of a slow chant, a deep and indistinct melopoeia. At the center of the chamber, he could not fail to notice a golden cage hovering in midair, and within it, Arabesque's familiar appearance. Despite her ghostly and immaterial nature, she seemed unable to escape her prison. Apparently unaware of his presence, she stared sadly in the general direction of the *Star Phoenix*, as best as the captain could ascertain.

Although it undoubtedly spared him a horrible death on the surrounding chainsaws, Isledemer cursed his own fog-like condition masking his identity from Arabesque. Gaseous billows recoiled when the captain cringed at the idea of flesh and bone dropping upon the deadly surfaces. As he slowly wafted across the chamber, he noticed with deepening apprehension the apparent lack of exits.

The sepulchral hymn grew louder as he approached Arabesque's cage. She looked around, concerned. Giving in to his immediate impulse, Isledemer permeated the cage and blended with the elven maiden. They both felt and recognized each other. Without a word, sensations of joy, relief, and love imbued them both, until the captain attempted to induce his lover from the cage. He found that he too was trapped. The golden rungs did not allow anything or anyone out. Sadness among the captives made way for despair.

The chant ended.

Chainsaws on one side of the sphere pulled away from an emerging portal. Out of it flew a horde of iron gargoyles, perhaps more than a hundred, screeching and darting in all directions. Among them rose a more monstrous presence. A silhouette as dark as the abyss, horned, hunched forward, and with spikes bristling along his spine and the outside edges of his arms, it stood some fifteen feet tall. Almost painful to regard, its eyes glared like blazing magnesium. It floated up some distance before the cage, its booming laughter reverberating across the chamber. It spoke a few beastly words and pointed a talon at the captain. In an instant, Isledemer felt himself pulled apart from Arabesque. He abruptly resumed his normal physical existence and struggled to keep his footing on the rungs at the bottom of the cage. All of his protective magic had ended when the demon lord waved its hand.

"Lord Maalzoth, I presume?" asked the captain, coughing out a lingering whiff of smoke. Hanging on to a vertical bar with one hand, he kept the other near the wand strapped to his forearm.

"I've been waiting for you a long time," the demon responded. At the lowest pitch the human ear could perceive, the edgy throb in its voice felt to Isledemer as if it could rip one's flesh right off the bones. "You have taken something that belongs to me."

"I can assure you, it was neither my intent nor my wish," said the captain. He eyed the gargoyles flying wide circles around the cage. "Nonetheless, you have wronged me, and I seek retribution."

"I surmise it is no coincidence that you yourself now hold someone dear to me." Try as he might, Isledemer could not discern an exit from the sphere, provided he could even get past the gargoyles. The portal the demon had risen from quickly vanished behind the flesh-rending chainsaws.

"You are perceptive, Captain d'Alberran. I wish to offer a pact. Serve me for all eternity, and I'll let the fair maiden leave to serve her liege. Refuse, and I'll destroy her and keep you so I may torment you in unspeakable ways. What say you?"

Isledemer struggled with the issue of the irksome cage and worried about a way to get Arabesque out once a way to escape the nightmarish chamber could be secured. "What guarantee do I have that you will honor the pact and let her go freely and safely?"

"It is the nature of pacts," answered the demon. "All parties are bound to respect their terms."

"So you say," said the captain. "My experience dealing with rascals of the worst sorts being what it is, you'll pardon me if I don't trust you."

A dismal growl filled the chamber. Isledemer gasped at the pain flaring in both his chest and his infected hand. He could see bone through his torn skin, where pus and maggots defiled his flesh.

"It is but a taste of what awaits you if you refuse my pact," said the demon. "I know the curse the draconic knight inflicted upon your chest. I can make it a thousand times worse, and she who can soothe you will be destroyed. Bow to my will, or suffer for all eternity."

"And condemn both my ship and my crew? I think not." The captain endeavored to ignore his tortured wounds. Arabesque placed a hand on his shoulder and, as he peered into her eyes, he found momentary solace.

The demon laughed. "Behold your ship. Soon, it shall be mine as well."

An image appeared off to the side within a border of rusted lace. In it, Isledemer observed the place where the *Star Phoenix* was concealed. A swarm of demonic beasts surrounded the vessel, launching attacks and retreating under fire, only to dive again from another direction. The ship's protections prevented the worst, and the crew fought bravely, judging from the number of demons falling off her sides.

"I have many more that I can hurl at your friends," said the demon. "Your ship is doomed, unless you give in to my demand."

"Destroy my ship, demon, and you'll be killing me as well. So much for serving you for all eternity."

Maalzoth waved a hand with irritation, and the image vanished. "So be it. I'll keep the elf, give her flesh and bone anew, and make her my slave. She will adorn my bed and please me in all ways. She will bear my spawn, and when I tire of her womb, her life force will feed and delight my progeny. They will relish her goodness, and I will laugh at your failure."

"So you say," Isledemer said once again. "I don't think you will."

The demon laughed. "And what's to stop me now, d'Alberran—you?"

"I say, I've got *your* wife, you contemptible swine! Destroy the ship and lose her forever," said the captain, still trying to solve his quandary. "I don't think you know how to undo what binds her to me. It is the doing of a goddess, and you are no god. It rankles you, doesn't it? Only through me can you get to her, and I've no intention of stepping aside, mind you. I sneer at what horrors you may heap upon me. She is now mine, and mine alone."



# A Mage's Conundrum

"Suit yourself," rumbled the demon. "I'll slay your crew, turn your ship over to my servants, and please myself with your elven whore before your eyes for all eternity, for it is what you fear most."

"My, my! Aren't you the horny devil! You really have a thing about this 'for all eternity' business." The captain sensed he was getting under Maalzoth's skin. For all its otherworldly arrogance, it showed a singularly human weakness. Or was there something else? He pondered what it could be. On a hunch, Isledemer added, "What does that fine succubus have on you? A pact, I wonder? Your dirty little secrets, perhaps? What about an ill-considered wedding gift? I honestly didn't peg either of you as the marrying sort. What you need is a divorce!"

The demon's hiss sounded more like a coming storm, confirming Isledemer's suspicion.

"Ah, that's it, isn't it? A fabulous offering you've granted, and now you want it back, of course. Yes... I can see it now. I once read that only demon lords could be revived from their ashes, so tell me if you please, how does a mere succubus accomplish this wondrous feat? From whom might she inherit such a princely gift but from her loving spouse? You must have desired her so much to consent to such generosity. How romantic. I'm impressed."

"Silence, human!" Maalzoth raised its arms and summoned a ring of fire enclosing the cage and himself within its searing volutes. The gargoyles spun beyond the blaze, their metallic screeches echoing in the chamber. "You mock my intelligence. Prepare to suffer my wrath."

"Yes, for all eternity, we get that, you pompous prick," Isledemer taunted. As the flames approached and the demon laughed, Isledemer spotted something else off to the side, disturbing the gargoyles. They chased something much smaller. The captain could not tell what it was from the distance and the flames. The diminutive creature darted about, dodging monstrous iron jaws and claws of steel, vanishing at one point and reappearing a stone's throw away.

Sensing a potential turn of events, Isledemer redoubled his efforts to distract Maalzoth while the situation outside the flames developed. "You are no match for me, you witless wretch. And you smell of elderberries."

As the flames grew dangerously close, Arabesque outstretched her arms, holding back the roaring billows.

"Praise Istra," the captain marveled in a low voice. He turned and shot a flurry of magical projectiles from his wand. "Sting!" he shouted to complete his spell. The demon blew at the glowing darts coming its way, dispelling them utterly.

"Oh dear..." said Isledemer, crestfallen.

Maalzoth laughed again. "Your magic is powerless against me, puny mortal."

"Whatever... Sting! Sting! Sting!" The captain's spells fizzled one after the next, but they accomplished what he'd hoped for. From a puff of smoke, little Moonsail appeared inside the cage and landed on Isledemer's shoulder. Panting, its black tongue hanging from its grinning mouth, Mama Goo's homunculus summoned a scroll into its tiny hands and gave it to the captain. An earthshaking bellow filled the chamber.

"Well, well, what have we here?" shouted Isledemer, ostensibly unfurling the ancient document.

"You clever little rascal, wherever did you find this?" he asked under his breath. Moonsail shrugged and squeaked, the palms of its hands raised in a coy and amused gesture.

The captain continued, louder, for Maalzoth to hear. "A deed of dominion upon this fortress and all dwelling within. How fascinating! I wonder what would happen if I tore it all up." With a sparkle in his eye, the captain ripped off a small corner of the scroll, which flashed and vanished instantly.

"No!" thundered the demon.

"Then get rid of those flames, you vacuous vermin!" ordered the captain. "Cease those infernal attacks upon my ship, I say, and let us depart at once. One twitch from you or your gargoyles, and I swear I will destroy this pact of yours. Your liege will be most put off."

Maalzoth dismissed the ring of flames while the iron gargoyles dove through a portal between the grinding chainsaws. The demon then considered Isledemer's words. "What proof is there that you will not destroy the scroll once you leave?"

"Unlike those of your kind, I, Isledemer Hieronymus Drake, Captain d'Alberan of the *Star Phoenix*, will honor my word, for my word is my honor. I shall not destroy this document so long as you, those who serve you, and he whom you serve stay away from me, my crew, and my ship."

## Captain's Log

*26<sup>th</sup> Day of Deirdea 1512, last dog watch.*

*The foray into Lord Maalzoth's Iron Fortress earlier in the day ended satisfactorily. The ship master's spirit was freed and she has now taken her place among the Fallen. Mister Starward will therefore resume her navigator functions as best as her present condition permits. Petty Officer Mofsecot will retain spiritual and healing duties, as she has proven more than adequate for these tasks. I shall prepare commendations appropriate to the circumstances. Additional casualties resulting from a demonic assault on the Star Phoenix have been committed to the Netherworld's deep. The crew, living or not, have performed above and beyond the call of duty in the defense of their ship. Mister Barrooney has indicated the numbers among the Fallen nearly equal those of the Living. The former have taken to blending with the ship's structure when off duty, freeing up the space underneath the fo'c'sle. Orders have been given to depart the Netherworld and repair combat damage. I shall remain in my quarters to rest and recover from my wounds.*



Cocooned in the comfort of his bed, still drifting through slumber's dense fog, Isledemer vaguely perceived the Netherworld's eerie glow piercing through a gap in his cabin's curtains. Maalzoth's gritty and overpowering voice lingered in his mind like a cheap wine's aftertaste until he banished vivid dreams of voracious gargoyles grasping his body. He wondered how much time had passed since Mama Goo's healing potion took effect. Had she laced it with





# A Mage's Conundrum

something to make him sleep? This wouldn't surprise him; nothing much did anymore. He took a deep breath and attempted to move. Something weighed against his chest and pinned his right arm on the mattress. He opened an eye and observed a head of long blond hair nestled on his bare chest. A hand gently exploring his midsection ended whatever haze of sleep still clouded his mind.

"What in the..." the captain rasped. "Arabesque?" A purr of satisfaction responded.

"I say, love, I did not expect..."

"Shhh," she interrupted softly. "I've been wanting you so much." The elven maiden slipped on top of Isledemer, pushing back the bed covers.

He admired Arabesque's slim but muscular body and her perfect alabaster skin, until a stone-cold misgiving overcame his desire. "Wait a minute! You can talk?"

With an inviting smile, she answered, "I can do so much more now."

"How dare you!" the captain suddenly growled. "Out of my bed!"

A puzzled expression appeared on her face. "I thought you would like it. I'm here to please you, my love, now that I am unattached." She giggled. "Actually, I'm pretty well attached to you right now."

"Great Dweomers, woman, get off of me. Now! I know who you are, and your place is not in my heart. You already have my ship."

Taking her time, pouting her lips, the elven maiden wiggled off the bed and stretched her arms. "Really?"

"Just... just get back to your normal self," ordered Isledemer.

"Oh, Islie! Why so stolid?" Arabesque's appearance faded away and morphed into Star's. Dark, curvy, and just as tantalizing as she stood stark-naked in the middle of the bedchamber, she grinned wickedly. Her pointy tail crossed mischievously before her eyes. "I'm a naughty girl. Always have been. It's in my nature."

"It's in my nature to cast spells too," Isledemer shot back. "You don't see me whipping out my wand at the drop of a hat and spewing great balls of fire at everyone."

"Would you prefer the tall one? I could make her fun for you." Star turned into Enna, impersonating her in a suggestive dominatrix manner. "I can make a whip, too."

"No! Stop that, I say!" snarled Isledemer.

"Come on, I'm really trying hard here," Star protested. "Alright, honey, maybe you like the guy better. You two seem pretty chummy." The succubus promptly took on Yuntai's appearance.

"Oh, dear..." the captain groused in a strangled voice. Equally bereft of modesty's trappings, he leapt out of bed, noticing outside the window Moonsail peering between the curtains. He dove for the fabric and veiled the window fully. Fuming, he faced Star. "What have you done, woman? I'll never hear the end of it!"

Star resumed her demoness self and dismissed the captain's complaints with a huff. "You are so picky! After all I've done for you."

"What—" interrupted Isledemer. "What have you done for me? I'll tell you what: you've sent me through a filthy trap where I got snared and nearly died."

Fists on her hips, Star rolled her eyes. "For a wizard, you're pretty dense. I gave you what you asked for: the shortest way

into my ex's fortress so you could get your silly blonde. For all the good she'll do you—she's dead as doornail. I knew you had all you needed to get through. And you thank me by playing hard to get. Am I not the most desirable? Many before you have dropped to their knees and bequeathed me their flesh and souls."

"Yes, until that time you got burned and it all went to pot, remember? The one I pulled you out of." Isledemer paused, aiming a somber look at the succubus. "Look, this isn't getting us anywhere. Is Maalzoth still talking to you?"

"That crazed cook of yours severed that bond forever," she answered grimly. "Divorce by chicken blood. Who knew? Thanks to her, I've got only you now."

"I suppose we should find a way to make this work somehow," the captain commented drily.

Star gave him a blank look. "That *was* my intention, dear. Put some clothes on. You look silly just standing there. I think I'll go blow some wind in my sails now."

As the demoness abruptly blended into the ship's woodwork, Isledemer dropped to the edge of his bed and exhaled longingly. He examined the palm of his wounded hand and its back, closing his fist a few times. Mama Goo's potion had done wonders to both it and the old chest wound. He rubbed his forehead and pressed against the top of his sinuses to keep a hint of headache at bay. He then endeavored to put on some clothes and looked around for his wand when a soft knock against the bulkhead distracted him.

"Hello?" he asked.

Arabesque's silvery ghost emerged from the woodwork.

The captain gazed at her with a pained expression. "Well, hello there. Aren't you a sight for sore eyes. I'm so sorry, love. I..."

The ship master raised a hand and shook her head briefly, with a suggestion of a shrug and a smile dismissing the captain's coming words. She touched her lips and placed her ethereal fingers against his, before pointing at the pillow on his bed to remind Isledemer where he'd hidden his wand. It lay alongside a slender but solid scroll case made of silver that held Maalzoth's deed of property.

"Ah, yes. Of course," he commented. He sensed this truly was Arabesque. "Thank you." He strapped the wand to his forearm and lifted the tube's lanyard over his neck. "Can't think of a better place to keep this."

Arabesque stretched out her hand.

"You want to keep it?"

She nodded.

After an instant of hesitation, he handed her the tube. Arabesque took it and smiled again, pointing at his rapier lying on a table, next to his hat and coat.

"I say, are we headed into battle?" He raised his index finger and added, "Do hang on, if you please. I have an idea." He rummaged in a chest near his bed and, with an expression of triumph, pulled out a leather bundle. "I have just the thing!"

He untied the bundle and revealed a spirit board with a bone token. Arabesque leaned over and moved the token from one letter to the next. The captain spelled out aloud, "I-s-a-w-m-y-k-i-l-l-e-r-s-f-a-c-e."

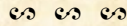


# A Mage's Conundrum

"You don't say," he uttered in amazement. "Do you know where he is?"

Isledemer read her answer. "H-i-g-h-l-o-r-d-s-p-a-l-a-c-e."

"Thank you!" he said with a broad smile. The captain donned his hat and coat, and seized his rapier. "Onward to that grand wizard."



Isledemer always felt odd sitting in mid-air. He observed the strange city hovering beneath him as he slowly descended alongside the fourteen-floor palace. Four huge city blocks surrounded the cylindrical building, tethered together with massive chains between which water cascaded to the city's lower districts. A monumental lighthouse on top slowly spun two beams of light through the night sky.

Something brushed against his arm and reminded the captain that Yuntai was sitting next to him. Both were invisible, along with the ship's launch on which they'd sailed to Upper Arcanial. On the bench behind them, huddled between two marines, was Ebben, who'd cast the spell of concealment. Two more occupied the bench astern, piloting the skiff. So far, they'd observed no reaction in the city. The captain took a breath of relief. They had gotten through undetected. Enna and the rest of the crew remained on the *Star Phoenix* outside Arcanial, just above the lower city's canal, in a fog bank that Mama Goo had summoned to help evade Caldwen's vigilance.

The captain leaned back carefully and spoke in a low voice. "Make for that fancy balcony, fourth floor from the top, and heave to by its railing if you please."

"Aye aye, Sir," responded a voice in back.

"Are you ready, Mister Rugwittle?" asked Isledemer.

"Say when, Captain."

The launch slowed and thumped slightly against the desired spot. Isledemer groped for a line to tether the invisible skiff.

"Now, Mister Rugwittle."

The gnome uttered a few arcane words. Nothing seemed different, but everyone present knew better. A phantasmal image of the empty balcony now stood exactly between its railing and the launch.

"I'll go first," said Yuntai. Isledemer felt the master-at-arms climb overboard, and barely heard him land on the tiled floor—thoroughly unseen.

The captain followed. He could now see the elf, crouching next to the balcony's door, peering surreptitiously through one of its window panes. Ebben's illusion concealed them perfectly from prying eyes across from the palace. Yuntai, Isledemer, and the marines aboard the skiff had traded their uniforms for formal wizardly robes, the sort guests to a reception might wear. Powdered wigs, white makeup, dark lipstick, and fake moles were *de rigueur* among the foppish sorts dwelling at the palace. Profuse lace and ample folds concealed the party's weapons.

"All clear," said Yuntai, pulling away from the glass pane.

"On 'two,' I'll release my spell," Isledemer responded. "Cast yours on 'three,' Mister Wu. Ready?"

"Aye, Sir."

"One... Two..." Isledemer muttered the words he hoped would neutralize any magic imbuing the portal.

"Three."

Yuntai's spell followed, knocking the door open. He quickly entered and looked left and right. "All good." Three of the marines appeared through the phantasmal screen and followed their commander.

"Thank you, Mister Rugwittle," said Isledemer. "Count to ten and return to the ship, smartly."

"Aye, Sir. Farewell."

The captain stepped inside. Vivid blue, purple, and gold, an ornate gallery extended past marble stairs curving alongside the outer wall to the left. Bronze arms stretching from both sides held glowing spheres in the palms of their hands. Clocks of all imaginable sorts and unidentifiable mechanical devices adorned all vertical surfaces and free-standing cases, whirring, clicking, and chiming. Isledemer had timed their entrance with a bell tolling at the top of the hour amid a cacophony of cuckoo calls and odd screams. He closed the door behind him well before the last strike.

Acting as casually as they could, the party approached the stone banister surrounding a circular opening at the center of the room. Music and the clamor of a ball rose from the floor below, where dozens of aristocrats enjoyed a fancy *soirée*. Lord High Vardalas was conspicuously absent.

"I suspected he might have already retired," the captain said. "He's known for working late in the Chamber of Audiences." Isledemer glanced at Yuntai. "I say, you look suitably ridiculous, Mister Wu."

The elf grinned, causing a mole to fall off. "Honored to follow your lead, Captain."

"Watch your stern, my friend," said Isledemer. "I don't fancy the cut of their jibs down there."

"We'll manage. *Faespeed*, Sir." Yuntai and his three marines turned and headed downstairs. An instant later, Isledemer went the other way. He knew from his previous visit that the Chamber of Audiences lay two floors higher. He wished he'd taken more time to explore the palace during his previous visit.

Carefully treading past the next floor, he noticed its different atmosphere. Stylized crane decorations, colors ranging from dark red to ivory, and lacquered furniture prevailed. Elegance here lay in the style's exotic simplicity. After a moment, a vague impression pervaded the captain's senses that the cranes and the scenery behind them moved. He shook off the mesmerizing effect of the illusory decorations and continued upstairs.

The captain recognized the pattern of swan etchings barely visible in the black marble walls, alternating with recessed columns resplendent with delicate golden carvings. The horseshoe-shaped gallery led to the throne room's antechamber, a place Isledemer knew to be well guarded. He'd have to wait until the rest of his plan unfolded before making his next move. To avoid attention, Isledemer stepped into the dimness behind one of the columns, pulling the folds of his attire close to him, and waited.

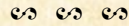
After a moment, he felt a presence nearby. He turned and noticed the ghostly shape of a buxom lady grinning at





# A Mage's Conundrum

him. She winked and pursed her lips in a hint of a kiss. Isledemer cursed silently. He nodded at her with an awkward, embarrassed smile, before gesturing with the back of his hand for her to leave. Another figure showed up, a dour apparition visibly upset at whom the captain assumed had been his spouse during better days. The offended husband crossed his arms. The lady rolled her eyes and faded away. After a lingering, suspicious glare at the intruder, the male turned in a huff and vanished as well.



"Ahoy, the *Star Phoenix*!"

Enna leaned over the forecastle's railing in the direction of the hail. She gazed at the fog to no avail. "Mister Rugwittle, what news from the captain?"

The flying launch, the gnome, and the marine at the rudder appeared a short distance away. "All went according to plan, Sir."

"Mister Cripplegate," the first mate called. "Have that skiff secured. We're departing at once. Ladies and gents," she turned to the crew, "we're off on a wild ride. Be ready for trouble."

Silent and with lanterns doused, the skyship rose past the fog and gained speed. Less than a mile away, the fabled city of Arcanial hovered above a ramshackle shantytown on the ground. Three separate districts above, one atop another, slowly spun in opposing directions, with fortifications hovering near their rims. At the very top, a lighthouse beckoned. A lone horn disturbed the moonless night.

"Full sails, Mister Cripplegate!"

"Full sails, aye aye!" acknowledged the bosun. Ghosts of the fallen crew crawled along the ship's upright and outboard masts and across their yardarms, glowing eerily in the dark. After a few luffs, the unfurled canvas caught the wind in earnest, and Ol' Babbiejack steered toward the wizards' capital.

"Get us to the upper district, Mister Belzer," ordered Enna. "We have business there."

The helmsman nodded and maneuvered accordingly.

"Ship-ho, dead astern," called out an airman from the aft deck.

"Time to ride the merry-go-round," said Enna.

As the *Star Phoenix* climbed, a siege weapon on a nearby fortification shot a round that flew wide.

"Hold it, Mister Pebbleborn," hollered the first mate. "Let's not tip our hand yet."

The skyship began circling the flying city. Other horns, more distant, responded to the first. Lights appeared at a multitude of windows where dimness had reigned an instant earlier. A second fortification came around, one district higher. A fiery projectile soared high and burst like a scarlet sun with a loud boom, flooding the sky with a red glow. Another, farther around the city's rim, cast a vast blue aura. Enna winced. Everyone in town could now clearly see the *Star Phoenix*.

"They want a good show, let's give them one!" she said. "Mister Belzer, easy to starboard. Hug those walls and seize the updraft."

"Two more ships off our port bow!" Ebben warned as he hung from the mainmast's ratlines. "They mean to cut us off."

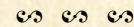
Enna observed the incoming vessels, gauging their speeds and headings. "Ready, Mister Pebbleborn?"

Standing on the main deck, his blunderbuss slung over his shoulder, the master artillerist grinned with anticipation. "Just say the word, Sir!"

The first mate waited a moment while several more projectiles whizzed by from different directions. She looked up at the lighthouse. It wouldn't be long before the *Star Phoenix* reached its altitude. Enna turned to the helmsman once more. "Mister Belzer, stand by for hard a-starboard." She then addressed the bosun on the main deck. "Mister Cripplegate, prepare to let go the starboard anchor at my signal." The first mate then ordered in full voice, "To all on deck, lower your faces and shield your eyes. Mister Pebbleborn, do your duty!"

The dwarf roared. "All portside weapons: loose!"

Four projectiles catapulted forth, spreading wide into the sky until they burst into blinding flashes. Though she held a hand before her eyes, Enna sensed the sheer pain inflicted to all gazing through the night. It would take precious minutes before they would regain their bearings.



It took some convincing to enter the ballroom. The snide fellow at the door being otherwise inclined to letting Yuntai and his marines in without a formal invitation, he was quietly yet forcefully taken aside and, after proper convincing, shoved behind a large potted plant without further ceremony. The captain-at-arms stepped in first, acting as innocently as he knew how, trying not to twist an ankle from the high heels under his robe. He admired for a moment the vast chamber, which seemed far larger than what the size of the building possibly suggested. The soft glow of levitating candelabra revealed a ballroom resplendent in alabaster and gold. Busts of grumpy old personalities mounted on pedestals alternated with recessed columns carved from pink marble. Scores of aristocrats danced across sky-blue tiles. As they did so, phantasmal clouds and eagles scattered across the polished floor, as if fleeing from the countless pairs of feet trampling them. A dais on one side featured musical automatons. Opposite the entrance he'd just walked in, a portal opened to a terrace serving as a private dock for flying gondolas dropping off and picking up passengers.

Yuntai watched his marines enter one by one and mingle, spreading out to strategic positions near the walls. He noticed an invitee observing him intently, at first haughty, then turning inquisitive. Tall and with wings folded neatly behind the back, the guest approached. "Greetings, O charming one. I'm not sure I've ever had the pleasure of your presence here."

The captain-at-arms was unsure whether the person addressing him was man or woman, or for that matter elven or human, given the amount of makeup and the convoluted wig dotted with butterflies. The voice remained strangely undeterminable in this respect.

"Might you be of Kumoshiman ancestry? Please do say yes," the guest inquired. Before Yuntai could respond, the unfathomable character continued. "But where are my manners? I am Crux-Phelician, elder sibling of Phlux-Caladyne—you might've heard. I



# A Mage's Conundrum

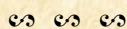
am fascinated by your culture. I own a marvelous collection of ink works I purchased at great cost from a visiting merchant, and I'm just dying to show them to you. My private gondola awaits outside. Might you join me?"

Thunder boomed outside, somewhere over the city, followed by a red glare in the night sky. The guests rushed to the terrace. Oohs and aahs rose from their ranks as another flare filled the neighborhood with purple and blue shades.

Crux-Phelician applauded. "Goodness gracious me, isn't this marvelous? His Excellency the Lord High is giving us a spectacle. Let's watch!" With a flourish, the guest spun and glided toward the crowd. Yuntai blew a sigh of relief, still not entirely sure what he'd just escaped. Suspecting there was more to the flares above the city than the crowd assumed, the captain-at-arms nodded at his marines, whereafter the four interlopers unsheathed hidden rods.

Amid whizz-bangs and fancy phantasms, a dark portal opened in mid-air, releasing a wave of ogre mages. Feigning to cower behind the bronze busts, the marines marched their illusory puppets toward the guests. At once, a number of panicked wizards vanished while others rushed onto the awaiting gondolas, almost causing one to capsize. A handful more flew away. Crux-Phelician fainted on the spot.

At last, a brave few faced the imaginary threat and unleashed an ungodly storm of fire, bolts of lightning, magical projectiles, and other frightening powers that Yuntai had never witnessed before. Chunks of the gorgeous ballroom tumbled off the walls, showering the marines with debris while each continued as best they could to animate their ogres. The inside door crashed open as a squad of palace guards charged in. Their commander followed, skidded on the polished tiles, and stopped to assess the situation more thoroughly. Her doubtful expression ended when she spotted the captain-at-arms, his half-concealed rod, and his powdered wig knocked askew. As she sucked in a breath to recall her detachment, Yuntai cast a flurry of sticky webbing around her face. The sound of more guards shouting in the stairs echoed outside the entrance.



Angry horns blared throughout the palace. Isledemer surmised Yuntai had done his duty. He remained in the dimness of his hideout until a squad of guards ran past him and down to the next floor. After he unsheathed both rapier and wand, the captain approached the end

of the hallway. A spell quickly paralyzed the guard standing there. Beyond lay an antechamber, which the other guards had already left. No one else was awaiting an audience there when Isledemer looked in. He knew a sentry was posted on the other side of the door across from where he stood. The demi-lune-shaped room featured leather seats, large potted plants, and tapestries depicting the lord high in various glorious events.

The captain crept to the Chamber of Audiences' portal, two large oak panels clad with brass ornaments. The doors were slightly ajar. A quick peek revealed several characters engaged in a muted discussion before the archmage, who sat on a throne opposite the entrance. Next to him stood what Isledemer assumed was a demon. Gray-green and white-eyed, the beast appeared as the slimy, bloated cadaver of a drowned ogre. It stood next to the archmage, its arms crossed. A magnificent stained glass window

adorned the wall behind the lord high. Oddly, the throne room appeared to extend well beyond the confines of the building. Much in the style of the hallways, the chamber included clusters of giant orchids growing from large gold-plated pots. Unwilling to enter, Isledemer summoned an animated image of himself stepping out from behind one of the oversized planters.

"Ah, Captain d'Alberran!" greeted the lord high. "I wondered how much longer I'd have to wait for the pleasure of your company." The greatest of grand wizards was a middle-aged Tolarin elf clad in an emerald green robe with gold trim and a high collar.

He owned a dark gray complexion and midnight blue hair tied in a bun behind his head. At the sight of Isledemer with rapier and wand at the ready, three of the other personalities in the chamber vanished at once.

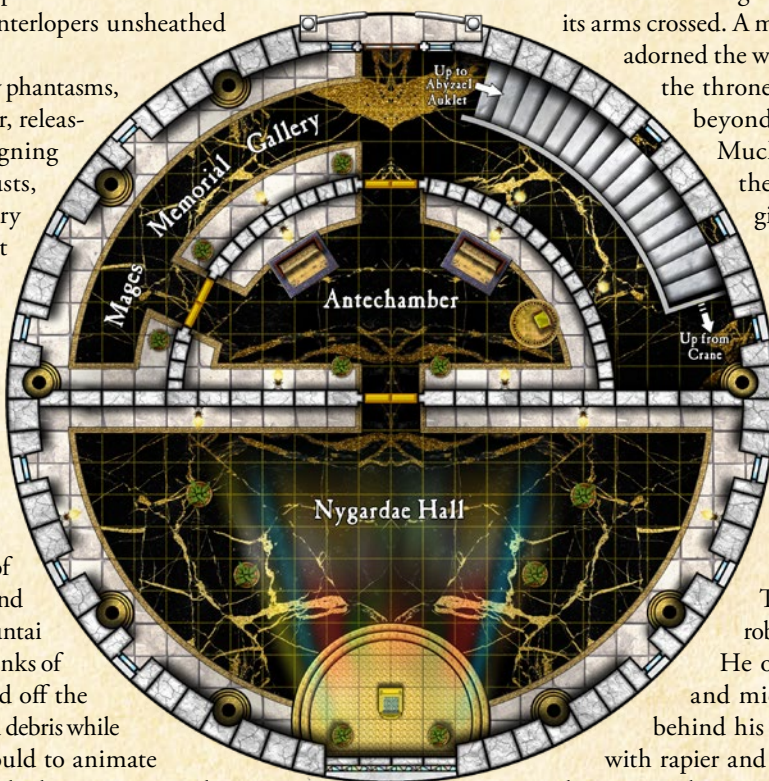
The others, two men and a female gnome, unsheathed their own devices while the demon remained poised to leap at the intruder.

"Come now, my friends, let us give diplomacy a chance," said Vardalas. He then made introductions. "Captain d'Alberran—Lady Kryovata, my treasurer, Sir Daemian, Marshal of Caldwen, and Lord LeBlanq, my librarian."

"Pleasure," responded Isledemer's image, nodding politely. "If Your Excellency will permit, I've come to present a grievance."

The female gnome stepped forward. With silver hair and skin white with pale blue shadows, she looked like no other gnome the captain recalled. "Runaway criminals command no favors in his place," she answered in an icy voice.

"Am I running away now?" Isledemer shot back.





# A Mage's Conundrum



Vardalas raised a hand and looked at the captain. "Lady Kryovata is very protective of my office." Turning to the gnome, he added, "Captain d'Alberran has made the effort to face justice. We can listen to what he wishes to plead."

"With all due respect, Your Excellency," said Isledemer, "I've been wrongly accused of murder, and my ship was attacked despite the right of safe passage. Furthermore, it's come to my attention that..."

The captain's image in the throne room stopped speaking when Isledemer felt the edge of a wand pressed against the back of his neck. When he looked around, the three individuals who'd vanished from the chamber of audiences now stood behind him, their devices aimed at him. One of them motioned the captain to drop his weapons and enter the throne room.

"Well, well," said Vardalas when Isledemer stepped in. "Aren't we full of surprises?"

"He's a tricky one, My Lord," said Sir Daemian. "He should be sent to Carcer Island at once."

The gnome pointed a finger at the captain. "And I'd wager his crew is responsible for the fracas in the ballroom. Someone will have to pay for the damages: if not him, then this queen."

The archmage waved a hand, summoning a circle to appear on the floor before him, showing Yuntai and his three companions clashing with guests and palace guards.

"Whatever did they hope to accomplish?" wondered the lord high with a smirk. "A diversion, I presume."

"Something tells me I would not be standing before you without it, Your Excellency," said Isledemer. "That being the case, I must inform you that someone in your personal retinue committed the murder of which I now stand accused. The culprit later on joined bounty hunters holding a warrant signed by the Justiciar General of Caldwen for my arrest, an encounter during which he wantonly stabbed my ship's master to death. The same poison was used to inflict both fatalities. With all due respect, Your Excellency, I prefer not to assume you were a party to these crimes, for their only imaginable purpose must be to create a conflict between you and my queen. I must therefore conclude there is a traitor in your midst."

A detachment of palace guards marched into the Chamber of Audiences as the captain finished his sentence. Vardalas motioned them to stand by. A flash of light somewhere over the city glared for a fraction of time, briefly casting multicolored rays through the room's stained glass. The archmage glanced over his shoulder, raised an eyebrow, and stepped away from his elaborate throne. "Captain d'Alberran," he said. "I presume you brought some evidence?"

"I have, Your Excellency, if you'll kindly bear with me." Just then, Isledemer caught surreptitious gestures among the three sorcerers behind him, as if they meant to cast magic. Quickest to react, the captain rolled to the side just before several spells were cast.

First, a cloud of fog obscured the chamber. Next, a magical portal opened, releasing a bevy of fracks and fiends. Third, a bolt of lightning shot just past Isledemer, scorching his formal wizard robe and bouncing off the nearest wall. Barely escaping death, the



# A Mage's Conundrum

captain felt the spell's searing pain nonetheless. He scrambled on his hands and knees behind one of the large orchid planters while a raging battle erupted in the throne room.

Amid gray swirls, Isledemer had the definite impression that someone nearby was looking for him, sniffing loudly and growling. He hated not having his wand and his trusty rapier. As he prepared a spell, the entire chamber shook. The stained-glass window shattered, and a blast of cold, crisp wind blew in, clearing much of the fog. To Isledemer's relief, it revealed the *Star Phoenix's* prow deeply imbedded in the room's wall, its boarding panel dropping open over the rubble.

Out came Enna and the entire crew. "Find the captain," she hollered. "Stay that fine rabble! Slay those who resist!" The Living and the Fallen spread out in a confused melee. Amid the chaos, a monstrous figure loomed over Isledemer, gurgling.

And everything came to a halt.

Utter silence prevailed, except for a slight cough. The lord high stood in the middle of the room, fanning off the fog. "Well, Captain d'Alberan," he said in a casual tone. "I must admit, you are a man of resource." Every creature, flame, flying debris, and speck of dust hung motionless, as if time had stopped. Frozen like an image, Enna held her cutlass, its blade deep in a frack's chest. Billows of fire and shot spewed from Hoyk's blunderbuss, ripping out another demon's entrails. Ebben, Ol' Babblejack, and Mama Goo pulled on a magical rope, holding back the fiend reaching for Isledemer. The archmage's bloated ogre-like beast stood near its master, tearing an arm off one of the three sorcerers.

"So, you said you had proof," inquired the lord high.

Regaining his composure, the captain got back to his feet and looked around. "This is the corroboration I promised, Your Excellency." Isledemer pointed at Arabesque's ghost, her hands locked around the palace librarian's throat. "Both a murder victim and its witness, my ship's master saw who'd killed her. If you check this man's pockets or his sword, you will find his poison. Those other three who initiated the fight must be his accomplices."

"Unfortunate," said Vardalas. "I was hoping to avoid bringing all this into the open. I already had my suspicions, but in a realm where treachery abounds, one is better off quietly watching known foes than trying to uncover hidden ones. There are others connected to Lord LeBlanc, whose identities my spies were planning to compromise. All this has now been wasted. I do not blame you, Captain d'Alberan, and I do apologize for your ship master's passing."

"There was no other alternative from our point of view," said Isledemer, bitter at the notion that Arabesque had been the needless casualty of callous political machinations.

"Indeed. I will have you restrain your ghostly companion, however," said the lord high. "As much as I sympathize with her desire for immediate justice, Lord LeBlanc must be sent to Carcer Island, wherein he will submit to questioning, and lawfully pay for his crimes."

The archmage gazed at the *Star Phoenix* and, ostensibly, at its resident succubus frozen with a most discomfited expression at the sight of the damaged prow. "If you pay me another visit, for which

you are most welcome, you will need a legal license to operate a demonic creature, and for the ghosts too. I must uphold Caldwen's laws on such, you see. Public opinion among the wizards, fractious bunch as they are, demands no less. I'll see that your vessel is repaired. Do forward my sincere salutations to Queen Shardwen when you return home."

## Captain's Log

*30<sup>th</sup> Day of Deirdea 1512, afternoon watch.*

*The final visit to Lord High Vardalas resulted in all charges against myself and my crew being dropped. Ship repairs are now underway, and all Caldwen personnel in our custody have been released. The diplomatic mission ended in success, reinforcing ties between the Kingdom of Meryath and the Magiocracy of Caldwen. Amends were made for the grievous losses among my crew; alas, they will not return life to any of the Fallen. A most curious individual later came aboard to offer me an honorary membership to the Cabal of Skymastery and an open invitation to teach at their guild house. I shall retain this option for a future time, should an opportunity arise.*



Crew and officers stood at attention while a cold wind swept flurries across the deck.

"We are gathered here," begun Isledemer, "to honor the Fallen and the actions of all aboard these past several days. Their courage demonstrated on multiple occasions in the face of impending doom demands sincere and official recognition. By the powers imparted me and with gracious confirmation from Her Royal Majesty, Queen Shardwen I of Meryath, I hereby award the following: for outstanding bravery in the face of death and beyond it, the *Citation of Skyward Merit* to both the Living and the Fallen; the *Order of the Cerulean Cross* for unrelenting gallantry in the service of Her Majesty to Officers Daggart, Starward, Yuntai, Rugwittle, and Pebbleborn. Last but not least and as a most unusual testimony of profound gratitude, I hereby bestow a special award created by my own devices, the *Golden Chicken Foot*, to Mister Gumboyle Mofsecot, as well as the promotion to Officer of the Warrant, for single-handed actions preventing the loss of the *Star Phoenix* and her entire crew. Finally, I request a moment of silence to honor the spirit now inhabiting this ship, making it a most unique vessel."

The whistle of the bosun's pipe sounded longingly as Isledemer observed Star reclining on the aft castle's railing. She winked at the captain, to which he responded with an imperceptible smile.

"Thank you all. Dismissed."

The bosun's call sounded again, and the crew returned to their duties.

"Where to next, Captain?" inquired Enna.

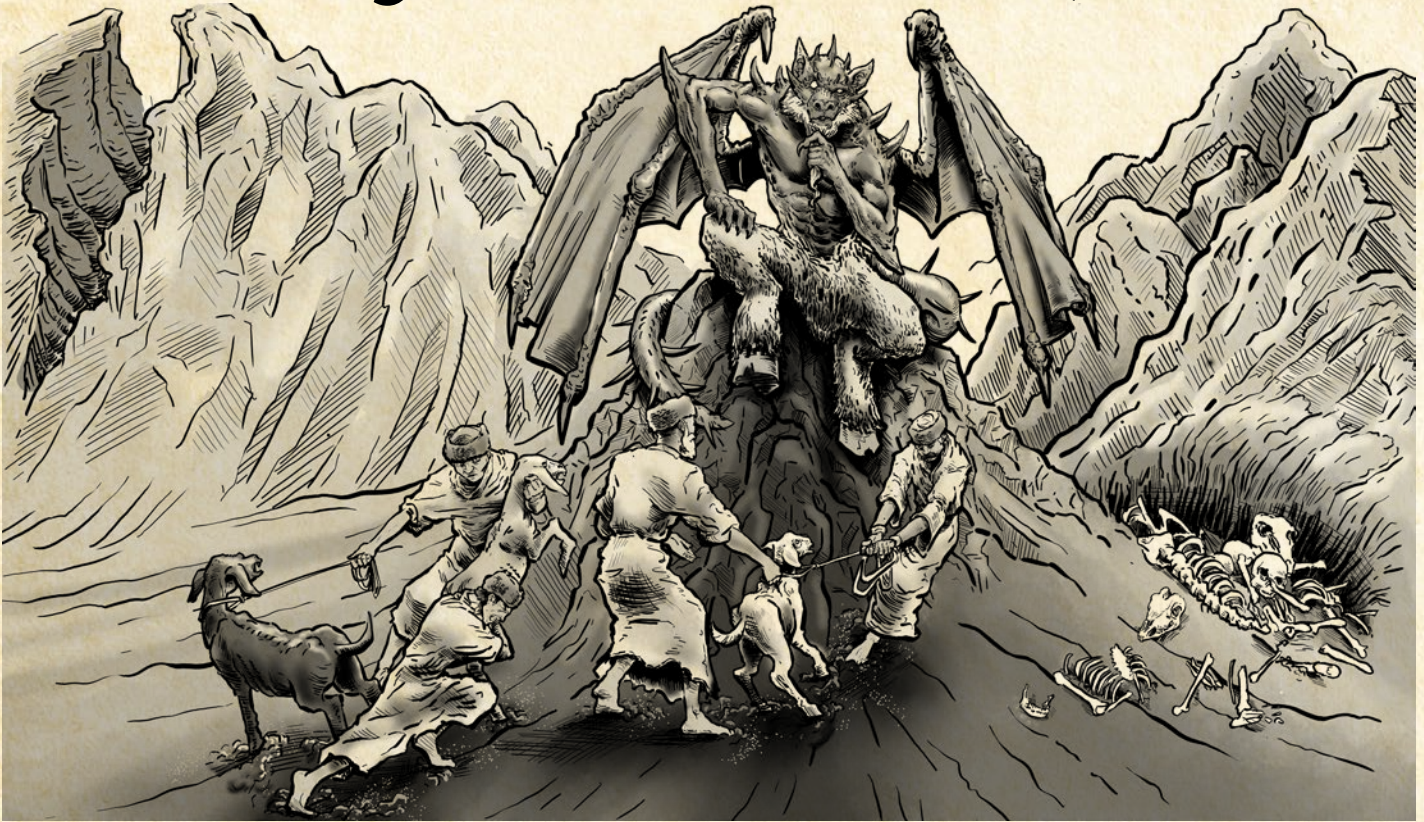
"Onward to glory, Mister Daggart. Onward to glory, I say."

*To be continued.*





# History of Caldwen



CAL1 [In Stranger Skies](#) gives the original timeline for the realms of the Great Caldera (page 78). Additional material is listed in CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#) (page 90).

## The Origins

**Circa 5600 BCE:** Goat-herding nomads spread out in Munaan's Gandar Desert.

**4300:** Demons bargain with goat-herding nomads, offering protection and magical secrets in exchange for access to raw seitha in the area.

**4200:** Gandarian tribes fight over ownership of seitha deposits. Demons sow discord among Gandarians and begin to rule the tribes.

**3500:** One after the other, seitha desert deposits are depleted. Demons demand sacrifices in the place of seitha.

**3250:** Robber-mages piece together secrets to conjure and control lesser demons.

**3000:** Naghilas the Black becomes the most powerful demon in Gandaria. To save their goats, Gandarians abduct young Tanethians to satisfy Naghilas's growing hunger for live flesh.

**1500:** Taneth grows powerful enough to launch punitive raids into Gandaria. Nicarea soon joins.

**1289:** Naghilas devours his rivals. Tribes and surviving demons submit to his supremacy as he becomes a malevolent god.

**1250:** Following the demise of the old pacts with demons, robber-mages scour the land for relics the devoured demons might have left behind. Some of them honor Naghilas.

**1000:** Gandarians regroup in their hinterland, wherein Naghilas instructs them to erect the fortress of Karsa, a temple to honor him, and palaces for demons and mages acting on his behalf. Under its

god's influence, Gandaria repels invasions from Taneth and Nicarea. Prisoners are fed to the demons.

**800:** Gandarian explorers secure allies in Bongor.

**493:** Rivalries between Taneth and Nicarea bring their wars with Gandaria to a halt. The desert realm recovers.

**341:** Robber-mages establish themselves as an organized guild.

**196:** Karsa experiences a golden age as the outer provinces are recovered. Trade with Bongor flourishes.

**100:** Gandarian explorers make contact with Talikai islanders.

**91:** Bongorese warriors bolster the ranks of Gandarian forces.

**1 CE:** Gandarian wizards build skyships and explore the Great Caldera.

**100:** Talikai and Bongorese warriors join the crews on Gandarian skyships.

**227:** Gandarian explorers find [mana](#) wells in northeast mountains of the Great Caldera. The information trickles back to Munaan.

**244:** Robber-mages collect scattered records about mana eruptions on Calidar. Some of them begin drafting rough topographical maps locating mana wells in the Great Caldera.

**276:** [Arafor](#) of the Drowned, a river demon, traces mana conduits to a main shaft in a valley he names after himself.

**287:** Robber-mages establish the Mages' Bazaar, a hidden market for stolen secrets, spells, and relics beneath the sewers of Karsa. Minor demons are summoned as hunters and guards.

## Gandaria's Dark Ages

**310:** Nicareans launch a great crusade against Gandaria.

**340:** The demon champions are defeated. Karsa is razed. The empire rules the whole of Gandaria with an iron fist. A bloody repression



# History of Caldwen

follows. Demons and half-bloods are exterminated. Robber-mages form the *Maghia*.

**372:** A Ghülean invasion ravages Calidar and its three moons. Three centuries of dark ages follow. Information about mana sources in the Great Caldera is misplaced.

**710:** Nicarea recovers from the dark ages, overruns Taneth, and demands previous conquests to submit to the empire.

**711:** Bongor invades Taneth and sacks Tenkara, its capital city.

**712:** Gandarian, Inti-Suyu, and Talikai forces ally and attack Nicarea.

A protracted struggle goes on while Nicarea secures Taneth.

**734:** Nicarea defeats the coalition at the battle of Six Crowns.

**735:** Gandaria submits to the empire.

**737:** Nicarea founds the provincial capital of Asgamon in Gandaria.

**745:** The Nicarean Inquisition is created. Repression worsens in Gandaria.

**751:** Nicarean tomb robbers unearth information about mana sources in the Great Caldera. Disciples of the *Maghia* kill the looters and seize the scrolls.

**782:** Disciples study rituals to enable demon-blooded progeny. First attempts fail disastrously. None of the newborns survive.

**799:** Disciples suspect raw mana is needed to revive the shatim as a race.

## Colonial Era

**885:** First Gandarian settlements of Nav-Gandar (Caldwen) on Calidar.

The *Maghia* begins its secret work in the colony.

**890:** Arcanial is founded as a provincial capital city in Nav-Gandar's midlands.

**898:** The *Maghia* quietly spreads the cult of Naghilas.

**908:** The first few hidden shrines dedicated to Naghilas are built in Nav-Gandar.

**915:** The *Maghia* links elemental chaos to demonic biology and researches proper rituals.

**927:** Naghilas awakes from his slumber and bestows a divine wound upon Artabanu the Scurrilous, a disciple of the *Maghia*, for doubting his faith. The banned cult regains strength, expanding 140 miles northwest from Aboseth to Arcanial.

**934:** Construction begins on the Great Library at Arcanial.

**946:** The *Maghia* determines emanations of raw mana to be strong with elemental chaos.

**955:** The first demon-blooded child survives when raw mana is used during the birth ritual.

**962:** The Great Library's construction ends. Work begins on establishing the Colleges of Magic.

**999:** Ashgaddon, divine patron of necromancers, awakens. His cult slowly spreads from *Horrem* and up the Bardafiel and Arael Rivers.

**1018:** A faithful worshipper of Teos discovers forbidden works and demonic relics under the Great Library. He alerts the imperial archon governing the province. Holy Potentate Kosyas III orders the library and all its contents destroyed.

**1027:** First occurrence of a natural shatim birth in a human family. The *Maghia* abducts the newborn within hours. The inquisition executes the parents and immediate relatives within days.

**1034:** Necromancer Darbyses the Black provokes Kosyas III's death on Munaan.

**1036:** Darbyses is captured in Arcanial and executed. He becomes a martyr.

**1043:** Kosyas IV orders the inquisition to the colonies of the Great Caldera.

**1045:** Severe repression provokes resentment and unrest in all Nicarean colonies.

**1049:** The *Maghia* smuggles into Nav-Gandar weapons purchased in Araldûr. Small stockpiles are scattered throughout the colony.

**1051:** The inquisition charges with sedition visiting dwarven merchants linked with the *Maghia*. Araldûr dispatches an emissary to prevent their execution. The dwarves are expelled without their gold, provoking a scandal in Araldûr. Borders are closed.

**1058:** Frostholm raiders pillage northern Nav-Gandar. Raids follow with increasing frequency.

**1060:** The inquisition at the provincial tribunal of *Incubael* condemns 38 families for consorting with demons and renegades of the *Maghia*. Scores are burned on a great pyre. Others are taken to Munaan and never heard of again. Weeks of protest and riots shake the region.

**1061:** Fleeing the Nicarean inquisition, Nav-Gandarian families emigrate to northern Osriel.

**1066:** Nav-Gandar's imperial archon offers land to Frostholm raiders for them to settle as Nicarean vassals, and to repel further raids.

**1071:** Frostholm expatriates build the town of *Tundar* and mix with local Nav-Gandarian settlers in the region.

**1085:** A mob of rogue demons descend upon Tundar to devour Frostholmers. After weeks of sustained bloodbath, Nicarean troops slay the demons and restore order.

**1101:** The *Maghia* creates a sect of clerical assassins called the *Hand of Haddan*. They target ethnic Nicareans among colonial administration and Nav-Gandarian collaborators. Over time they become followers of Astafeth.

**1111:** Prisoners convicted of sedition are sent to forced labor camps on *Carcer Island* to drain its swamps. Magical wards are raised all around the shores to prevent unauthorized entry or escape.

**1119:** Construction of a great prison begins on Carcer Island.

**1124:** Meryath monster hunters are hired to capture hideous beasts and breed them in captivity.

**1127:** Construction is completed on Carcer Island. Forces under the inquisition's control take possession of the island. Construction crews are slaughtered to preserve the prison's secrets, and their bodies dumped into dungeons. Dreadful monsters are released outside the prison. Meryath monster hunters are later eliminated as they leave Nav-Gandar.

**1128:** Captured disciples of the *Maghia* and anyone suspected of consorting with them are imprisoned on Carcer Island.

**1136:** Nav-Gandarian mages outside the *Maghia* become aware of the existence of raw mana vents and how they affect spellcasting. Those connected with the Nicarean establishment quietly purchase land centered on mana vents.

**1143:** The *Maghia* sees Nav-Gandarian landowners as collaborators, and targets them accordingly.





# History of Caldwen

- 1152:** Nav-Gandarian landowners create the secret order of the *Shebbai* to protect themselves from the *Haddanim* and to suppress knowledge of the raw mana's existence. They endeavor to discredit the *Maghia* among the uninformed public.
- 1165:** Uhuzu the Festering, a demon bound to serve the *Shebbai*, is slain. The *Maghia* is blamed. Inquisitors rejoice. Chroniclers begin to question the motives of the ancient sect.
- 1177:** The inquisition discovers a hidden temple of Ashgaddon beneath Nygardae's sewers. It is demolished, but a horde of undead is accidentally awakened and released, killing or infecting townsfolk. Nicarean troops intervene. Some undead escape westward.
- 1180:** Roxanai is born of a human mother and a demonic father in the village of Dabuloth.
- 1186:** Necromancers in the *Maghia* gather wandering undead in mountain hideouts.
- 1198:** *Shebbai* mage-knights struggle to keep rampaging undead out of wizardly estates. The inquisition is blamed. Landowners demand reparations and begin distancing themselves from Nicarean authorities. Roxanai joins the *Maghia* and adopts the disciple name of Caldwa.

## Civil War

- 1204:** Widespread insurrection spreads from Ellyrion. The *Haddanim* eliminate Lamerith's colonial governor and his family, spurring townsfolk to take to the streets and erect barricades. Imperial troops burn down the town and massacre all ethnic Gandarians fleeing the blaze.
- 1205:** Rebel forces are defeated at *Quasiph*. Spellcasters are sent to Carcer Island and never heard of again; the others are crucified outside Arcanial.
- 1206:** A major part of the imperial fleet is destroyed in Ellyrion, hampering warfare in Nav-Gandar and emboldening the insurgency.
- 1207:** Nicarean forces rout rebels near *Carnibuth*, 80 miles southwest of Nygardae. It is a diversion. Meanwhile, an undead army wipes out Nygardae's imperial garrison. Nicarean forces rush back north. The undead ambush them outside Aroth and slaughter the entire force.
- 1208:** Nicarean troops put down a mutiny in *Hyrkanial*. A mixed force of *Shebbai* mage-knights and demons annihilates these troops on their way back to Abyzael. Prisoners taken to the Forest of Howls are never seen again. Caldwa becomes a hagiarch among the *Maghia* and earns the epithet "the Wise."
- 1209:** Undead forces overwhelm Carcer Island's defenses. The prison is taken, and its guards become food for ghouls and zombies. Inmates join rebel forces. The *Maghia* occupies the fortress.
- 1210:** Landowners refuse to pay taxes. The imperial garrison in *Nazghial* ventures out and captures unruly wizards. Prisoners talk of demons gathering in the mountains. Colonial troops mutiny and betray loyalists outside Lameth. Imperial ranks surrender at the sight of illusory demons.
- 1211:** A small Nicarean skyfleet approaches Arcanial while the *Haddanim* take imperial archon Tyros Kliostos hostage. The city garrison and the archon's family are evacuated toward Ellyrion.

- 1212:** Nav-Gandarians expel Munaani forces and claim their independence. The entire colony rises against Nicarean forces. Caldwa the Wise calls for a truce between her sect and the *Shebbai*.
- 1213:** Nicarean troops complete full-scale withdrawal from Nav-Gandar to Ellyrion.
- 1217:** The imperial archon is later traded for Nav-Gandarian captives. Tyros vows to return.
- 1221:** Caldwa offers support to Ellyrian rebels and their Meryath allies against the empire, despite mutual dislikes and mistrust.
- 1223:** A Gandarian expeditionary force flies to Ellyrion. Osriel merchants finance the insurrection in exchange for trading concessions.
- 1225:** Coalition forces of Ellyrion, Meryath, Osriel, and Nav-Gandar defeat an imperial fleet. Caldwa is killed in the battle. Tyros Kliostos, the fleet commander, is captured and sent to Carcer Island.
- 1227:** The truce between the *Shebbai* and the *Maghia* ends after Caldwa's demise. Rival factions and opportunists bicker about who rules Nav-Gandar. The expeditionary force returns home and is disbanded. Cities and towns become largely autonomous.
- 1228:** Mirzov the Beguiler, mage-knight of the *Shebbai*, becomes the autarch of Arcanial and establishes a provisional council to settle governance objections in Nav-Gandar.
- 1229:** Mirzov is elected Grand Councilor by neighboring towns. The *Maghia* objects.
- 1230:** Mirzov forces unruly city states to join and comply with council decrees.
- 1231:** The council grants legislative privileges to landowners, creating a class of aristocrats. The *Maghia* openly denounces the council. The *Haddanim* assassinate Mirzov during the night. Public opinion turns against the *Maghia*.
- 1232:** Bahadar the Bold succeeds Mirzov as Grand Councilor. He presides over elections instituting the *Upper Chamber of the Magi* and *Lower Chamber of Sorcerers*, ratifying Mirzov's reforms. He becomes the first High Wizard Chancellor of Nav-Gandar. The provisional council is dissolved and a constitution formally enacted.

## Independence

- 1233:** Empress Teosophylacta I signs a peace treaty with the former Nicarean colonies of the Great Caldera. Nav-Gandar is officially independent.
- 1235:** The *Haddanim* botch an assassination attempt on the High Wizard Chancellor. Bahadar outlaws the *Maghia*. The rebellious sect goes underground.
- 1237:** Ghüle launches another raid on Calidar and its moons. Much of the land is devastated and throngs of captives abducted, but the main towns survive. Nav-Gandar rebuilds what was lost.
- 1248:** Nav-Gandar organizes the land according to schools of magic. Construction of a new library at Arcanial commences. The *Declaration of Sorcerers' Rights* is promulgated.
- 1262:** Provinces are required to build and promote colleges corresponding to their schools of magic. The new library is inaugurated in Arcanial.
- 1274:** The *Mausoleum of Keth* is built in the province of Nygardae. A monument to Caldwa the Wise is included on top of the necropolis.





- 1281:** Bahadar the Bold dies from a mysterious curse. The *Maghia* is suspected. He is interred in the necropolis. Faradun the Enlightened succeeds him.
- 1296:** Nav-Gandar officially adopts Caldwen as its nation's name (see CAL1, page 81).
- 1308:** The two chambers outlaw rogue demons and enact laws ensuring no demon can occupy government functions. Shatim sorcerers protest.
- 1321:** A coven of disgruntled shatim leads a demon uprising against laws they judge unfair.
- 1333:** The uprising is put down; shatim sorcerers earn academic and military careers, as well as seats in the *Lower Chamber of Sorcerers*.
- 1342:** The *Habrith* (the shatim's anti-defamation league) is formed. It opposes common views that their kind is fundamentally malevolent. It also opposes injustice perpetrated toward them.
- 1357:** Faradun retires to pursue personal goals. Estera the Bright steps in. She appoints a governor to take charge of Carcer Island. Entry is refused. Estera sends an armed force. After a full-scale battle with monsters and rebellious *Maghia* sorcerers, the chancellor orders the island besieged.
- 1364:** Estera negotiates with necromancers for special laws regarding the presence of undead on Caldwen soil. An agreement is reached in exchange for necromancers betraying the *Maghia*. They find a hidden way into Carcer Island's fortress and evict the outlawed sect.
- 1379:** The *Upper House of Magi* secretly agrees to focus *Shebbai* activities on hiding the existence of raw mana from the non-wizards. Wizardly estates' sizes, ownership, and succession mechanics become subject to collegial authorities. In exchange, aristocrats pay no taxes and receive a pension.
- 1395:** Estera orders the construction of the *Eye of Naghilas* monument.
- 1416:** Unseasonal rains plague Caldwen. Arcanial is flooded resulting in major loss of life and assets.
- 1420:** Estera abdicates. Elaal Skyborne succeeds. He orders the financing of new buildings and enchantments to make Arcanial a levitating city. Freed up lands are entrusted to tenant farmers.
- 1438:** A large fleet of Kumoshiman skyships use a malfunctioning Kahuulkin gate causing them to crash on an island off Caldwen's east coast. Survivors take over the mostly uninhabited island.
- 1441:** Elaal dispatches an army to the renamed island of *Miyuki* to demand fealty and taxes from the newcomers. Clashes ensue.
- 1449:** After years of warfare, the two sides call for a truce. Partial autonomy is granted to the island, in exchange for taxation and conformity with the magiocracy's colleges of magic.
- 1455:** The new library is successfully relocated to its present address in airborne Arcanial.
- 1457:** Unrest flares between tenant farmers and encroaching migrants, as *Port Arcana's* slums expand from Arcanial's skyport and canal areas.
- 1462:** Caldwen explorers reach Kumoshima with Miyukian envoys aboard. They are permitted to land. Cautious trade agreements are reached. Miyuki is recognized as a part of Caldwen. A legation stays behind while the skyships return home with Kumoshiman emissaries.
- 1473:** Elaal orders the construction of defensive monuments around Caldwen. The *Watchers of Gyggarax* are the first two.
- 1487:** Elaal vanishes mysteriously. Vardalas the Green steps in as chancellor.
- 1490:** The last of the old buildings become airborne in Arcanial. Ancient dungeons are backfilled or buried.
- 1499:** A Lao-Kweian fleet sailing from Osriel to the Great Vault runs across a passing Miyukian skyship. It is destroyed and its crew imprisoned. A few manage to escape to Hisetsu. The Kumoshiman emissaries warn Vardalas that the Lao-Kweians most certainly bear hostile intentions.
- 1512:** The *Star Phoenix* enters Calidar's universe.



# Lay of the Land

**The Land:** Much of the magiocracy lies cradled between the two principal ranges, the Arm of the Magus and the Caldwen Shield forming a wall with Osriel. Tall, steep, and with deep, narrow valleys, these young formations hold glaciers and turbulent torrents. Icy-cold lakes commonly dot the highlands, with quiet, remote villages clinging to their banks.

More than two-thirds of Caldwen's borders are coasts, most of which face or connect with the dangerous waters of the Eastern Calderan Sea Ring. Islands abound along this coast, many of which are uninhabited. A lace-like shoreline features countless coves, bays, and sounds offering deep, well-protected anchorages.

The Ice Spine isthmus links Caldwen to Nordheim, largely impassable save for mule paths perched on cliffs overlooking fjord-like shores. Mountain wilderness covers a great deal of the realm, separating narrow coastal plains from the great Valley of Arafor in the center. The richest and most fertile region rings the Lake of Whispers in the south. The vast majority of the population resides along an axis including Anzael, Incubael, Arcanial, and Abyzael. Protected by the magiocracy's laws, large, uninhabited forests often lie between settled lands and mountain foothills, as if they were meant as natural barriers. One may wonder whether they keep commoners away from wizardly estates in the highlands, or if they hide something else entirely.

Much of the mountain and hill areas are off limits to commoners. Private estates owned by Caldwen's wizardly aristocracy occupy the high ground as well as some areas beneath the surface of the Witch's Cauldron. It is unlawful to trespass without written invitations or work permits. Loitering near these estates will prompt armed patrols to investigate and send interlopers away. This practice is in force throughout the entire magiocracy, and it is well known to the common population.



The most important waterways are the Mazuzel River in the south and the Arafor in Central Caldwen. Minor rivers are typically limited to flat-bottom barges and Norse-style longships. Too shallow or rocky beyond the first village, these waterways are unnavigable if no village is shown on the map.

**The Climes:** Prevailing winds blow from the west. As the diagram in the upper right shows, southern and western regions experience generally temperate conditions with frequent periods of rain. A mild sea current flows from the south across the Bay of Araldûr and into the Mørkling Sound before cooling and flowing back out, deeper beneath the surface. Much of the moisture from the Bay of Araldûr is trapped in the Pentacle Mountains, or is blown toward the Lake of Whispers. Snow is abundant at altitude in the Pentacles and the Arm of the Magus. The highest peak in the Pentacles is Mt. Vadaz,





at 6,687 ft. Higher yet soars Mt. Hothim, at 7,133 ft. in the Arm. The Valley of Arafor features slightly drier, cooler, and seasonal weather with thunderstorms in the summer and some snow in the winter. Occasionally fierce wind typically blows from the southwest up this valley, channeled between highlands bottlenecking from Arcanial to Haurith.

The Arm of the Magus prevents much of the moisture from reaching the oriental coast, resulting in these shores becoming semi-arid, colder to the north, milder to the south. Wind sweeps from the south-southwest through the [Nygardae](#) Valley. Tucked between the humid west and semi-arid east, this region enjoys weather similar to the Valley of Arafor, though generally dryer and milder. East coast winds are otherwise dry and often weak. A mild sea current flows up to [Miyuki Island](#) from the south. Cold waters from the arctic north rotate from the northeast up along the coast though Mantra Bay, Wizards Gulf, and the Østfjord, keeping this region cool. Fog often lingers near the northern shores. Caldwa's Wand and the Black Shards Mountains only feature snow or ice during winter months.

**Vegetation:** Oaks prevail in much of the western lands, with evergreens gradually taking over in the foothills. Farmland in the plains and main valleys features a rich and fertile soil. The east coast is better known for heather moorlands, scrub, and pine trees of various sorts.

**People:** Caldweners include mostly elves, dwarves, and a majority of humans. Among the latter stand various ethnicities—Gandarians with prevailing black hair and eyes, Kumoshimans with slanted eyes, Osrielites and Nicareans of mixed appearances, and Norse with predominantly lighter complexions. The shatim are mostly Gandarian in appearance and culture. Other human ethnicities,

gnomes, and fellfolk together make up no more than a tenth of the magiocracy's population.

**Wildlife:** With its temperate climate, western Caldwen boasts a wide variety of wildlife. Common mammals include deer, boars, bears, rabbits, weasels, hedgehogs, badgers, squirrels, foxes, and wolves. Many seabirds populate the coasts. Wading avians favor the flatter, sandier Mørkling and the Lake of Whispers' banks, and cliff birds such as puffins the rockier eastern shores. While crows and cranes own the fields, owls claim the woods, and larger raptors rule the heights along with mountain lions and wild goats. Snakes and other reptiles are more common in the provinces of [Nygardae](#) and [Meggidon](#).

Many monsters dwell in Caldwen's wilderness. Some, descendants of Ghülean invasions, hide below ground and occasionally raid neighboring villages for livestock, riches, and slaves. Dragons are uncommon, but smaller beasts abound, such as griffons, wyverns, hippogriffs, manticores, and chimeras. The undead are allowed existence in the province of [Nygardae](#) under strict necromancer control. They are illegal elsewhere. Monsters that do not generally raid settled areas are protected species, as they provide spell components to sorcerers. Lycanthropes are not tolerated in the magiocracy, but demons very much are. Many of them live near regional features or are connected with them while dwelling on another plane. Local customs govern how to avoid disturbing demons: for example, when crossing a bridge associated with a patron demon, it may be customary (and safer) to leave a coin, food, or some other offering appropriate to the area's traditions.









Name	Coord.	Feature
1085	C1	Battlefield
1165	A3	Battlefield
1205	B3	Battlefield
1207	C4	Battlefield
1208	C2	Battlefield
1210	B3	Battlefield
Aariel	C1	Village
Abael	C2	Village
Abbashiah	C3	Village
Aboseth	C3	Village
Abyzael	C2	City
Alamir	B3	Large Town
Albaaz Lake	C2	Lake
Aleph Lake	C2-3	Lake
Ammon	A2	Small Town
Anthrox	B4	Village
Anzael	A3	City
Arachnos River	B3	River
Arael River	C4-5	River
Arafor River	B2-3, C2-3	River
Arbadin	B2	Large Town
Arcanial	B3	City
Ariech	D3	Small Town
Arim	B4	Village
Arinn Shael	D5	Fortification
Arm of the Magus	C1-4, D2	Mountains
Aroth	C4	Village
Asagax River	D3	River
Asmaddon	D4	Village
Asmodal	A3	Fortification
Astaral	B2	Large Town
Astaral's Inlet	B2	Inlet
Asurias River	D2	River
Athom, Mt.	B2	Peak
Axorith River	C4-D4	River
Az, Rock of	C5	Monument
Azaazul	B2	Large Town
Azemom River	C3-D3	River

Name	Coord.	Feature
Azim Lake	C4-5	Lake
Baaba River	B3	River
Baelith, Horns of	D3-4	Monument
Balsur	C2	Small Town
Balphares	C1	Small Town
Balthezul	D1	Large Town
Baoxas	D3	Village
Barbaroth	C3	Village
Barbith	D3	Village
Bardafiel River	C4	River
Bertsasim	A3	Village
Bebisphaal River	B2	River
Behirith	B4	Village
Belael	C4	Fortification
Belbaal River	C2	River
Belion River	C2	River
Belsaroth	D3	Village
Belzephim, Mt.	C3	Peak
Bisilithur	B4	Large Town
Black Shard	D4	Peak
Black Shard Mts.	C4-5, D4	Mountains
Borborith	D5	Village
Braazu	C4	Small Town
Brommion	D4	Village
Bugai, Mt.	D2	Peak
Cabbarial	B1	Village
Cabiath	C1	Village
Caldwa's Wand	D3	Mountains
Caldwen Shield	A3-4, B4, C4	Mountains
Caltrap Archipelago	D1	Archipelago
Calzabub	D3	Village
Camaro	B3	Village
Camorax River	C5-D5	River
Carabban	D3	Village
Caradim River	B3	River
Carcaroth	A3	Village
Carcas Island	C4	Monument
Carnibuth	C4	Village
Charm's End Cape	C1	Cape
Charoth	B4	Village
Charrion River	B4	River
Cloven Hooves Arch.	D4	Archipelago
Copper	C3	Mine
Crucible Islands	C1	Archipelago
Cumphaal	D5	Small Town
Dabbor	C1	Village
Dabrinis	C1	Village
Dabuloth	B3	Village
Dagron	A2	Village
Deadwood	D4	Forest
Decarabbas	B4	Small Town
Decarai	C4	Village
Deilath	D3	Village
Denageth	D5	Small Town
Domirith	D3	Village
Drachnos River	B3	River
Dusana	C1	Village
Dvergarveg	A2-B2	Tunnel
Edriz	C1	Village
Ehet, Lake	C2	Lake
Elal River	D2	River
Elcar	C1	Village
Elgoroth	C2	Small Town
Elith	D3	Small Town
Emeth River	C3	River
Emohim	C4	Village
Esashi	E3	Village
Essurim	B3	Village
Ethiax	A2	Village
Etimion	B4	Village
Eye of Naghila	C2	Monument
Fabaroch	C1	Village
Fabiaz	C2-3	Village
Fazuzu	B1	Village
Feather Woods	B3	Forest
Feroth	B3	Small Town
Fish Head Bay	D5	Bay
Flauroch	A3	Village
Fommon	B4	Village
Fornuz	D3	Village
Furial	C4	Village
Gaapheth	C1	Village
Gaazi River	A3	River
Gabion	B1	Village
Gadriath	C3	Village
Galikial	A2	Large Town
Gamazul	B3	Village
Garamial	C3	Large Town
Gargarith	C2	Large Town
Gariath	C4	Village
Geas Cove	C4-D4	Bay
Geddaim	D5	Village
Geriaz River	B4	River
Ghast Woods	B4	Forest
Giggarax, Watchers of	C1	Monument
Gith River	B4	River
Glasyelobath	D3	Village
Glyph Bay	D3	Bay
Gold	D2, D3	Mine
Golgothim	B4	Village
Gommor River	C2	River
Gommor Lake	C3	Lake
Gremiaz	A3	Small Town
Ha-Gul River	C4	River
Halpareth	C2	Village
Hamaz	C1	Village
Hapax	C3	Village
Ha-Pharom	A3	Village

Name	Coord.	Feature
Harpoon Narrows	D3-E3	Strait
Hashem	B3	Village
Hator, Mt.	C3	Peak
Haurith	B2	Large Town
Hav Kulud	C4	Peak
Hav Naarith	C3	Peak
Hav Zifud	D3	Peak
Ha-Yodh River	B2	River
Hematie	B2	Mine
Hememex	C5	Village
Heroth's Bed	C1	Inlet
Hedlords Coast	D4	Coastal Region
Hierax Island	D1-2	Island
Hisame	E3	Small Town
Hisetux	E3	Large Town
Horsu	C3	Village
Horrem	C4	Village
Hoshikage	E3	Village
Hotim, Mt.	C2	Peak
Howls, Forest of	C2	Forest
Hyrcanial	C1	Large Town
Ichstyx River	C5	River
Ichthiel	C5-D5	Village
Ierophax	C2	Small Town
Ieshaiah	C1	Village
Ietziluth	A3	Village
Iezilom	C3	Village
Ievrom	C4	Village
Ilith	B2	Village
Imptail Islands	D3	Archipelago
Incabulax	C1	Village
Incubeal	B3	City
Iphet	C3	Village
Iron	C3	Mine
Issarim	C4	Village
Jamaz	B4	Village
Janiaz	B2	Small Town
Japhet	C2	Village
Jefer River	C2	River
Jubalim	C3	Small Town
Karimi, Mt.	B3	Peak
Kathrax	D2	Village
Keriaph	C2	Village
Keth, Mausoleum of	C4	Monument
Kiph River	D2	River
Labael	C2	Large Town
Labazu	B2	Village
Ladash	D2	Village
Lamael	B2	Village
Lamerith	D2	Large Town
Lameth	B3	Village
Larioch	D3	Village
Lasrael	A2	Small Town
Liboleth	B4	Village
Lix Terra River	C3	River
Luciphet	C5	Village
Maaz	C3	Village
Maccarith	B2	Village
Madorion	D2	Village
Mafeer	B3	Village
Malafax	B2	Village
Malphezul	D3	Large Town
Malphezul, Bight of	D2-3	Bay
Maneph	B2	Large Town
Mantra Bay	D2	Bay
Marabbas Pen.	A2-3	Peninsula
Maracandal	A3	Large Town
Marble	B2	Mine
Marderon, Eye of	C4	Monument
Mareth	C4	Village
Maroth	A4	Village
Matsumori	E3	Village
Matsuzaki	E3	Village
Mazuzel R. (lower)	A3-B3	River
Mazuzel R. (upper)	B3-4, C3	River
Meggidon	D4-5	Large Town
Melphon River	C2	River
Mephilim	C3	Village
Mist Glens	C2	Forest
Miyuki Island	E3	Island
Mordeshem	D4	Village
Morkling Sound	A2	Inlet
Morphaim River	C3	River
Mummeth	C5	Village
Murmuru	B3	Small Town
Nabarthor	D1	Village
Naberioth	B2	Village
Nadbroch	B2	Small Town
Nakagawa	E3	Village
Nanimet	B3	Village
Narzael	B3	Small Town
Nassareth	B2	Village
Nazhial	B3	Large Town
Nazhiv	C4-5	Small Town
Neirath	C3	Village
Neziron, Mt.	C2	Peak
Niakappu	E3	Village
Niraz	C5	Village
Niyardae	C4	City
Oemith	D1	Village
Ophidim	C3	Village
Opriax	B2	Village
Oraphet	B2	Village
Orfeth	C4	Village
Ormion	B2	Village
Oshirim	B3	Village
Osford	B1	Inlet
Oviniax	D4	Village

Name	Coord.	Feature
Paimmon	E1	Village
Palafim	C2	Village
Palathor, Mt.	B4	Peak
Pandorim	C2	Small Town
Parashar	A3	Village
Pentacle Mountains	B2-3	Mountains
Phalloch	D3	Village
Pheneoth	C4	Small Town
Phobomet	B3	Village
Pit, The	C3	Monument
Qadeph, Horns of	C2	Peaks
Qhod	D2	Village
Qhoresh	B3	Small Town
Qittai	C2	Village
Quartz	B4	Mine
Quasiph	C3	Village
Quills Island	D1	Island
Rabath	C2	Small Town
Rabiaz	D2	Village
Raboch	B3	Small Town
Ramael	B4	Large Town
Rasheph	B3	Village
Raurax	D4	Small Town
Reihoku	E3	Village
Roggor	D4	Village
Ruax	A3	Village
Ryusei	E3	Village
S'shax River	B2	River
Sabaz	B3	Village
Sabbaph	C2	Village
Salt	C1	Mine
Samarial	D2	Large Town
Samial	D4	Small Town
Saphem	A3	Village
Sarael	B3	Village
Sardareth, Gate of	A2-3	Monument
Scroll Woods	C4	Forest
Sea Hags Strait	A2-3	Strait
Sea Witch Cove	D2	Bay
Shaddom, Mt.	C4	Peak
Shaddu	D2	Village
Shatim Islands	D5	Archipelago
Sheddum	D4	Village
Shoggod River	C3-D3	River
Shroudsmist, Lake	C4	Lake
Sigil Narrows	D1-2	Strait
Silent Clamor Island	D4	Island
Silver	A3	Mine
Souls, Forest of	C4	Forest
Spellstorm Islands	C1	Archipelago
Sphandor	D4	Village
Stone Ring Islands	D2	Archipelago
Succubael	D3	Large Town
Sumirezawa	E3	Village
Sursuru	B4	Village
Taal River	C1	River
Tabril	C3	Large Town
Tanarith	B4	Large Town
Taroth	C2	Small Town
Tarshom	B4	Village
Tartaras	D2	Village
Tephet	C4	Village
Terath	A3	Small Town
Thalub	B3	Small Town
Tundar	C1	Large Town
Thurible Islands	C1	Archipelago
Thurimim	D4	Village
Tol Akkadir	D3	Fortification
Tol Baelith	B1	Fortification
Tol Bahamir	D4	Fortification
Tol Brith	C1	Fortification
Tol Domial	D3	Fortification
Tol Jarmur	C4	Fortification
Tol Sirith	C2	Large Town
Torbatal	D1	Fortification
Torkael	C1	Fortification
Tzev River	A3	River
Udael	C2	Village
Uhuzu River	A3	River
Ursim	D2	Village
Ushiah	B3	Village
Usupher	A3	Village
Vadaz, Mt.	B3	Peak
Vadroth	C3	Small Town
Valach	C2	Small Town
Vanuel	D5	Village
Vapulax	A3	Village
Vassiah	C4	Village
Vaz	D2	Village
Vrox	B4	Small Town
Wandwood Island	D1-2	Island
Warlock Bay	D3	Bay
Warp Woods	C3	Forest
Whispers, Lake of	B3-4	Lake
Witch's Cauldron	A3	Inlet
Wizards Gulf	D1	Bay
Xai, Mt.	C3	Peak
Yagnoth, Mt.	B2	Peak
Yaphem River	B3-4, C4	River
Yaziroth, Mt.	D2	Peak
Yilim River	B4	River
Yukimatsu	E3	Fortification
Zagareth	C2	Village
Zamorem	D3	Village
Zepharom	C3	Small Town
Zephorath	D4	Village
Zoemim	C4	Village
Zoraphet	A3	Village

## Legend



Scale: 1 Hex = 10 miles/16 km, 1: 5,000,000  
Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area Projection

## Magocracy of Caldwen

Cartography by Thorfinn Tait  
& 2019 Bruce A. Heard





# Lay of the Land

## Province of Abyzrael

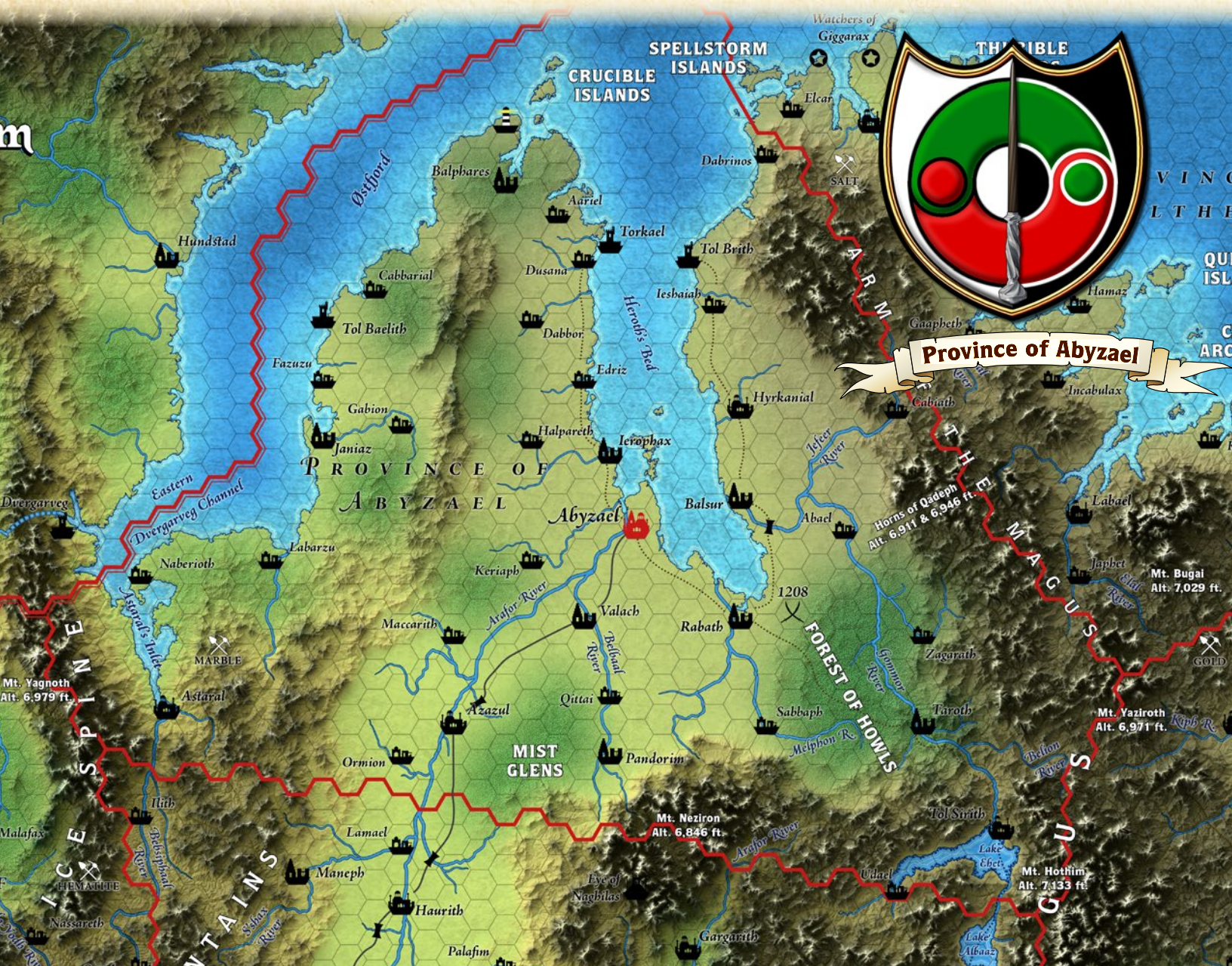
<b>Province Area:</b> 72,320 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 1,726,097 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Abyzrael</a> (19,816 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> Samaz 60%, Naghilas 20%
<b>Races:</b> Human (35% Gandarian, 20% Norse, 5% Nicarean), 15% shatim 10% dwarven, 5% elven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Drachean</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 11°C (52°F) to 22°C (72°F), and with 25mm (1 inch) rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Vortas</i> with average temperatures from -1°C (30°F) to +4°C (39°F), and with 102mm (4 inches) of rain or snow.	

This northerly province features Heroth's Bed, a long bay well over 150 miles long and about 30 wide, and the alluvial plain born from the Arafor and Gommor Rivers. Farther up, fog-prone Østford separates eastern Caldwen from Nordheim. The Arm of the Magus isolates Abyzrael from the oriental coast, while the Pentacles extend into a hilly ridge in the west.

The regional capital lies at the southern tip of the bay, the starting point of a long paved road leading past Arcanial. Dirt trails link

with two crucial fortresses, Torkael and Tol Brith. A third trail leads to the mountain city of Tol Sirith and to tarns beyond. Outside of these trails and the road, people and goods move along coasts and rivers. It is the most practical way of reaching such remote locations as the fortress of Tol Baelith and the towns of Balphares, Janiaz, and Astaral. The wizardly estate owning the Crucible Islands collects tolls from ships sailing through its waters. This "legalized" extortion is bad enough that ships often stray into Nordheim waters. The small town of Balphares pays dearly for its merchandise as a result of this practice. The Gommor River is navigable up to Tarothe, although locks between the mountain lakes enable sailing in the summer. The Belbaal and Melphon Rivers are also navigable up to Pandorim and Sabbaph.

The three fortresses harbor [military](#) ports and [garrisons](#) guarding Heroth's Bed and Østford. Patrols often ply these waters for pirates and sea monsters. Merchant vessels commonly sail between the major port of Abyzrael, Stålbrand in Frostholm, and the Dvergarveg, Nordheim's tunnel leading to the Mørkling Sound on the other side





of the Ice Spine. Less frequent traffic reaches Tundar in the far north. Abyzael is the most important sea port, after Anzael in the southwest. It controls vital traffic down the Arafor River.

Reaching the village of Cabiath in the Arm of the Magus is difficult since its river branch is too shallow for navigation. Straying uphill from its banks is unwise. Those wishing to travel discreetly can cross the treacherous mountain passes toward Gaapheth in the adjacent province. If spotted, they will be viewed with suspicion and investigated. Winter all but closes these passes. Crossing is forbidden anywhere else along the Arm of the Magus in the province of Abyzael.

This land embodies the [College of Alteration](#). Its seat stands in the regional capital, with branches at Hyrkanial and [Tol Sirith](#). Azazul also counts the guild house of [alchemists](#). The holy town of [Astaral](#) is devoted to an important monastery honoring the cult of Samaz. A great shrine also stands at Abyzael, harboring aquariums and a private school of water-based magic.

About 60 miles north to south, the Forest of Howls has become a cursed land. Captured Nicarean soldiers were executed there long ago, but not before their demon captors bound their spirits to trees and rocks to suffer eternal nightmares. Their howls can be heard in the night, when these twisted spirits roam the woods as wraiths and worse things, seeking to feed on the living. Magical protections are vital to safe travel along the trail or the Gommor River. Nonetheless, it is best not to stray from the banks or the trail. Farther west near Azazul, the Mist Glens aren't quite as deadly, but the trees there grow tall with canopies thick enough to dim sunlight. Its permanent mist is an enchantment causing confusion and misdirection. Only creatures of these woods can escape its effects. Legends allude to the tomb of a forgotten magus lying there somewhere in the mist.



## Province of Anzael

<b>Province Surface:</b> 32,251 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 908,444 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Anzael</a> (22,711 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> Barthazu 60%, Naghilas 20%
<b>Races:</b> Human (40% Gandarian, 15% Nicarean), 15% dwarven, 10% elven, 10% shatim	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Solteane</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 12°C (54°F) to 23°C (74°F), and with 42mm (2 inches) of rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Deirdea</i> with average temperatures from 2°C (36°F) to 8°C (47°F), and with 152mm (6 inches) of rain.	

This province on the far-western side of Caldwen shoehorns the Witch's Cauldron, a long and deep seawater bay extending southward from the Morkling Sound. Much of the movement of people and goods is done along rivers and by sea, mostly between [Maracandal](#), Anzael, Galikial, Arbadin, and Ulvgård in Nordheim.





Spellcasters generally rely on means of transportation unavailable to average commoners. There are no paved roads in this province. One dirt trail connects the fortress at Asmodal to the regional capital. Traffic continues from Anzael toward the Lake of Whispers up the trail to Flauroch or on the all-important Lower Mazuzel River.

Two enchanted monuments forming the Gate of Sardareth straddle the Witch's Cauldron. Their magic extends across the bay, 1,000' above and below the surface. It detects one thing crossing (on a random schedule). Roll 1d4: **1.** Anyone listed on Arcanial's registry of most-wanted criminals; **2.** Any stolen object on this registry; **3.** A specific race or monster type, or; **4.** A specific nationality. The exact detection is controlled from Arcanial and lasts for 1d6 hours before changing. If an alarm is triggered, a message is sent by way of crystal ball to the [military](#) in [Anzael](#) and Asmodal, usually resulting in a skyship being dispatched. Vessels triggering an alarm emit a green aura for d12+12 hours.

Aside from being a crucial merchant city for Caldwen—the magiocracy's primary shipping center connecting with the Great Caldera's inner seas—Anzael stands as the patron city of enchanters. Its [College of Enchantment](#) is located on the north side, away from the bustling port and slum districts. Every new moon, students descend upon a selected district and demonstrate their skills, usually resulting in some permanent enchantment to amaze city folk and visiting foreigners. Nothing is too lavish or spectacular when it comes to the sprawling city's prestige, as money and magic flow freely here. A great shrine consecrated to Barthazu stands near the college grounds. A wide, busy canal stretches from the port to the Cauldron. Water elementals keep it clear of silt and help tug larger vessels in and out.

The remainder of the province is relatively poor, except for [Arbadin](#). It lies near Nordheim's Dvergarveg located just across the border, the colossal dwarven tunnel connecting with the Østfjord. Notorious for countless inns and bawdy houses catering to travelers and ship crews, Arbadin also is a den of thieves. Asmodal, on the Marabbas Peninsula, is a fortified port with a village huddling near its walls. It is not open to civilian traffic. The fleet based there patrols the western coast, the Sea Hags Strait, and the Mørkling. Important sea traffic transits through, especially to and from Anzael, Ulvgård, and the Dvergarveg. Vessels of both realms watch for smugglers and pirates passing themselves off as merchants. Patrols will board any suspicious ship. Caldwen also uses skyships.

## Dominion of Arcanial

<b>Dominion Surface:</b> 66,527 sq. miles	<b>Dominion Population:</b> 1,818,910 people
<b>Capital City:</b> <a href="#">Arcanial</a> (22,918 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> <a href="#">Naghilas</a> 60%, Barthazu 15% (Urthaala 65% in Gargarith and mountain lakes)
<b>Races:</b> Human (55% Gandarian, 5% Nicarean), 20% shatim, 10% elven, 5% dwarven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Drachean</i> is the warmest month in the valley, with average temperatures from 11°C (51°F) to 29°C (84°F), and with 29mm (1.2 inch) rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Deirdea</i> with average temperatures from -1°C (31°F) to -7°C (20°F), and with 44mm (1.7 inch) of rain or snow. High in the mountains, temperatures rarely rise above freezing and can drop as low as -60°C (-76°F).	

Nerve center of the magiocracy, Arcanial's landlocked dominion claims the Valley of Arafor, from the Pentacles well into the Arm of the Magus, and from the plains down to the Feather and Warp Woods



## Lay of the Land

to the south. At the center and well above [Port Arcana's](#) ground level slums, the [capital city](#) remains the high point of one's presence in the dominion (see page 100 for details on its layout and contents). Connecting with the busy landing pads and docking towers of Port Arcana's skyport, a paved thoroughfare known as the Road of Geas connects with Abyzael and [Alamir](#). At 150' intervals, magical lights levitate 30' above the road all along 10-15 miles from towns and villages. Vandals sometimes attempt to dispel the glowing orbs for nefarious reasons but the lights always return after a time as they result from the road's overall enchantment rather than separate spells.

Thirty-foot tall animated statues of famous wizards stand by bridges, holding lamps of their own. They mostly gaze into the distance or, on occasion, appear to observe travelers walking or flying by. They

do not speak and aren't sentient beings. These statues have limited ability to interact with passersby, pointing them in the right direction if asked about a town's location. If attacked or besmirched in any way, they will fight back to scatter miscreants, then return to their bridges. Late at night, statues spit out jets of river water to clean the bridges' pavement, especially during the warmer months. Littering, other than dung from beasts of burden and other livestock, is strictly forbidden. Levitating chariots with crews of two or three [hellions](#), often including a spellcaster, occasionally patrol the Road of Geas and its bridges. Their role is to address disturbances, occasionally providing assistance to merchants with broken carts or alerting local garrisons of more serious troubles. The Road of Geas's enchantments are limited to the dominion of Arcanial, of which local wizards are





# Lay of the Land

quite proud. A southern extension across the neighboring province was discussed, but [Incubael](#) has steadfastly refused to support the cost of building and maintaining it, let alone enchanting it. Merchants continually argue for this extension, complaining about the bad conditions of the dirt trails leading to Alamir, especially during the spring and fall seasons.

Farther down the road from the capital city, a trail leads to the town of Gargarith in the Upper Arafor Valley. Two others run from Alamir to Tabril through the Warp Woods, and to the regional capital of Incubael, down south. Navigation on the Upper Mazuzel River is possible from the foothills below the village of Barbaroth to the Lake of Whispers. Aside from Alamir, other towns and villages that can be reached upriver include Maneph, Palafim, Opriax, Quasiph, Raboch, and Dabuloth. Mountain waters are too swift and prone to flash floods to enable river traffic past Zepharon and Mephilim. The Arachnos River is also suitable for barges from the small town of Feroth in the southwest to the Lake of Whispers. Four tarns dot the northeastern border. Local navigation is possible throughout. A trail runs through the Arm of the Magus from Elgoroth to the oriental coast. The mountain passes are closed during the colder months.

Two large forests straddle the border with the province of Incubael—the Feather and Warp Woods. The “Feathers” used to

be a giant sylvan aviary created by a wizard of some past century. They are now home to flying creatures with extravagant plumages. Most are just pleasant to watch. Others are deadly, ranging from flocks of small blood-suckers to magic-using predators, including at best harpies and sphinxes, or at worst demon peacocks of death. The enchantment prevents them from ever leaving these woods. The “Warps” are cursed with malevolent, flesh-craving trees armed with claw-like limbs. Denizens of the “Warps” delight in displacing normal trees to mask the trail to Tabril and to lead travelers to a place of ambush. The oldest of them are capable of spellcasting. Rumors abound of monsters cohabiting with these killer trees, usually dwelling in subterranean lairs.

Corn, barley, and wheat are the main crops of the region, along with apples and chestnuts. Horses and bovines make up much of local livestock. Fishing is also common on the Arafor, downstream from Zepharon. Mines are scattered in the mountains, providing lodestones and [cloudstones](#) relatively near the capital city, as well as iron and copper higher in the mountains. Haurith, Arcanial, and Alamir collect river and road tolls from travelers. Haurith and the capital city are largely devoted to the cult of [Naghilas](#). Gargarith is a holy city devoted to the cult of Urthaala, while Barthazu’s faith is stronger in the south around Tabril and Alamir. It also houses





# Lay of the Land

a cabal of [fire elementalists](#). In all these places, a visit to the local shrine is recommended, along with a donation.

A great monument stands atop a rocky spur on the western ridge of the Upper Arafor Valley, some 30 miles northwest of Gargarith. The Eye of Naghilas is a large stone tower made of black basalt surmounted with a glowing crystal sphere. Tendrils of mana continually arc and split within the crystal, as if probing for a way out. The sphere and the stonework below were fashioned with rock-shaping spells and feature smooth surfaces, save for a few alcoves housing monstrous carvings. There is neither any visible portal nor access path up the cliff-like mountain sides. A password enables entrance directly through the walls. The Eye's purpose is to detect skyships or flying monsters, galleon-sized or larger, traveling the skies of Arcanial and Abyzael, up to 150 miles away horizontally and 30 miles upward. The tower contains a phantasmal display showing observers the position, speed, and bearing of detected objects. The crystal enables a closer look at a single object, permitting at least visual identification. Spells may be cast through the crystal, up to half its detection range. The rest of the tower holds a library in which are recorded observations, as well as the names of identified vessels. If registered, ship names appear in the phantasmal display. Magical communication scrolls may be used to contact garrisons at any of the large towns and cities within range. The remainder of the tower houses facilities for its occupants, sorcerers appointed by the High Wizard Chancellor at Arcanial. One or more [demons](#) are bound to defend the tower, in addition to gargoyles-like statues in outside alcoves.

## Province of Balthezul

<b>Province Surface:</b> 19,042 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 480,548 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Balthezul</a> (7,689 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> Avraoth 55%, Samaz 30%
<b>Races:</b> Human (35% Norse, 25% Gandarian), 15% shatim, 15% dwarven, 5% elven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Drachean</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 8°C (46°F) to 19°C (66°F), and with 33mm (1.3 inch) of rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Vortas</i> with average temperatures from -2°C (28°F) to +4°C (39°F), and with 25mm (1 inch) of rain or snow.	

This cool but arid province lies in Caldwen's far northeastern end. Its rocky coast forms the Wizards Gulf, stretching from Charms' End Cape to Hierax Island. It is a land of fishermen and goat herders, with townsfolk huddling in few fortified centers. Wizards remain mostly aloof on the high ground and on small, inhospitable islands. Labael is a holy center devoted to Avraoth, Caldwen's god of flies and of lies. It might explain why so many flies seem to thrive in this region despite its inclement weather. The regional capital, Balthezul on Hierax Island, boasts more residents than Labael, a [military](#) port, the [College of Conjuration](#), and therefore greater affluence—all things being relative in this remote and desolate province. Much of this craggy island is sparsely forested.

Following the wishes of the local aristocracy, no roads or trails mar the land. None of the rivers are suitable for navigation, save

by small rowboats. Travel is mostly done by sea along the coast, or with sure-footed mules on paths known only to locals. High seas are notorious for aquatic monsters intent on pushing the marine limits of the Dread Lands ever closer to inhabited shores. The wizards holding Quill Island and the Caltrop Archipelago collect tolls from passing ships headed to Labael—so does the Lord of Wandwood Island from any traffic between the mainland and Hierax Island, or along the Inner and Outer Sigil Narrows.

Mostly Norse in its culture and population, [Tundar](#) is the northernmost town. Merchant traffic sails in from Abyzael. Local traders continue from here to Labael and Balthezul. Less than 20 miles away stand the Watchers of Gyggarax, two iron monuments straddling the entrance of Tundar's fjord. A few demon guards and a sorcerer occupy facilities inside the two monuments. In earlier days, their mission was to alert the town of approaching Frostholm raiders. Though Caldwen remains at peace with neighboring Nordheim, piracy and occasional monster raids do still happen. Like all urban centers in the province, Tundar maintains a sturdy palisade and towers, surrounded by a refuse-strewn ditch. The two watchers, demon-like colossi kneeling by the shores, hold a massive chain. It runs beneath the sea's surface, but can be raised from either side to prevent interlopers entering or exiting. On command, the barrier and the two Watchers can turn into fire.

## Province of Incubael

<b>Province Surface:</b> 56,766 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 2,100,099 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Incubael</a> (28,519 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> Zarghadin 40%, Ashgaddon 25%, Naghilas 25%
<b>Races:</b> Human (45% Gandarian, 25% Nicarean and Osriel ethnics), 15% shatim, 5% elven, 5% dwarven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Solteane</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 12°C (53°F) to 24°C (74°F), and with 52mm (2 inches) of rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Deirdea</i> with average temperatures from 0°C (32°F) to +5°C (41°F), and with 102mm (4 inches) of rain or snow.	

This large and fertile region holds claim to the [College of Illusion](#). Sprawled over the drainage basin of the Upper and Lower Mazuzel River, it enjoys the Lake of Whispers's life-bearing bounty, the recipient of all mountain runoff from Caldwen's Shield and the Arm of the Magus's southern end. Its waters discharge down the Lower Mazuzel and into the Witch's Cauldron. Crucial for the local economy, most rivers are navigable, up to the mountains' foothills, including Ramael. River barges can reach the villages of Phobomet and Rasheph in the north, near the Feather Woods. Muddy trails connect the capital with [Alamir](#) and Ramael. Another runs from the province's second most important town, Nazghial.

Generally wet and temperate, this province is home to farmers, fishermen, and traders dwelling in several large cities. Though merely a regional capital, the city of Incubael boasts the magiocracy's greatest number of townsfolk, and possibly the wealthiest. A temple to Zarghadin stands in the city, near the College of







Illusion, which locals call the *House of Chimeras*. The magiocracy's art center shines on Vrox Island, at the heart of the lake. Enhanced with the wonders of phantasmal magic, this small town is devoted to artworks in general. Many visitors stop on Vrox to purchase souvenirs. The name came from the original village's demon patron, a vulture-like biped endowed with magnificent plumage. It shows up during festivals to amuse the crowds and collect offerings. Inns are expensive and booked well in advance. Wealthy residences claim the many small islands dotting the lake.

The Ghost Woods cover the [Bisilthur](#) Valley, a cursed area. During Nav-Gandar's insurrection, throngs of captives, Nicareans and Gandarians alike, were led to Carcer Island through this swampy forest. The sick were left behind and some became ghoul-like undead. The cult of [Ashgaddon](#) claims the region from Fommion to Decarabbas and Arim, known as the *Obsidian Triangle*. It is safest to travel with local priors, as such ghastly creatures hunt in packs among the trees or underwater. Wards keep them in the woods and out of the towns. The town of Bisilthur is home to Caldwen's [Cabal of Demonology](#).

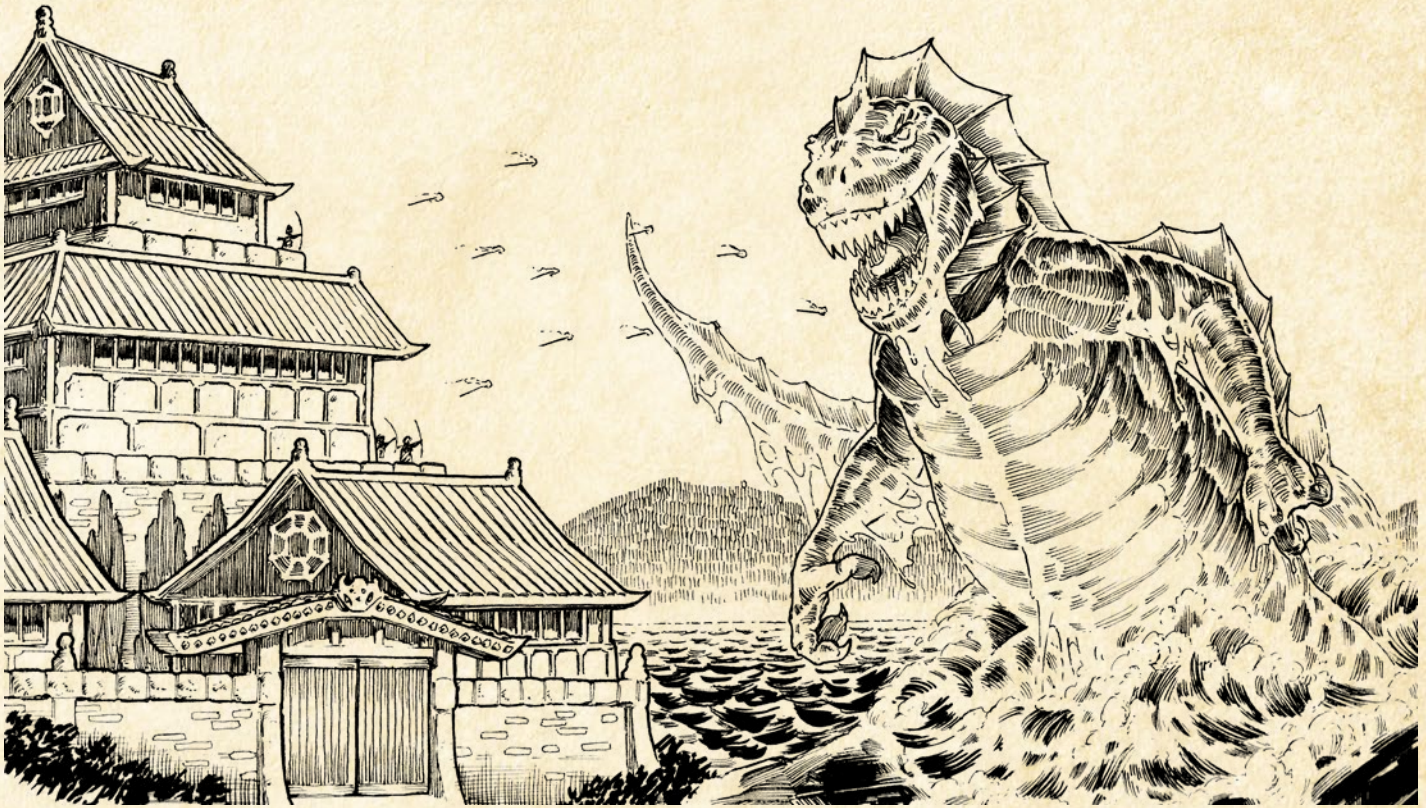
## Province of Garamial

<b>Province Surface:</b> 30,880 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 1,054,218 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Garamial</a> (14,759 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> <a href="#">Astafoth</a> 45%, <a href="#">Naghilas</a> 20%
<b>Races:</b> Human (35% Gandarian, 20% Kumoshiman, 10% Norse), 15% shatim, 10% elven, 5% dwarven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Drachean</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 13°C (55°F) to 24°C (75°F), and with 13mm (0.5 inch) rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Vortas</i> with average temperatures from 4°C (39°F) to 12°C (54°F), and with 19mm (0.75 inch) of rain.	

Located near the oriental seaboard's center, this province's shores form the Hexlords Coast's northern half. Mountains and forests cover much of the hinterland, leaving precious little farmland along river banks and seashores. Distant and inscrutable, shepherds and fishermen dwelling therein honor Astafeth, the lord of mysteries, desire, lust, and vice. Indeed, [houses of carnal pleasures](#) abound, serving as spiritual shrines and profitable businesses. They are reputed the best in the whole of the magiocracy and reasonably salubrious, as indulgence there is more relevant to artful ritual and symbolism than to primal wickedness. The only establishments where one might fancy encounters with mysterious and sophisticated shatim,



# Lay of the Land



it is believed they help elevate one's mystical understanding of the divine, enough so to make a frost giant blush. Alas, visiting foreigners almost always focus on the process rather than its symbology and unearthly meanings. Other than a state of utter content, one never quite remembers the full details of a night in Garamial anyway, liberal uses of elixirs, phylacteries, and exotic pipeweeds helping.

The [College of Invocation](#) claims this corner of Caldwen, its largest branch centering in the regional capital, the town of Garamial. A school of symbology focuses on ritualized behavior, and its seal of approval is required to operate pleasure parlors. Visitors often sail up the Hexlords Coast, the province's peculiar notoriety having worked its way down Osriel's oriental shores. For those seeking less spiritual trade, the only navigable river is the Shoggod, all the way up to Glasylebolath. A bumpy trail connects the regional capital to the fortress of Tol Akkadir and the town of [Succubael](#) (pronounced SOO-kuh-bel, though foreigners always seem to stumble on this name). From there, one either travels farther up the trail into neighboring [Lamerith](#) or sails to Miyuki Island. Along the way, the Imptail Islands are reputed for small displacer monkeys living there. Many are sold as pets and ship mascots.

**Miyuki Island:** Once a borderland long ago known as Gobbar Island, it became a landing site for Kumoshimans shipwrecked on Calidar. Over time, the stranded folk overtook the island and succeeded in preserving their culture and language. Though a part of the Province of Garamial and an active participant in Caldwen's college orthodoxy, Miyuki enjoys an autonomous internal

administration. Local authority in the person of a vice-chancellor resides in Hisetsu, a sizeable town of more than 12,000 souls. By tradition, this Kumoshiman sorcerer known locally as a *Mahôtsukai* heads the College of Invocation's local branch, with courses given in the local vernacular. The Fortress of [Yukimatsu](#) stands on the island's opposite end, a bastion against wandering sea monsters (horrific tales of a gargantuan reptile spitting lightning bolts are told occasionally). Though [Astaferth](#) is honored locally as *Asutafesu*, most of the Miyukian faiths are native Kumoshiman.

## Province of Lamerith

<b>Province Surface:</b> 21,689 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 580,178 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Lamerith</a> (10,056 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> Dagleeth 50%, Avraoth 25%
<b>Races:</b> Human (30% Gandarian, 25% Norse), 20% shatim, 15% dwarven, 5% elven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Drachean</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 12°C (55°F) to 23°C (73°F), and with 16mm (0.6 inch) of rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Vortas</i> with average temperatures from 3°C (37°F) to 11°C (52°F), and with 22mm (0.9 inch) of rain.	

Facing Mantra Bay, this province is home to the [College of Abjuration](#). Featuring almost entirely deserted mountains and rocky shores, this cool and semi-arid region enjoys one valley through which runs the Azemmon River. Its muddy waters cut a gorge through a low ridge, just 15 miles up from the town of Malphezul. This waterway allows navigation to the village of Zamorem. No other rivers





# Lay of the Land

are suitable for anything bigger than a rowboat sailing 10-15 miles from the coast. A trail runs along the entire seaboard, from Samarial all the way to the southern border, and westward from Malphezul to Elgoroth, in the Dominion of Arcanial. Fishing is an important resource, but food is scarce as a general rule. Dry goods (foodstuffs and textiles) are shipped in from other provinces and as far away as Osriel. Priors from various temples use their divine magic to donate edibles, especially on sacred holidays and during festivals. It is one way the clergy ensures followers remain faithful to their cults. One local source of revenue, known as *Tritons Blood*, is a hard liquor, dark blue and slightly sparkling, made from fermented algae.

The lord wizard of the Stone Ring Islands collects a toll from all civilian traffic sailing in or out of Sea Witch Cove, in exchange for the duty of keeping sea monsters away from the town of [Lamerith](#), the regional capital. This quiet town is devoted to the cult of Dagleeth, lord of science, ancient lore, and mostly useless knowledge. It is also the seat of the College of Abjuration, next to which stands a wizard's library, the best in the oriental provinces, and a private school of arcane grammar and calligraphy. Shops selling "certified pre-owned spells" abound in the streets of Lamerith. Most come with a warranty. They purchase at competitive fees unusual or unique spells. A magical binding prevents traded *spellware* from functioning at all unless cast by previous owners or licensed buyers. Known as [Dweomer Regulated Mastery](#), the shop's glyph encryption is forevermore embedded in the text of traded *spellware* whenever it is copied from scrolls or spellbooks, limiting its use to legal owners. [Shady sorcerers](#) in Lamerith's underground may purvey

illicit services to bypass such protection glyphs—an expensive and dangerous endeavor, as hacked *spellware* is prone to malfunction spectacularly. *Spellware* piracy is unlawful in Caldwen and punishable by imprisonment up to 50 years, eye and tongue removal, and/or exile.





# Lay of the Land

The northern town of Samarial houses a [cabal of water elementals](#). The Cult of Shai-Mamnon, a sapient demon scroll, prevails in the southern town of Malphezul. The artifact is the priceless centerpiece of the town's main temple. Common pilgrims journey to this revered site by sea, or on foot across the Arm of the Magus.

Affluent wizards fly in aboard skyships or just teleport any time they feel like it. Spellcasters can safely materialize at the college's *spellport* tower, which features landing receptacles enchanted to prevent horrific teleporting accidents. Many curious and ill-informed infidels wishing a glimpse of the living parchment return from Malphezul as devoted faithful of Shai-Mamnon or other deities of Caldwen's pantheon.

## Province of Meggidon

<b>Province Surface:</b> 15,527 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 507,131 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Meggidon</a> (14,200 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> Nekathal 55%, Ashgaddon 35%
<b>Races:</b> Human (45% Gandarian, 15% various Osriel ethnics), 15% elven, 10% dwarven, 10% shatim	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Solteane</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 14°C (57°F) to 25°C (77°F), and with 10mm (0.4 inch) of rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Vortas</i> with average temperatures from 5°C (41°F) to 13°C (55°F), and with 17mm (0.6 inch) of rain.	

Facing the Hexlords Coast's southern half, this narrow strip of land is home to the [College of Divination](#). Temperate but dry, this province enjoys one fertile plain through which the Camorax River flows. Navigable up to [Cumphaal](#), it is the only waterway suitable for galleys and river barges. A lone trail links the regional capital with the province's fortress at Arinn Shael. Another stronghold guards the northern cape, at Tol Bahamir. People and goods typically travel by sea.

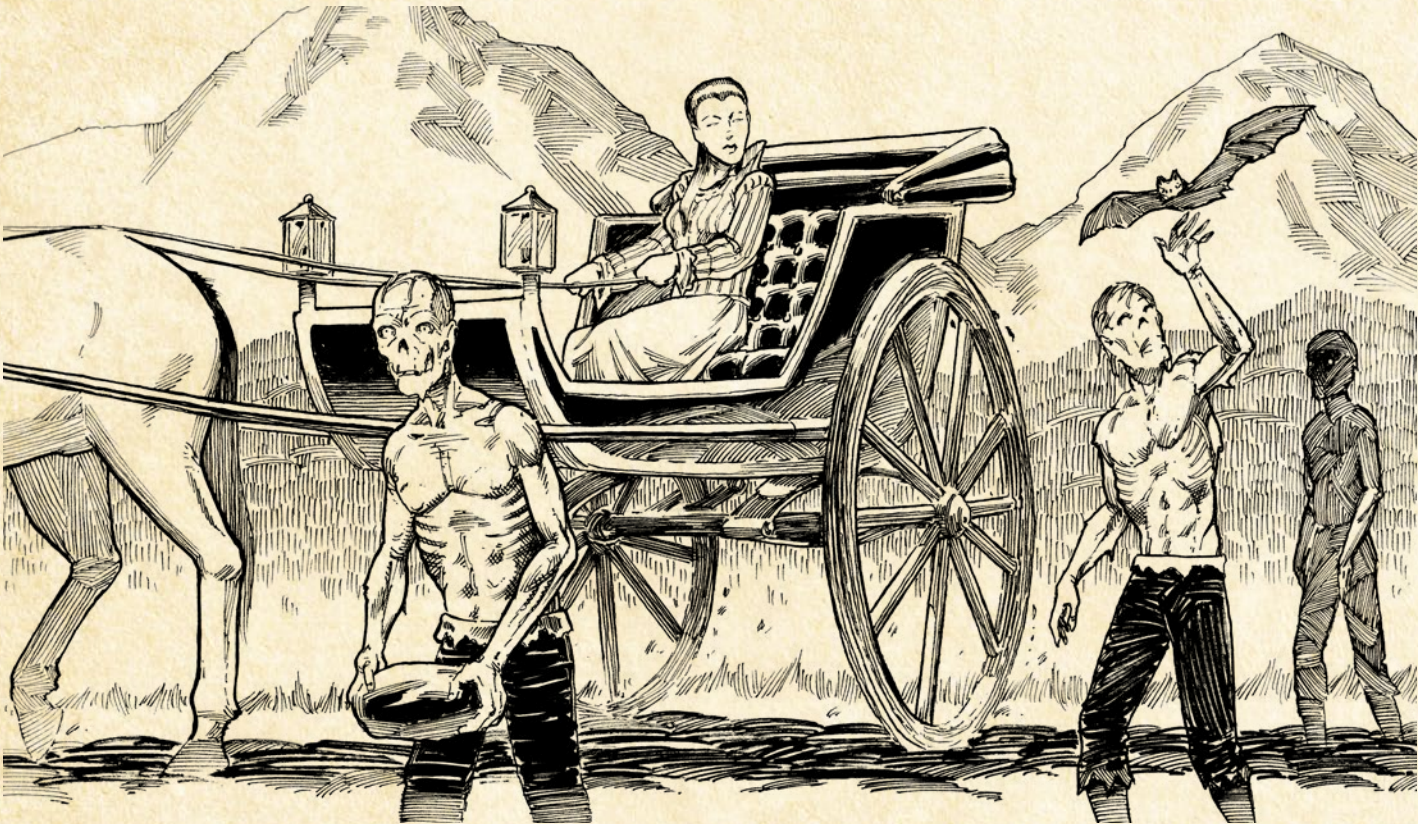
Generally rocky, the coast features small coves and pebble beaches cluttered with scores of multi-colored fishing boats pulled ashore at day's end. Gossamer walls of nets hung to dry or being repaired stretch between the boats and nearby shacks. Ubiquitous flocks of screaming gulls remain on permanent watch for the imprudent fry near the surface or for leftover chum. All becomes quiet after dark, for danger beneath the surface lurks in search of a quick meal or tantalizing loot. Rare are ships sailing near the snaggle-reefed seashores of Meggidon during the day, much less at night. Captains would be wise to seek shelter before dusk and keep a watch. Coastal settlements own palisades and watchtowers, or at the very least thick hedges of thorn bushes.

The town of Meggidon and much of the surrounding province are dedicated to the cult of Nekathal, a mistress of healers and alchemists. It is the College of Divination's seat, which houses a [Shebbai](#) hospital experienced with curses, venoms, and diseases related to the sea. Smaller college annexes operate in Raurax and Denageph. Several lord wizards claim well-guarded estates on nearby islands and below the surface. The Horns of Baelith watch the entrance to Geas Cove. One stands in [Garamial](#), the other in [Meggidon](#). Their enchantments enable the detection and identification of sea creatures with single or collective life forces comparable to a large dragon's. If the alarm is raised, notification is quickly sent by way of crystal ball to communities around Geas Cove and the two nearby [fortresses](#). Iron barbs and rotating blades protect the towers from attacking monsters.





# Lay of the Land



## Province of Nygardae

<b>Province Surface:</b> 37,483 sq. miles	<b>Province Population:</b> 646,136 people
<b>College Seat:</b> <a href="#">Nygardae</a> (19,384 ppl.)	<b>Main Cults:</b> <a href="#">Ashgaddon</a> 70%, Naghilas 10%
<b>Races:</b> Human (50% Gandarian, 5% various Osriel ethnics), 25% shatim, 5% elven, 5% dwarven	
<b>Climate:</b> <i>Drachean</i> is the warmest month, with average temperatures from 12°C (54°F) to 31°C (88°F), and with 20mm (0.8 inch) of rain monthly. The coldest is <i>Deirdea</i> with average temperatures from -6°C (21°F) to +1°C (34°F), and with 29mm (1.1 inch) of rain or snow.	

Viewed as a sinister land by all in the Great Caldera, this province is home to the [College of Necromancers](#). It lies along the Arael Valley, between the Arm of the Magus and the Black Shard Mountains. Taking its source in the far south, the Arael is navigable from Lake Azim and Nazhav to the regional capital nearly 200 miles away. Tributaries enable river traffic up to the foothills. A trail follows the main waterway, linking with Tol Jarmur and the city of Nygardae, the sole major city on Caldwen’s oriental coast and a key sea port. Merchant business from Santa Salvação in Osriel safely transits the well-patrolled Arael between Lake Azim and Nygardae, sailing out of Geas Cove toward the magiocracy’s northern provinces. Local topography constricting air currents frequently provokes windstorms in the vicinity of Lake Azim and the town of Braazu.

The practice of necromancy is heavily regulated and generally limited to this province. The living and the undead are not permitted to mix. However gloomy in appearance, farmland and

municipalities are theoretically safe. The purview of local nobility, forests and mountains are another story. It isn’t rare to see undead laborers providing services under the control of a necromancing taskmaster, which requires a license; for example, teams of zombies are available to help tow river traffic along the Arael. Rogue undead are outlawed and are hunted down.

The province’s baleful reputation comes from Lake Shroudmist, where Carcer Island lies. Just as unsettling, the Eye of Marderon and the [Fortress of Belael](#) guard the region. No trading with Osriel takes place across the lake. The villages are Golgothim and Horrem, isolated, backward, suspicious, and unwelcoming communities. The Eye of Marderon is a monument in the shape of a clawed hand carved out of red stone. It holds a large sphere made of polished quartz acting as a lighthouse. Its magical beam searches the lake and its shores for trespassers. It also tracks individually the locations of all Carcer Island inmates up to 60 miles, piercing through as much as 300’ of water and rock. All such knowledge is monitored from Belael, the local military garrison, which can control where the beam is directed. One or more demons dwell within the hand, protecting it from interlopers.

About 40 miles northeast of Horrem lies the [Mausoleum of Kerth](#), a place where illustrious figures of Caldwen’s past are entombed. Undead guardians bound to the place remain on the lookout for unwanted visitors. Only lord wizards and their blood relatives may enter, usually with an escort of [Ashgaddon priors](#). A platform on top of the mausoleum enables a skyship to land. Tombs and catacombs lie well within the rock of the necropolis’s mountain peak.





Province of Meggidon

PROVINCE OF  
MEGGIDON  
CLOVEN HOOVES  
ARCHIPELAGO

SILENT  
CLAMOR  
ISLAND

SHATIM  
ISLANDS

Hexford's  
Coast

FOREST OF SOULS

PROVINCE OF  
NYGARDAE

SCROLL  
WOODS



Province of Nygardae

COSTA  
VERDE



# Intrigues of the Magi

Unlike most realms, Caldwen qualifies as a meritocracy, a *dascalocracy*, and a magiocracy. It is therefore a state ruled by meritorious teaching mages. Much of what happens here involves these three aspects overlaid on a fragile balance between wizard aristocrats and working-class sorcerers. A High Wizard Chancellor serves as the head of state, with the help of two political councils: the *Upper Chamber of the Magi* representing titled aristocracy, and the *Lower Chamber of Sorcerers* representing common magic-users.

## Provincial Authority

The magiocracy is divided among nine arcane colleges, each under the authority of a chancellor ([Abjuration](#), [Alteration](#), [Conjuration](#), [Enchantment](#), [Illusion](#), [Invocation](#), [Divination](#), [Necromancy](#), and [Grand Wizardry](#)), centered around the [capital city](#). [Colleges of Magic](#) are responsible for educating and promoting the spellcasting class (often at the expense of those unskilled in the Arts), with the added duty of administering the land, its people, town militias, tax collection, and law enforcement. In other words, academia rules the nation. Arguably, titled wizards and working-class sorcerers are all part of Caldwen's elite, at least from the point of view of non-spellcasters, thus sorcerers could be considered petty nobility.

A good portion of settled lands is entrusted to municipalities (towns and villages) and military governors (fortresses and enchanted monuments). Unless land is part of larger townships or wizard estates, hamlets and villages hold jurisdiction over the surrounding 5 miles, 15 miles for small towns and monuments, or 25 for large towns, [fortresses](#), and major cities. Colleges directly administrate unincorporated territories. Farming communities, wealthy individuals, and corporations may rent real estate from the appropriate authorities. Such an arrangement is terminated only if the renter fails to uphold agreed-upon terms, breaks the law, or is disgraced. An heir may inherit a parent's tenant agreement, with the same conditions. Rented land does not constitute a nobility title.

## Wizard Estates

Colleges legally own all the land in Caldwen. Unsettled lands are entrusted to wizards in the form of twelve estates for each of the nine colleges, housing up to 108 aristocrats and their immediate families, plus the city of Arcanial, which is the High Wizard Chancellor's own domain. Wizard estates typically include some land and a dwelling (a tower, a manor house, or some other abode). They can be located on, above, or below the ground or the sea.

Titled aristocrats do not own their college estates. They are merely entitled to live on them and exploit their resources while rising among their colleges' hierarchies. They also receive a pension from the owning colleges. Wizards can only hold one estate at a time. These domains' prestige is ranked from 1 to 12, the latter being the most prized. When one is vacated, all aristocrats in the college's lesser estates must move to the next best domain, eventually freeing up the one with the lowest prestige. This process can take months. Geased or otherwise beguiled [movers](#) are often hired to pack and transport a relocating family's personal effects (anything that isn't a permanent feature of vacated estates). Aristocrats wishing to move in from another province as well as local working-class sorcerers often compete for an unoccupied domain.

This eventually results in an opening for the province's entry-level

estate. An estate is never granted to anyone below a [Bachelor of the Arts](#) (see *At the Heart of Magic*, page 70). The owning college decides whom it is granted to, usually (but not always) in the following order:

- **First:** *Aristocrats in order of current and previous estates' prestige ranks added up*
- **Second:** *Siblings or immediate offspring of titled wizards (in the above order)*
- **Third:** *Working-class sorcerers employed by the owning college, in order of career achievements*
- **Fourth:** *Working-class students enrolled in the local college, in order of academic grades*
- **Fifth:** *Working-class sorcerers employed by another college, in order of career achievements*
- **Sixth:** *Sorcerers born and permanently residing in Caldwen (in the above order)*
- **Seventh:** *Any other sorcerers permanently residing in Caldwen (in the above order)*

Competition for vacated domains is fierce and rarely fair. Being on good terms with the local chancellor helps. Many sorcerers, on the other hand, aren't interested in political power and forego this process for the sake of privacy. Sorcerers granted a college estate earn the status of titled wizard: they and their immediate families are considered aristocrats.

## Forms of Address

Titles are generally used with beneficiaries' given names, or their full names. Untitled sorcerers are addressed as Master or Mistress, such as Master Abachaia or Mistress Fazzika. A titled wizard is called a lord or a lady wizard, and addressed as My Lord or My Lady, or *Your Lordship/Ladyship*. Out of courtesy, usage extends to the spouse and immediate family members as well as officials representing the High Wizard Chancellor and upper rank military. A spellcaster with a [Master of Grand Wizardry](#) (see *At the Heart of Magic*, page 70) is called an archmage and addressed as *Your Highness*. The High Wizard Chancellor is addressed as *Your Excellency* Lord High Vardalas. Even though he may never have taught Grand Wizardry, he still commands the honorary title of *Professor Emeritus*. The College Chancellor of Grand Wizardry should be addressed as *Distinguished Magister*, and a grand prior of the clergy as *Your Grace*.

## Inheritance Laws

In the event the head of a wizardly family passes away, a spouse or direct heir with adequate skills in the Arts may retain the parent's college estate and related privileges. If they already hold another domain, they must choose which one to keep. Inheritance laws in Caldwen favor spellcasting achievement over primogeniture, in the following order: **1.** Spouse if skilled in the Arts, **2.** The most skilled among children or grandchildren, **3.** The most skilled among siblings, etc. Collegial authorities reserve the right to test heirs to determine their skills in the Arts. Diplomas are crucial elements of this process. Inheritance laws work the same way as regards a late parent's personal effects (treasures, properties in foreign lands, businesses, skyships, spellbooks, magical items, and household demons, if any), unless a will was issued. Such documents are only legally enforceable for beneficiaries with adequate skills in the Arts.



Key Figures of Caldwen & Regional Votes		
Region	Name	Title
Caldwen	<a href="#">Lord High Vardalas Dardael</a> “The Green”	<b>High Wizard Chancellor</b> <i>Professor Emeritus of Grand Wizardry</i>
	<a href="#">Mistress Ziav the Nagevah</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Alteration</a>
<a href="#">Abyzael</a>	<b>1 Upper Chamber seat</b> ( <a href="#">Lady Tabaris of Zagarath</a> ) 14 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Abyzael, Astaral, Azazul, Hyrkanial, Tol Sirith, Janiaz, Balphares, Ierophax, Valach, Pandorim, Rabath, Taroth, Balsur, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Anzael</a>	<a href="#">Master Arieiph Johirim</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Enchantment</a>
	<b>1 Upper Chamber seat</b> ( <a href="#">Lord Londo Festerborn</a> ) 9 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Anzael, Maracandal, Galikial, Arbadin, Ammon, Terath, Qhoresh, Lasrael, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Arcanial</a>	<a href="#">Master Tenoboam Beb'zarah</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Grand Wizardry</a>
	<b>12 Upper Chamber seats</b> ( <a href="#">Lord Valapox of the Quezzim</a> and 11 others) 13 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Arcanial, Haurith, Gargarith, Alamir, Tabril, Maneph, Nadroch, Elgoroth, Zepharon, Vadroth, Thalbul, Ferroth, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Balthezul</a>	<a href="#">Mistress Vanash An'melek</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Conjuraction</a>
	1 Upper Chamber seat ( <a href="#">Lady Crallas of Hamiz</a> ) 4 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Balthezul, Labael, Tundar, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Garamial</a>	<a href="#">Mistress Tallas Yavdon, the Younger</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Invocation</a>
	1 Upper Chamber seat ( <a href="#">Lord Yamakura Hayate</a> ) 8 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Garamial, Succubael, Hisetsu, Jubalim, Elith, Ariech, Hisame, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Incubael</a>	<a href="#">Master Neshuzu, Son of Zavriel</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Illusion</a>
	1 Upper Chamber seat ( <a href="#">Lady Gibberima of Sursuru</a> ) 11 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Incubael, Nazghial, Tamarith, Bisilthur, Ramael, Gremiaz, Vrox, Decarabbas, Murmuru, Narzael, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Lamerith</a>	<a href="#">Master Abachaia of Bamirith</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Abjuration</a>
	1 Upper Chamber seat ( <a href="#">Lady Pothecca of the Pestle</a> ) 4 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Lamerith, Malphezul, Samarial, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Meggidon</a>	<a href="#">Master Gilganim Eyes-of-Dezvi</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Divination</a>
	1 Upper Chamber seat ( <a href="#">Lady Flumoxa of Zoraphet</a> ) 5 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Meggidon, Raurax, Cumphaal, Denageph, and the chancellor</i> )	
<a href="#">Nygardae</a>	<a href="#">Mistress Latira Enizer the Issarim</a>	<a href="#">College Chancellor of Necromancy</a>
	1 Upper Chamber seat ( <a href="#">Lady Honoria Morbide</a> ) 6 Lower Chamber seats ( <i>Nygardae, Pheneoth, Samial, Braazu, Nazhav, and the chancellor</i> )	

Estates associated with the [College of Grand Wizardry](#) are limited to graduates holding degrees from all eight of the other [philosophies](#). They cannot be petitioned for or inherited without these credentials. Unqualified heirs inhabiting a grand wizard domain must claim the very next available estate in another province and move out.

## Governance

The [High Wizard Chancellor](#)'s title is assigned by a vote in the *Upper Chamber of the Magi*, which includes all estate-holding archmages in Arcanial and a titled wizard from each of the other eight schools of magic (elected by peers). A grand prior representing each of Caldwen's faiths also holds a seat. Once a position is earned in the upper chamber, this tenure remains permanent except after becoming the High Wizard Chancellor. The *Upper Chamber* therefore houses 20 wizards and 11 members of the clergy. Their role is to confirm or reject ministers assisting the High Wizard Chancellor, as well as laws passed in the *Lower Chamber of Sorcerers*. The *Lower Chamber* accommodates college chancellors and untitled magic-users, one per town or major city, elected by peers holding a [Master's](#) from the relevant establishment (in this respect, some provinces enjoy greater representation than others). The *Lower Chamber* houses

up to 74 chancellors and untitled sorcerers. Their role is to create, remove, or modify laws. The Head of State collects funds from colleges, handles foreign diplomacy, appoints ambassadors and military governors, commands Caldwen's [armed forces](#), and commissions great works of magic. The High Wizard Chancellor's personal authority may supersede that of provincial colleges with a majority vote in the Lower Chamber. The head of state may address either chamber directly; both are located in the city of Arcanial.

## Leagues and Alliances

Archmages largely dominate the Upper Chamber, often supporting the [High Wizard Chancellor](#) who is their peer, although no longer holding a seat. What divides the Upper Chamber lies mostly in personal rivalries and political ambitions, especially as regards a possible election as head of state.

Town delegates often form loose alliances since the provinces wield unequal voting powers. Many of these sorcerers have links with their college chancellors. With up to 21 seats, the *League of the East* includes [Balthezul](#), [Lamerith](#), [Garamial](#), and [Nygardae](#). The *Southern Fellowship* counts sorcerers of [Anzael](#), [Incubael](#), and [Meggidon](#), with up to 22 seats. The *Arafor Ring* includes [Arcanial](#) and [Abyzael](#), for up to 25 seats. Individual wizards may be tempted to withhold their votes, depending on personal interest, bribery, and other factors.

Though many seat-holding sorcerers scheme to earn an estate, secret [Maghia](#) sympathizers have infiltrated the Lower Chamber. This outlawed sect opposes the notion that colleges must own all of Caldwen's land. It rabidly objects to the existence of titled wizards and their privileges. The [Habriith](#) tend to support the latter opinion, but not the former.

Members of the same family may be active in either chamber. The child or spouse of a wizard could actually hold a separate estate or an office in the service of the High Wizard Chancellor. Likewise, a college chancellor's sibling, nephew, cousin (and so on) could also be a town delegate, an ambassador, or a military governor. With nearly a hundred personalities in the two chambers, there are many possibilities, as nepotism isn't at all a concern—rather, it is ingrained in the magiocracy's mindset. It's all about magical prowess and political influence. Despite its electoral mechanics, Caldwen is definitely not a democracy.

## Armed Forces

**Militias:** Not counting possible peasant levies, local forces' roles are to defend urban centers and enforce the law. Municipalities generally govern their militias. Essentially reserves, they train only occasionally; their equipment depends mostly on personal wealth. The greater one's status in the city is, the higher the rank in the local militia may be. Though up to 5% of a town's population can be called to muster, only a small fraction remains on permanent retainer, such as the town watch and law enforcement under a bailiff's charge. College authorities may warrant detachments to handle disturbances beyond town jurisdictions. As large wartime units, militias rarely venture far from their hometowns.

**Standing Army:** All provinces and the Dominion of Arcanial furnish troops and financial or logistical support for permanent forces operating under the [High Wizard Chancellor](#)'s authority. Armed and trained by the [Marshal of Caldwen](#), these troops are redeployed to large towns, major cities, and fortresses as needed. Appointed by the High Wizard Chancellor, military governors command each of these garrisons independently from local authorities.





# Intrigues of the Magi

Crews aboard ships (sailors and artilleryists) remain under the authorities of an [Admiral of the Seas](#) and an [Admiral of the Skies](#). These two commanders oversee the acquisition, maintenance, and deployment of their vessels. Personal rivals, they answer directly to the High Wizard Chancellor, much to the marshal's dislike, who believes both should be under his authority. The Admiral of the Skies has also argued that hippogriff riders should remain under his purview, which did nothing to alleviate inter-service frictions. Unless countermanded by an admiral, military governors have authority over local naval and aerial activities; they can order ground forces to embark as needed.

In total, Caldwen's peacetime forces employ about 3.5% of all large towns' population, or about 9,440 combat troops and 3,020 ship crews. To prevent conflicts of interest, permanent troops and their commanders are rarely posted in their native provinces, except for the [Island of Miyuki](#), which holds a treaty governing its relations with the magiocracy. Caldwen's standing forces aren't expected to gather on a battlefield as a single army. In the case of an invasion, regional forces will endeavor to hold their ground until reinforcements can be dispatched. Skyships and demons respond fairly rapidly. Overall, Caldwen commands 10 skyships, 70 seagoing vessels, 188 hippogriff riders, 71 battle-ready fracks, and 11 fiends (see Demons, CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 216).

Galley patrol nearby coastlines while well-armed carracks sail farther away and on deeper seas. Rowers are convicts who aren't counted as armed troops or as civilian population. Skyships either survey land areas or can be summoned to address disturbances. Small submersibles, seawolves perform underwater patrols and can ambush surface vessels. Most ships are fitted with some magical weapon or device, and enchantments that help reduce the number of crew needed to operate them. Hippogriff riders focus on watching over unincorporated lands, usually flying in teams of two or three. Away from their garrisons for periods up to 3 days, hippogriff riders can reach as far as 100 miles per day with favorable winds. Demons are sometimes used for special missions.

Standard combat forces include the following troops: 60% infantry (3 miscellaneous melee to 1 pike), 20% archers (3 crossbows to 1 bow), 10% cavalry (4 horses to 1 hippogriff), and 10% siege weapon crews. Up to 2% of troops (usually officers) have varying sorcery expertise. Military governors with good spellcasting ability may also retain priors, untitled sorcerers, or titled wizards in their service. Upper ranking commanders often own a flying device or a flying mount with a life force comparable to their rider's.

**Province of Abyzael:** The port city of [Abyzael](#) harbors five galleys, three carracks, a seawolf (the *Isengrim*), and two skyships (the *Black Horn* and the *Nightwailer*). About 560 combat troops are stationed in the city garrison (including 11 hippogriff riders), plus up to 710 city militia if needed. A fiend and four fracks may also be present on the ground or aboard ships. Seven military governors report to the Captain of Abyzael commanding regional capital's citadel.

The towns of Azazul, Hyrkanial, [Astaral](#), and [Tol Sirith](#) together field seven fracks and land forces 711 strong (including 14 hippogriff riders). The province's three fortresses together, Tol Baelith, Torkael, and Tol Brith, can field another five fracks and 448 combat troops (including nine hippogriff riders). They harbor a total of three galleys, two carracks, and two seawolves (the *Barracuda* and the *Blood Pearl*).

**Province of Anzael:** A key port and major military concern, the city of [Anzael](#) harbors six galleys, three carracks, a seawolf (the *Sea Witch*),

and two skyships (the *Nightstorm* and the *Nightrage*). About 690 combat troops hold the city garrison (including 14 hippogriff riders), plus up to 1,135 city militia. A fiend, five fracks, and four military governors report to the Captain of Anzael commanding the regional capital's citadel. Also quartered there, the magiocracy's [Admiral of the Seas](#) often travels between the cities of Abyzael, Nygardae, and Arcanial to inspect operations and facilities.

The towns of Maracandal, Galikial, and [Arbadin](#) together field five fracks and land forces 450 strong (including nine hippogriff riders). The fortress at Asmodal, the largest in Caldwen, has another two fracks and 212 combat troops (including four hippogriff riders). It also counts two galleys, one carrack, and a seawolf (the *Sting Ray*).

**Dominion of Arcanial:** Caldwen's [capital city](#) retains an elite guard 562 strong (including 11 hippogriff riders), two skyships (the *Mage King* and the *Manaborne* replacing the recently-decommissioned *Darkwing*), four fiends, and up to 1,145 city militia with an unpredictable number of spellcasters. All provincial captains and four local military governors report to the [Marshal of Caldwen](#). The marshal oversees the [Dominion of Arcanial](#)'s military affairs and the [High Wizard Chancellor](#)'s personal protection. The magiocracy's [Admiral of the Skies](#) also resides in the floating city.

The towns of Haurith, Gargarith, Alamir, and Tabril together field seven fracks and land forces 713 strong (including 14 hippogriff riders). There are no fortresses in the dominion of Arcanial.

**Province of Balthezul:** More of a military outpost than a true stronghold, this regional capital keeps two galleys and a carrack, 324 combat troops (including six hippogriff riders), and up to 384 town militia. A fiend and two fracks bolster local defenses. Three military governors report to the Captain of [Balthezul](#), who is quartered within the port's fortification.

The towns of Labael and [Tundar](#) together field three fracks and land forces 292 strong (including six hippogriff riders). The fortress at Torbatal on Hierax Island counts a frack and another 111 combat troops (including two hippogriff riders). It also harbors two galleys.

**Province of Garamial:** The port city of [Garamial](#) harbors two galleys and a carrack, and holds 264 combat troops in the town's garrison (including five hippogriff riders), plus up to 738 town militia. Stationed in the port's fortification, the Captain of Garamial oversees a fiend, four fracks, and five military governors including the two from Miyuki Island, which she visits regularly.

The towns of [Succubael](#) and Hisetsu together count two fracks (mainland), six ogre mages (Hisetsu), and land forces 459 strong (including 9 hippogriff riders). With the title of *Lord Lieutenant of the Island*, the military governor in Hisetsu oversees the island's defense. Only a [titled wizard](#) native of Miyuki, or a close relative, is given this rank. The three fortresses together, Tol Akkadir, Tol Domial and [Yukimatsu](#), can field two fracks (mainland), three ogre mages, and another 371 combat troops (including eight hippogriff riders). Fortresses also harbor a total of three galleys, a carrack, two junks, and one Miyukian warship.

**Province of Incubael:** Behind tall mountains and bordering what so far has been a peaceful neighbor, the Mazuzel Plain retains nominal forces. Due to its relatively large local population, however, Incubael is the magiocracy's largest contributor of troops sent to other provinces (more than 20% of all



# Intrigues of the Magi

standing forces). The regional capital holds a skyship (the *Death Wind*), 380 combat troops in the city garrison (including eight hippogriff riders), and up to 1,426 city militia. A fiend, two fracks, and four military governors report to the Captain of [Incubael](#), who occupies the regional capital's military district.

The towns of Nazghial, Tanarith, [Bisilthur](#), and Ramael together field eight fracks and land forces 787 strong (including 16 hippogriff riders). There are no fortresses in the province of Incubael.

**Province of Lamerith:** Somewhat of a military backwater (and one of the least prestigious postings among the military), the regional capital keeps two galleys and a carrack, along with 272 combat troops (including five hippogriff riders), three fracks, and up to 503 poorly trained and equipped town militia. Two military governors report to the Captain of [Lamerith](#), who is quartered within the port's fortification. The towns of Malphezul and Samarial together count two fracks and land forces 230 strong (including five hippogriff riders). There are no fortresses in the province of Lamerith.

**Province of Meggidon:** The port town of [Meggidon](#) harbors three galleys, two carracks, a seawolf (the *Sealion*), and a skyship (the *Sky Dread*), with 465 combat troops in the town's garrison (including nine hippogriff riders), plus up to 710 city militia. A fiend, three fracks, and two military governors report to the Captain of Meggidon commanding regional capital's citadel.

There are no other large towns in this province. The two fortresses together, Tol Bahamir and Arinn Shael, house three fracks and another 283 combat troops (including six hippogriff riders). The fortresses harbor a total of two galleys, a carrack, and a seawolf (the *Triton*, at Tol Bahamir).

**Province of Nygardae:** A major port, the city of [Nygardae](#) counts five galleys, three carracks, a seawolf (the *Maelstrom*), and two skyships (the *Spectre* and the *Shadow*), along with 538 combat troops in the city garrison (including 60 ghouls and 11 undead hippogriff riders). One of the two skyships is often dispatched to patrol the vicinity of [Carcer Island](#). Up to 969 city militia can be called to arms. A fiend, 12 spectres, and four military governors report to the Captain of Nygardae commanding the regional capital's citadel. Undead troops are required by law to remain within Nygardae's borders. Galley rowers are animated skeletons or zombies requiring no rest.

There are no large towns in Nygardae. The two fortresses at [Belael](#) and Tol Jarmur house a frack, six spectres, and another 314 combat troops (including 30 ghouls and six undead hippogriff riders). They also harbor a total of four galleys. Carcer Island remains under the authority of the [High Wizard Chancellor](#). Sorcerers and possibly the undead guard the island with a host of other monsters.

## Sample Military

**Frack:** AR 45 (unarmored), *Rascal* LF 28+12, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others or 1 weapon, DR bite 3M+4 or other attacks M+2 each or by weapon +6, DC as monster; Size L (8'tall), MR 67, Min. Int 56

**Abilities:** Possession (1 individual at any single time; DC negates); call other 30%; spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x1; teleport: only if called. **Defenses:** 20% immunity to magic; +2 weapon to

hit; half damage from physical or magical attacks by mortals. See page 60 for more details on demons.

**Fiend:** AR 60 (unarmored), *Rascal* LF 44+16, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others or weapon, DR bite 3Hi+4 or other attacks 2Lo+2 each or by weapon +6, DC as monster; Size L (9'tall), MR 67, Min. Int 67

**Abilities:** Possession (1 individual at any single time; DC negates); call other 30%; spellcasting: SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x2, SP IV x2; teleport: only if called. **Defenses:** 35% immunity to magic; +2 weapon to hit; half damage from physical or magical attacks by mortals. See page 60 for more details.

## Hippogriff Rider

**Rider (2-4):** AR 10 (unarmored) or 30 (armored), any character profession LF 8-11, MV 120' (40') on foot, TA 1 mace/light crossbow or spell (as appropriate to profession), DR by weapon or spell, Size M (as per race)—ability scores, equipment, and special abilities as per NPC (aside from necessary skills to ride and care for hippogriffs); MR 67, PH ♥—/♠+2/♣—

**Hippogriff:** AR 25, LF 8+1, MV 180' (60') or flying 360' (120') or 100 miles/day, TA 1 bite + 2 claws, DR bite 1H, all others 1Lo, DC as monster; Size L, MR 67 (75 when mounted), PH ♥—/♠—/♣—

**Galley:** AR 25, SR 90, MV sailing 90 yards/combat action with fair winds (50 miles/day) or rowing for a short duration up to 120 yards/combat action (30 miles/day), TA 1 ballista (aft) + 1 ram (forward), DR ballista Hi+6 or ram VH+12, DC as captain, Size 90' length (1 mast), Crew 20 (17 sailors, 3 officers, 180 rower convicts)

**Carrack:** AR 25, SR 120, MV 60 yards/combat action with fair winds (or 40 miles/day), TA 4 ballistae (2 ea. starboard & port) + 2 light catapults (1 ea. starboard & port), DR ballistae Hi+6 or catapults M+8, DC as captain, Size 120' length (3 masts), Crew 40 (36 sailors, 4 officers)

**Seawolf:** AR 30, SR 60, MV surface 60 yards/combat action (or 40 miles/day) or submerged 30 yards/combat action (or 20 miles/day), TA 4 harpoons (in forward tubes; require 3 combat actions to reload), DR harpoons Hi+6, DC as captain, Size 60' length, Crew 20 (17 sailors, 3 officers). Special Abilities: *detect/identify noise* (1 mile range), produce breathable air.

**Skyship:** AR 25, SR 120, Class B, MV in flight 180 yards/combat action (or 200 miles/day), TA 4 ballistae (2 ea. starboard & port) + 2 light catapults (1 ea. starboard & port), DR ballistae Hi+6 or catapults M+8, DC as captain, Size 120' length (3x3 masts), Crew 120 (115 airmen, 5 officers)

**Ships' Special Abilities:** Roll one of the following (1d4)—**1. Enchanted projectiles** (2d6+1 available, +2 to hit, double damage, Defense Check against fire damage), **2. Protection from fire** (immune to non-magical fire, half damage from magical fire), **3. Favorable wind** (once per day for 4d6 hours ignore unfavorable wind or becalmed conditions) OR (if seawolf) *Silent running* (silent once per day for 4d6 combat actions; can make Defense Checks to elude divination spells), **4. Self-sealing** (hull damage regenerates 6 SR per hour) or (if skyship) *Ethereal sails* (fitted for netherworld navigation).





# Behind the Curtain



Aside from the personal rivalries of sorcerers and wizards, or the politics driving the ruling class, a number of guilds, factions, and secret brotherhoods further divide what many outside the magiocracy see as Caldwen's single-minded, shadowy entity. By no means is the following list anywhere near complete, especially without including Gandarian religious sects described in CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#).

## Factotum Fellowship

**Status:** *Trade guild, mostly legitimate.* **Head:** [Sniffwick the Swift](#) (page 57). This association regulates workers specialized in cleaning college facilities and private residences, or packing and moving the personal effects of lord wizards. All information pertaining to the latter remains confidential. The guild guarantees professional standards and work ethics. Applying members undergo in-depth scrutiny to keep out anyone with ulterior motives. The guild owns sky barges and fields sorcerers supervising the execution of individual contracts. Mobile teleporting receptacles may also be available to help move small items more quickly. Workers and supervisors are subject to geas, beguiling, and contingent abjurations meant to dissuade crime and immediately alert the upper ranks if these safeguards have been dispelled or tampered with. On the other hand, in exchange for dues on their earnings the guild trains and protects its members from employer abuse and from potential hazards lying in the residences of powerful spellcasters. The guild maintains a branch in each of the magiocracy's large towns and major cities.

Its upper ranks entertain discreet links with the [Proctors of the Halls](#) and the [Falconers' Guild](#) to help unmask and eliminate interlopers. **Worst Enemy:** the [Spell Hackers' Cabal](#).

## Falconers' Guild

**Status:** *Trade guild, partly covert and illicit.* **Head:** [Marvis Black](#) (page 56). Its original purpose is to offer the services of monster chasers, trackers, and foresters. It also organizes hunts for the magiocracy's upper crust, often using falcons, hence the guild's name. For a fee, experienced rangers endeavor to keep poachers out of forests under the purview of lord wizards. Guild members can be hired to watch the outskirts of wizard estates, which are mostly uninhabited, heading off wandering monsters, undesirable visitors, and other riff-raff. They prevent dangers from predatory beasts, either eliminating or capturing them for resale (live or as spell components).

Over the years, the guild pushed its boundaries and became involved with law enforcement. This aspect of the business consists in guiding militia detachments through wilderness. Trackers help with locating escaped convicts, criminals on the run, and highway bandit lairs. Falcons and hunting dogs are commonly used with success. The guild aggressively offers to execute local bailiffs' warrants for a fee, or collects bounties on its own accord. Given the difficulty of sending urban militia into borderlands or wilderness, magistrates and bailiffs see it as a convenient and efficient device to maintain law and order outside city walls. Following a similar strategy, the guild also



# Behind the Curtain

approached military governors with similar opportunities. At first dubious, local commanders began dispatching falconers to ferret out members of the *Fifth Column* after they discovered Nicarean spies watching isolated fortresses. This led to a hidden war between the *Fifth Column* and the Falconers, the latter now eager to eliminate their foes on their own accord and without legal warrant.

These recent activities developed another set of skills among certain Falconers more suited to slaying individuals than merely hunting them. Never one to miss an opportunity, the guild quietly offers such services well beyond the limits of the law. Most Falconers aren't involved, but some suspect as much and choose to turn a blind eye. Well-connected sorcerers and wizards sometimes use Falconers to remove rivals. The guild resorts to blackmail to keep past clients quiet, should some evidence leak.

To further help protect the guild, its upper ranks devised a sinister method to hide professional slayers. Bodies of the recently deceased are sometimes stolen from their graves and immersed in an enchanted vat. The slayer lies nearby in another. Using alchemical and other magical alterations, an arcane osmosis takes place, swapping the physical appearances of the two individuals. The cadaver is then quietly returned to its grave, and the slayer relocates to another province, with a different identity. Residual memories from the cadaver may linger in the living recipient's mind, occasionally causing some confusion, but the practice goes on. Lately, living people have become the victims of this practice, in order for a slayer to pose as someone else. Victims are promptly eliminated after the swaps. **Worst Enemies:** the *Fifth Column* and the *Hand of Haddan*, which is seen as unwanted competition.

## Fifth Column

**Status:** *Militant faction, outlawed and covert.* **Head:** [Stropesta Mortis](#) (page 57). Not all Nav-Gandarian citizens necessarily felt any loyalty to the nascent magiocracy, and some took matters into their own hands in the wake of the empire's retreat from Calidar. Members of the *Fifth Column* involve a motley bunch—secret followers of Teos, ethnic Nicareans, disgruntled wizards, and shady individuals on the run from the law. For many, they yearn for the return of the empire; for others it is an opportunity to spite the spellcasting establishment and counter-balance their power. The group seeks to infiltrate the [Lower Chamber of Sorcerers](#), taking up the study of magic and working to become elected town delegates in Arcanial. Activists also target town militias and the standing military, ambushing detachments outside towns, eliminating commanders, and performing acts of sabotage whenever possible. Defacing monuments and works of art are favored activities. Another tactic is to slay demons and hang their remains for all to see the next morning, especially creatures well known for being the patrons of popular features (bridges, rivers, roads, monuments, chapels, etc.) Priors and their acolytes are also fair game. The *Fifth Column* maintains links with the *Spell Hackers' Cabal*, helping crime lords in exchange for favors, unusual spells, information, or protection. **Worst enemies:**

the [Falconers' Guild](#), the [Hand of Haddan](#), the [Maghia](#), the [Proctors of the Halls](#), and the *Habrith*.

## Habrith

**Status:** *Benevolent fellowship, overt and legal.* **Head:** [Latira Enizer](#) (page 56). A race of people with demonic ancestry, the shatim formed this association in 1342 CE to defend their rights and reputation among Caldwen's society at a time when they were considered the spawn of servants, little more than subjects born to do the bidding of magic-users. This changed when the *Habrith* forced the magiocracy to cease to ignore the shatim's non-demonic lineage, which was of aristocratic origins in many cases, and to recognize their fundamental nature as spellcasters. This at least earned the shatim the status of sorcerers, though with limitations to which their kind bitterly objects. Offices in the service of the High Wizard Chancellor still aren't open to the shatim. They are not permitted the grant of wizardly estates either, though they may reside with a titled parent, sibling, or spouse. If they do not bear demonic marks, the offspring of shatim may inherit titles and associated privileges.

Aside from endeavoring to alter Caldwen's laws in their favor, the shatim seek to change how the *ta'an* (what the shatim call those without demonic ancestry) perceive them. Within the magiocracy, it has been a persistent belief that the purpose of demons is to serve magic-users. This deep-rooted atavism originates from the times following the demise of ancient Gandaria, when demons were kings and humans their subjects, until the masters were fallen and banished. Though no sorcerer of Gandarian origins would currently admit it, it is their Nicarean heritage: Caldwen's *ta'an* today believe in this "natural order" of things nonetheless. It has become the crux of Caldwen's relations with its neighbors. Given fearful and openly hostile attitudes toward demons in other realms, the magiocracy isn't willing to change its disposition toward full-blooded demons, at least officially, for which the shatim are paying the price.

Aside from swaying the less supportive of Caldwen's wizards, the *Habrith* is determined to demonstrate outside the magiocracy's borders that not all shatim are necessarily evil—a much more taxing quest if ever there were one. The most public of the fellowship's activities is to challenge defamation and injustice against the shatim whenever possible. It is believed, and with good cause, that the shatim make the best advocates (thus the expression: "the devil's advocate"). For this reason, the fellowship is wary about allowing openly wicked members into its fold. It cannot afford to be tied to misbehavior of any sort as this could undo decades of hard work. One of the *Habrith's* less public activities consists in educating and reforming the wicked among the shatim. It promotes an aggressively benevolent ethos, and its members may be the first to confront hostile and malevolent kin. Though unadvertised, this latter aspect of the fraternity does not sit well with demons who are free of Caldwen's control. Much to the fellowship's chagrin, the shatim majority isn't of a particularly benign disposition. The *Habrith* bears tacit sympathies toward the [Maghia](#). **Worst enemy:** the *Fifth Column*.





# Behind the Curtain

## Hand of Haddan

**Status:** *Religious sect, outlawed and covert.* **Head:** [Uz the Sinbound](#) (page 58). Created in 1101 CE by the [Maghia](#), this sect of assassin-priors targeted ethnic Nicareans opposing the [Maghia](#) and Nav-Gandarian collaborators. They fought against land-owners and the [Order of the Shebbai](#), their arch-enemy. While Caldwen grew into the magiocracy it is now, the [Maghia](#) was outlawed and nearly destroyed. The sect went dormant while severing its ties with its originators. It aligned itself more specifically with the faith of Astafeth (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 96). Though today's clergy denies any involvement with the [Hand of Haddan](#), tacit sympathies prevail. [Priors of Ashgaddon](#) and [Avraoth](#) also joined, bringing different valuable skills to the sect.

Though they still are staunch allies of the [Maghia](#), the so-called [Haddanim's](#) newfound purpose is to oppose foreign influence in Caldwen. Xenophobic to the extreme, they target magic-users of non-Gandarian origins seeking offices in the magiocracy's collegial establishment or any function under the [High Wizard Chancellor's](#) purview. Aside from assassination, its last resort in fact, the sect prefers setting up victims to compromise their reputations, leading to their disgrace and exile. This is where the sect excels, as Astafeth is the lord of night, mysteries, vice, envy, and lust. Its priors know well [how to entrap](#) the unwise for the sake of blackmailing or disgracing them. Aside from the [Maghia](#), the [Haddanim](#) remain on reasonably good terms with the [Spell Hackers' Cabal](#). **Worst enemies:** the [Falconers' Guild](#), the [Fifth Column](#), the [Jiyū-kai](#), and the hated [Order of the Shebbai](#).

## Jiyū-kai

**Status:** *Political faction, overt and legal.* **Head:** [Lord Hayate](#) (page 59). Based on [Miyuki Island](#), the [Freedom Assembly](#) (自由会) promotes Miyukian autonomy. Publicly known members include the two town delegates in the [Lower Chamber of the Sorcerers](#) and Lord Wizard Yamakura Hayate in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). They ensure that the island's honor and the terms of its treaty with Caldwen are respected. If not elected to stand for the [College of Invocation](#), Lord Hayate is entitled by this treaty to a silent presence there and to audiences with the [High Wizard Chancellor](#) as needed. Many people of influence on Miyuki Island are members. They meet privately in a forested location between Hisetsu, Esashi and the Yamakura estate.

Some of the participants have a penchant for outright separatism. They believe that they are subjects of Kumoshima, and therefore should not accept the ways of the gaijin. They have a singular dislike for those who are as xenophobic as themselves, especially the [Fifth Column](#) and the [Hand of Haddan](#). The more unruly members occasionally overstep the bounds of the [Jiyū-kai](#) and resort to harassing visiting foreigners, sabotaging their vessels, or brutally discouraging locals from doing business with them. Masked criminals are hired for these occasions. On the other hand, the [Jiyū-kai](#)

also works to keep out crime lords of the [Spell Hackers' Cabal](#) and their minions, whether gaijin or native Miyukian. Some members of Kumoshima's yakuza do hide on the island and have already made fruitful arrangements with the nefarious cabal.

## Maghia

**Status:** *Subversive faction, outlawed and covert.* **Head:** [Saffor the Nefeoth](#) (page 57). Originally a loose association of robber mages trading in stolen demonic spells and relics, the sect was formed in 340 CE on Munaan when Nicarean invaders exterminated demons. Their purpose was at first to preserve old knowledge from the inquisition. Circa 885 CE, they transferred their lore and faiths to Nav-Gandar, Nicarea's Gandarian colony on Calidar. Having revived the old faiths in the colony, the sect engineered a rebellion that eventually overcame imperial hegemony. By then, the mindsets of both the colonial population and their deities had changed, and the sect found itself marginalized. Opposing political changes that led to the creation of Caldwen as a magiocracy, disciples of the [Maghia](#) were branded renegades in 1235 CE. Much of the population today sees them as die-hard fanatics.

The sect claims full credit for overthrowing the imperial overseers, a view that most titled wizards and the [Order of the Shebbai](#) have challenged. Disciples see their detractors as little more than the inheritors of Nicarean landowners, the very people who'd once brutally suppressed the old faiths. In truth, only a minority of titled wizards bear Nicarean ancestry. The [Maghia](#) vehemently opposes the notion that a caste of aristocrats should exist among magic-users, and favors a sorcerers' democracy. It also challenges the legal ownership of all land by colleges, and most importantly, the 14<sup>th</sup> Article of the 1248 CE [Declaration of Sorcerers' Rights](#) officially defining [demon-kind](#) as the servants of magic-users. The sect fiercely believes that demonkind stand as the true teachers of magic until such time the shatim outgrows the mortal population. Its disciples see themselves as the faithful servants of demons, a fundamental and irreconcilable difference with the magiocracy's ruling establishment. Caldwen's clergy has remained largely neutral in the bitter quarrel between the sect and the magiocracy's archmages, leaving the divine to decide whom to favor in order to avoid conflicts of interest. The gods aren't taking sides either, as they mostly follow the collective wishes of those who pray to them. For now, therefore, the matter remains unsettled.

The sect is divided into autonomous covens. They are more powerful in the oriental provinces, especially [Lamerith](#), mainland [Garamial](#), and [Nygardae](#). The sect is weakest in the [Dominion of Arcanial](#) and the province of [Anzael](#). There is no such thing as a top authority, as far as the disciples know. Coven leaders, known as [harbingers](#), can be subject to visitations, visions, personal pacts, and other manifestations from [archfiends](#). Though some of these powerful







demons are rivals, they do support the *Maghia's* general aims and may help on occasion.

The various covens follow a common ideology. When *Proctors of the Halls* destroy a hideout on behalf of the [High Wizard Chancellor](#), survivors or sympathizers establish a new coven elsewhere and resume their activities. Disciples focus on influencing younger folk especially outside towns, and recruiting disgruntled sorcerers. They rely on the same general strategy as the one used against the Nicarean Empire centuries earlier. This includes assassinations, sabotage, diverting sources of mana for their own uses, blackmail, propaganda, building weapons caches, and so on.

The *Maghia* is singularly interested in shatim births. Disciples often play secret roles in their occurrences, scheming to perpetrate the consorting of mortals with demons, willingly, unwittingly, or forcibly. Abducting people with promising ancestry isn't rare. They also seek to kidnap newborns from parents who aren't disciples, so they may be raised as disciples. Due to unpopular legal barriers imposed upon them, the shatim have become the preferred source of *Maghian* recruits, putting the sect in direct conflict with the [Habritth](#). The end goal is to assemble an army of shatim, which would be hard to beat with conventional forces. Disciples once defeated an all-powerful empire, and they expect to win again however long it may take. If not scruples and decency, patience and determination are shining virtues of theirs.

The *Maghia* looks down upon the [Spell Hackers' Cabal](#), despite its own founders' origins as robber mages. Ties with the [Haddanim](#) are still good. The sect remains somewhat xenophobic, though disciples

are willing to disregard actual origins (except Nicarean) among followers of Gandarian faiths and foreign spellcasters. They appreciate the efforts of the *Habritth*, but disagree with the fellowship's reticence to shatim sedition. **Worst enemies:** *Proctors of the Halls*, [Order of the Shebbai](#), [Fifth Column](#), and [titled wizards](#) in general.

## Proctors of the Halls

**Status:** *Intelligence service, mostly legal but covert.* **Head:** [Kryovata the Icy](#) (page 55). The organization's name was inspired from the folk colleges hire to watch their students, uncover developing issues, and encourage acceptable behavior. It behooved the magiocracy's rulers that most political personalities hone their skills at the colleges and that valuable knowledge about them could be easily acquired. Over time, it became common practice to quietly hire the best of hall monitors to keep Arcanial's top circles well informed of the colleges' internal affairs and to accumulate ample records on graduates, college officials, and their acquaintances. This network later grew into a secret police answering directly to the [High Wizard Chancellor](#), and concerning itself with state security.

So-called proctors include sorcerers, non-magic-users, and all creatures that colleges employ as hall monitors—including innately magical beings, such as shatim, demons, and others with useful abilities. Large towns and major cities usually harbor local branches disguised as common businesses. Not all employees are necessarily aware of their employers' true natures. Branch offices provide secure



# Behind the Curtain

meeting places, safe houses, equipment and cash supplies, detention cells, recording devices in the form of enchanted quills and grimoires, and private *spellports* connecting with headquarters in the city of Arcanial, euphemistically known as *The Great Hall*. Magical wards protect branch locations from unwanted attention, enabling proctors to enter or leave unseen. [Provincial authorities](#) either aren't aware of local branches or look the other way. **Worst enemies:** the [Fifth Column](#) and the [Maghia](#) in particular, and all illicit parties directly challenging the High Wizard Chancellor's authority.

## Shebbai, Order of

**Status:** *Knightly order, legal and mostly-overt.* **Head:** [Voyvoda Valvadeen](#) (page 59). This order originated from landowners' hired hands protecting their masters' properties against the [Maghia](#) and the [Haddanim](#). This practice dates back to the eleventh century CE, although their skills and methods were as uneven as their employers' scruples. Early in the twelfth century, some henchmen became more involved with the stewardship of raw mana (see *Blood of the World Soul*, page 94). Against landowners' wishes, neighboring henchmen exchanged views on how best to fulfill their upkeep of the poisonous emanations. Basic sorcery and combat abilities were deemed crucial in their line of work. Despite initial resistance, landowners eventually recognized the benefits of a guild of oath-bound mana guardians imposing skill standards, instruction, healing, and pay scale. By 1152, these owners had armed and financed the foundation of the *Order of the Shebbai* to replace the guild and fight the [Maghia](#) more effectively.

Members of the order adopted the style of mage-knights, warriors with spellcasting abilities. Working near raw mana enabled them to acquire the [unusual skills](#) of the order and avoid succumbing to its [sickness](#). *Shebbai* aren't as potent as pure magic-users, priors, or warriors with equivalent experience; however, their combined skillsets made the mage-knights effective enough to challenge the growing threats of the [Maghia](#) and the dreaded [Haddanim](#). A landlord typically employed one mage-knight with at least one flying steed and a retinue of unmounted stewards, all squire-apprentices trained from a young age. Indoctrination and *esprit de corps* ensured discretion and loyalty.

In 1379, the nascent magiocracy officially recognized the increasingly militarized order and gave it a charter clarifying its activities. Mage-knights today are no longer permitted to wage private wars under the purview of their lieges. Their purposes are to defend [wizard estates](#) from trespassers, to prevent disseminating knowledge of raw mana beyond aristocratic confines, to prevent unlawful tampering with emanations of such, and to heal anyone accidentally exposed to its sickness. The *Shebbai* no longer earn wages from lord wizards. For a time the order received funds directly from the magiocracy's treasury; it now operates revenue-generating monasteries and lending entities. The order assigns mage-knights to wizard estates, independently from the aristocrats currently inhabiting the

premises. The *Shebbai* run hospitals whose intent is charity and public health. [Mana sickness](#) is treated there (and circumstances of the exposure quietly investigated). The two best-known hospitals are in [Arcanial](#) and [Meggidon](#).

Though mage-knights do not form a religious order, they follow diverse ethea. Those entrusted with wizard estates often reflect a faith prevailing locally. Others administering monasteries usually honor Naghilas or Dagleeth. Hospitals are almost always devoted to Nekathal. All of these knights are at least pious followers of the deities mentioned above, and on good terms with their associated clergies. They wear robes bearing colors and symbols of their faiths. By tradition, they favor the [aristocracy](#), which they were originally created to serve. A Grand Mistress oversees the [Lord Abbott](#), Lady Hospitaler, and Lord Treasurer from the order's High Basilica levitating above [Tol Sirith](#). **Worst enemies:** the [Maghia](#), the [Haddanim](#), the [Fifth Column](#).



## Spell Hackers' Cabal

**Status:** *Criminal gangs.* **Head:** [Abachaia of Bamirith](#) (page 54). This cabal includes a number of interests of crime lords who divided Caldwen's territory amongst themselves. Its origins are diverse, including highway bandits, seafaring pirates, street hucksters, deserters, discharged mercenaries, dispossessed Nicareans, disgruntled sorcerers, college flunkouts, and robber-mages whose forebears had broken with the [Maghia](#) during Gandaria's dark ages. The latter had always attracted the lesser sorts, even more so while Nav-Gandar grew into a magiocracy. During the chaos prevailing in the wake of the empire's retreat, opportunities abounded.

Robber-mages of old bequeathed their knowledge to their descendants as they built their gangs during following centuries. In the early days of Caldwen's independence, rival crime lords fought each other until one managed to convince the others that cooperation was more profitable. The cabal was established to settle disputes between crime lords. They now gather secretly to parlay important issues. Meetings occur once a year in one of the magiocracy's provinces, and never at the same locations. They elect a kingpin if one passed away, to preside and act as a tiebreaker. Today, most territories center around large towns; cabal leaders also claim smaller communities that lie closest, barring topographic obstacles. Less formal gatherings occur more often, usually involving neighboring rivals.

In a realm of wizards, what better trade is there than stolen magic? For the inheritors of robber-mages, the greatest source of revenue lies in the trafficking of spells and enchanted objects. This is especially true of protected or forbidden magic. The former involves stolen magic items requiring command words, and proprietary *spellware* subject to [Dweomer Regulated Mastery](#) preventing unlicensed use. The latter includes spellcasting and demonic artifacts deemed too dangerous for public use. Shady sorcerer-thieves specialize in *hacking* through *magicware* protections for a fee. The most notorious of them





ply their odious trade in the [Province of Lamerith](#) (see page 39). Magic trafficking in Caldwen is a capital offense on the same level as murder and high treason. The magiocracy hardly treats petty larceny any less harshly. Capital punishment often proves creative and sinister: if death is the final issue it never comes swiftly.

Although there isn't such a thing as a single "thieves' guild," the cabal stands as its closest alternative. Street gangs are extremely territorial about who operates on their turf. Only dues-paying members are entitled to perform their trade, and only within their bailiwick. Although minor gangs claim neighborhoods and small towns, they obey their crime lords. Members can only join one gang; belonging to more than one rarely results in anything good should the matter come to light, which it sooner or later will. Itinerant adventurers identified as being skilled in the cabal's trade are carefully watched and treated with the utmost unkindness if they challenge the cabal's rules.

The [Factotum Fellowship](#) remains the crime lords' favored way of gaining access to wizardly estates. The [Fifth Column](#) pays crime lords generously and often enlists their services. **Worst enemies:** the [Falconers' Guild](#) and the [Jiyū-kai](#).

## Other Associations

**The Wild Ones:** Head: [Gilganim Eyes-of-Dezvi](#) (page 55) Members are activists opposing the exploitation and abuse of non-malevolent monsters. Seen as eccentric sorcerers, they discourage the collection of spell components from creatures under their protection.

They are bold enough to free hippogriffs from military enclosures and "liberate" other creatures' eggs and hatchlings. Members abhor the notion of using benevolent creatures for warfare or entertainment. The *Wild Ones* hold a few seats in the [Lower Chamber of Sorcerers](#), which they use to publicize their credo and shame abusers.

**Odin's Ravens:** Head: [Svartgaldur, Son of Grim](#) (page 57). Members seek the autonomy of areas with prevailing Norse culture and ethnicity. These often include humans, dwarves, and elves of Nordheim ancestry. Their presence is strongest along the Østfjord coastline and the northern tip of the [Balthezul](#) province. The sorcerer elected to represent Tundar in the [Lower Chamber of Sorcerers](#) is a notorious member. It has been the magiocracy's common policy to suppress Norse culture, renaming communities to better suit a Gandarian bias, which *Odin's Ravens* seek to remedy.

**The Mausoleum:** Head: [Honorio Morbide](#) (page 55). Otherwise known as the *Necromancers' Congress*, it seeks to protect the rights of the more powerful undead and to promote the [College of Necromancy's](#) ideals. Basic rights with strict limitations had been negotiated in 1364, forcing undead sorcerers to send living subordinates to represent them in Arcanial. Travel restrictions are a major grievance, along with the interdiction for non-living spellcasters to attend colleges outside [Nygardae](#), barring them from the status of archmage. Members sympathize with the [Habritth](#), whose plight parallels that of the undead. A branch of the congress secretly meets in Arcanial's [city catacombs](#).



# A Cast of Many

Personalities described herein are by no means a complete list; many more are inferred in this book. One lord wizard is provided for each region, who can be placed in any [single estate](#), as needed. Also included is a sampling of personalities from the [Upper and Lower Chambers](#), the colleges, the [guilds](#), and others in the [High Wizard Chancellor](#)'s service. Suggested Armor Ratings (AR) reflect experience (LF), abilities, assumed equipment, and optimal magic. Characters with dual professions use the best Defense Checks either provides. [Credentials](#) shown below only list the highest achievement attained; several other college diplomas are likely.

**Abachaia of Bamirith:** The [College of Abjuration](#)'s chancellor, Master Abachaia hides his true business as kingpin of the [Spell Hackers' Cabal](#) (see page 52). Though an able administrator, this sorcerer is known for his narcissistic and vindictive character. His accomplices among college educators teach unadvertised courses about [Dweomer Regulation Mastery](#) encryption to a select few. These courses nearly guarantee employment for those surmising ulterior motives and showing signs they wish to follow the path of crime lords.

**Gandarian, Untitled Sorcerer-Rogue:** AR 70, LF 72, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 sword/cane +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 61, Agt 89, Dex 94, Sta 72, Int 83, Wis 61, Per 78, MR 67, PH ♥-2/ ♠-5/ ♣-4. **Faith:** *Shai-Mamnon*, pious. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Abjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** old. **Residence:** [Lamerith](#).

**Aquaxa Meroën:** Admiral Meroën commands the magiocracy's seafaring fleet. A native of [Astaral](#) in Abyzael, she is equally skilled with sword and wand. Lady Aquaxa is a rival of her skybound colleague (see [Phlux-Caladyne](#), page 56). Convinced an ancient sea dragon dwells deep beneath the Østford, she is notorious for ordering expeditions to find her nemesis.

**Meruín Elf, Untitled Sorceress-Warrior:** AR 70, LF 44, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +3, DR M, Size M—Str 89, Agt 83, Dex 78, Sta 72, Int 89, Wis 67, Per 78, MR 67, PH ♥\*/ ♠+4/ ♣-2. **Faith:** *Samaz*, pious. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Enchantment](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Anzael](#).

**Arieph Johirim:** The [College of Enchantment](#)'s chancellor, Master Johirim opposes the [Habirith](#)'s practice of interfering with personal matters of his fellow shatim. He does not share his views publicly, but actively works against the fellowship. Nonetheless,

Arieph is a devoted activist fighting unfair laws against his kind. He blackmails [Tangolo Nimoriën](#) (page 58) to vote in the [Lower Chamber](#) to support his causes. This chancellor tends to be distrustful of foreigners and will do no favors to non-native students.

**Shatim, Untitled Sorcerer:** AR 50, LF 83, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 89, Agt 67, Dex 61, Sta 72, Int 94, Wis 56, Per 67, MR 83, PH ♥-4/ ♠+6/ ♣-2. **Faith:** *Barthazu*, casual. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Enchantment](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Anzael](#).



**Belroth Suppurax:** The Grand Prior of Ashgaddon spends much of his days at his shrine in the [Mausoleum of Keth](#). A powerful necromancer, His Grace Belroth also is a secret member of the [Maghia](#). He married [Honoria Morbide](#) (page 55) with whom he lives, along with their offspring Horroth and Beloria Suppurax-Morbide. The youngsters already attend the [College of Necromancy](#) as *spellwrights*. Purportedly insane, his mother Bubonia resides with them under lock and key.

**Gandarian, Untitled Necromancer-Prior:** AR 60, LF 50, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 barbed spear +3, DR M, Size M—Str 72, Agt 50, Dex 44, Sta 78, Int 89, Wis 94, Per 61, MR 92, PH ♥-5/ ♠-5/ ♣-6. **Faith:** *Ashgaddon*, zealot. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Necromancy](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Nygardae](#).

**Crallas of Hamiz:** Of distant Nicarean landowner ancestry, this lady wizard holds an estate south of Tundar

in the province of Balthezul and its seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). A High Wizard Chancellor's loyalist, she abhors the [Maghia](#). A notorious member of the [Wild Ones](#), Lady Crallas also is an experienced elementalists in the [Cabal of the Fundaments](#) (page 88). She happily married [Master Svartgaldur](#) (page 57) who lives with her.

**Nicarean, Earth Elementalist:** AR 40, LF 67, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +3, DR Lo, Size M—Str 50, Agt 61, Dex 67, Sta 56, Int 94, Wis 72, Per 89, MR 67, PH ♥\*/ ♠\*/ ♣+3. **Faith:** *Samaz*, casual. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Conjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Balthezul](#).

**Daemian Malcrux the Elder:** Originally sworn to protect [Lord High Vardalas](#)'s previous wizardly estate (page 59), Sir Daemian is a loyal mage-knight of the [Shebbai](#). He moved to the capital city when the archmage became the High Wizard Chancellor. He was thereafter assigned as the commander of Caldwen's [military](#) and the magiocracy's Lord Protector. He despises wizards disdaining his lack of college education, though none ever dare challenge him.



# A Cast of Many

**Gandarian, Untitled Mage-Knight:** AR 70, LF 56, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +4, DR M, Size M—Str 89, Agt 78, Dex 50, Sta 83, Int 89, Wis 67, Per 61, MR 92, PH ♥\*/ ♣ +6/ ♠ -3. **Faith:** *Dagleeth*, pious. **Credentials:** No college degree. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Fazzika Whisperdark:** Mistress Fazzika was born and raised in Caldwen, after her father, a Narwani sorcerer, moved there to perfect his skills. Currently in the [Cabal of the Blood](#), she signed up as a dracologist (page 84) in hopes of swaying black dragons to kindlier aims. A [High Wizard Chancellor](#) loyalist, occasional ambassadress to Narwan, and member of the [Proctors](#), she suspects the relationship between [Lady Flumoxa](#) and [Admiral Anachronius](#).

**Narwani Human, Sorceress-Warrior:** AR 60, LF 31, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +2, DR Lo, Size M—Str 61, Agt 78, Dex 50, Sta 72, Int 94, Wis 83, Per 89, MR 92, PH ♥ +4/ ♣ -6/ ♠ +4. **Faith:** *Nekathal*, pious. **Credentials:** [Bachelor](#) of [Divination](#). **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Residence:** [Meggidon](#).

**Flammaria The Torchbearer:** A stalwart supporter of the magiocracy, Flammaria became one of the most powerful figures in Caldwen, not only earning a Master of Grand Wizardry but also becoming the Grand Prioress of Naghilas. Despite her great skills, she remains humble, reserved, and focused on thwarting dastardly schemes of the [Maghia](#) and the [Fifth Column](#).

**Gandarian, Untitled Archmage-Prioress:** AR 65, LF 58, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 barbed chain-whip +3, DR M, Size M—Str 67, Agt 56, Dex 50, Sta 72, Int 94, Wis 100, Per 78, MR 83, PH ♥\*/ ♣ +4/ ♠ -2. **Faith:** *Naghilas*, zealot. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Grand Wizardry](#). **Apparent Age:** old. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Flumoxa of Zoraphet:** Lady Flumoxa commands an estate and a seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). A skillful member of the [Proctors](#) with divided loyalties, she leaks information about the service and the Upper Chamber to Alore's *Tòrr-Gàrraidh*. She nurtures a romantic liaison with [Admiral Anachronius](#) (page 56), to extract information about the [military](#) and enchantment methods of Caldwen's [skyships](#). She also is a member of the [Black Cabal](#).

**Sòldor Elf, Wizard-Warrior:** AR 70, LF 50, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +2, DR M, Size M—Str 72, Agt 83, Dex 50, Sta 61, Int 94, Wis 56, Per 89, MR 67, PH ♥ -3/ ♣ +6/ ♠ +6. **Faith:** *Naghilas*, pious. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Divination](#). **Apparent Age:** middle age. **Residence:** [Meggidon](#).

**Gibberima of Sursuru:** Currently studying for her Master of Illusions, Lady Gibberima nonetheless holds an estate and a seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). A member of the [Proctors](#), she quietly watches [Mistress Stropesta Mortis](#) (page 57), whom she suspects of links with spies of the Nicarean inquisition. Lady Gibberima acts as a lobbyist for a banking business based in Villavecchia, Osriel, in which she inherited a substantial share.

**Osriel Human, Illusionist-Rogue:** AR 50, LF 31, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +2, DR M, Size M—Str 67, Agt 94, Dex 83, Sta 61, Int 89, Wis 50, Per 78, MR 67, PH ♥ +5/ ♣ -3/ ♠ +8. **Faith:** *Zarghadin*, pious. **Credentials:** [Bachelor](#) of [Illusions](#). **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Residence:** [Incubael](#).

**Gilganim Eyes-of-Dezvi:** Aside from being the [College of Divination's](#) chancellor, Master Gilganim secretly runs the [Wild Ones](#) and is an active member of the [Habriith](#), whose chairlady ([Mistress Latira](#) in neighboring Nygardae) he married (page 56). He earned his cognomen from an artifact made from the eyes of a fallen *archfiend*, which enable him to sense people's demonic affinities (ancestry, curses, or pacts) within 30' radius.

**Shatim, Untitled Sorcerer:** AR 50, LF 86, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 67, Agt 50, Dex 44, Sta 72, Int 94, Wis 89, Per 83, MR 67, PH ♥ +6/ ♣ +6/ ♠ -3. **Faith:** *Nekathal*, casual. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Divination](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Meggidon](#).

**Honoraria Morbide:** Lady Honoraria represents her peers in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#) on behalf of the [Necromancers' Congress](#) (page 53). A member of the [White Cabal](#), she is a fierce advocate and promoter of necromancy as a worthwhile and honorable field of study. She resides at her estate with her spouse, His Grace [Belroth Suppurax](#), their offspring, and his apparently insane mother (page 54). Her ghost-like bodyguards wear special shrouds to prevent accidental damage to the living who meet with her.

**Gandarian, Necromancer:** AR 45, LF 58, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 dagger +3, DR VL, Size M—Str 56, Agt 72, Dex 78, Sta 83, Int 94, Wis 67, Per 89, MR 67, PH ♥\*/ ♣ -3/ ♠ +3. **Faith:** *Ashgaddon*, casual. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Necromancy](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Nygardae](#).

**Kryovata the Icy:** In the [High Wizard Chancellor's](#) employ as Treasurer of the Court, Lady Kryovata is less well known as the shadowy Preceptor of the [Proctors](#) (page 51). Born from natives of Belledor's Icefolk Bay, this gnomish sorceress developed an affinity for all things chilly, thus her given name and epithet. Obsessive-compulsive according to some and as implacable as winter's hoary grip, she discharges her duties as methodically and thoroughly as a bear trap. She harbors a visceral hatred of outer-world interlopers, especially the [Fifth Column](#). After a long time breaking the ice, Kryovata developed a very discreet and much-less-than-frosty liaison with [Marvis Black](#) (page 56), choosing to ignore her paramour's extra-curricular activities. She inherited from her mother a winged polar bear, which she rides in combat.

**Gnome, Untitled Sorceress:** AR 50, LF 53, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 dagger +3, DR VL, Size S—Str 44, Agt 83, Dex 78, Sta 72, Int 94, Wis 56, Per 67, MR 75, PH ♥\*/ ♣ +6/ ♠ +4. **Faith:** *Avraoth*, casual. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Divination](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).





# A Cast of Many

## Latira Enizer of the Issarim:

Mistress Latira is the [College of Necromancy's](#) chancelloress and the much-publicized Steward of the [Habritth](#). She is known for authoring frequent articles in the [Arcanial Tribune](#), ranging from endearing to inflammatory, depending on one's point of view. Aside from her extensive knowledge of necromantic magic and her advocacy of the shatim, she also adopted demonology (see page 82) as her field of expertise. She tirelessly endeavors to prevent abusive sorcery. Humane and respectful treatment of the not-so-dead and demon servants has in fact proven to be a concern among Caldwen's wizardly society. Despite her work in the [Cabal of the Flesh](#), she devotes what little free time she has left to [Master Gilganim](#), her beloved spouse and fervent supporter (page 55). Her most vitriolic detractor is [Mistress Vanash An'melek, Balthezul's](#) Chancelloress of Conjunction.

**Shatim, Untitled Necromancer:** AR 50, LF 92, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 61, Agt 56, Dex 50, Sta 67, Int 100, Wis 78, Per 83, MR 67, PH ♥ +3/ ♠ \* / ♣ -3. **Faith:** *Naghilas*, casual. **Credentials:** PhD in [Necromancy](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Nygardae](#).

**Londo Festerborn:** Still studying the craft in the [Cabal of Apothecaries](#) (page 80), Lord Londo secured an estate and a seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). He earned fame and fortune early on with a bubbly brew making people laugh and feel giddy (a laboratory accident he has yet to admit). Now [Arbadin's](#) mayor, he struggles to rid the town of its riff-raff and crime lords. Londo also is a member of the [Wild Ones](#).

**Gnome, Wizard:** AR 35, LF 39, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 dagger +2, DR VL, Size S—Str 44, Agt 72, Dex 78, Sta 83, Int 94, Wis 50, Per 89, MR 67, PH ♥ +4/ ♠ -3/ ♣ +5. **Faith:** *Barthazu*, casual. **Credentials:** Bachelor of [Enchantment](#). **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Residence:** [Anzael](#).

**Marvis Black:** In the [High Wizard Chancellor's](#) employ as Justiciar General, Lady Marvis oversees the magiocracy's magistrates and the proper application of Caldwen's laws. Only two people know she also runs the [Falconers' Guild](#) (page 48). [Lady Potheca](#) (page 57) represents her inside and outside the guild; Marvis uses blackmail to keep her under control. What Caldwen's magistrates cannot



accomplish by legal means, the Falconers may dispatch privately. Marvis maintains a secret romantic liaison with [Lady Kryovata](#) (page 55). Especially where the [Fifth Column](#) is concerned, insider information often flows from the [Proctors](#) to the Falconers and back by way of this exceedingly influential gnomish couple. Marvis rides a winged wolverine to reach a private tower on a cloud, well above the town of Haurith. She and her paramour spend time there, away from prying eyes.

**Gnome, Untitled Sorceress-Rogue:** AR 75, LF 44, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 short sword +3, DR Lo, Size S—Str 78, Agt 100, Dex 89, Sta 83, Int 94, Wis 56, Per 50, MR 67, PH ♥ \* / ♠ -4/ ♣ +3. **Faith:** *Avraoth*, pious. **Credentials:** Master of [Invocation](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Neshuzu, Son of Zavriel:** The [College of Illusion's](#) chancellor, Master Neshuzu also is a disciple of the [Maghia](#) and an aspiring demonologist in the [Cabal of the Spirit](#) (page 84). It's been wrongly believed that his father was a previous chancellor, now deceased under strange and still unexplained circumstances. His true forebear was instead a rogue demon by the same name, one who was slain by [Sir Daemian Malcrux](#), a deed for which Neshuzu vowed revenge.

**Gandarian, Untitled Illusionist:** AR 50, LF 89, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 67, Agt 61, Dex 50, Sta 85, Int 94, Wis 72, Per 78, MR 58, PH ♥ -5/ ♠ \* / ♣ -5. **Faith:** *Avraoth*, casual. **Credentials:** PhD in [Illusion](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Incubael](#).

**Phlux-Caladyne Anachronius the Cacophrene:** Colorful and eccentric, the [Admiral of the Skies](#) is notorious for his rivalry with [Aquaxa Meroën](#) (page 54), his naval counterpart. Few people know of his relationship with [Lady Flumoxa](#) (page 55). His nature as a facetious inventor and a perpetrator of impish antics at formal receptions has made him popular among Arcanial's upper-class. A sound tactician and able commander, he earned the [High Wizard Chancellor's](#) support despite the [Marshal's](#) mounting annoyance. Flux also is an experienced cabalist in [Skymastery](#) (see page 91).

**Elëan Elf, Untitled Sorcerer-Warrior:** AR 70, LF 44, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +3, DR M, Size M—Str 83, Agt 89, Dex 61, Sta 67, Int 89, Wis 72, Per 78, MR 67, PH ♥ \* / ♠ +4/ ♣ +6. **Faith:**



# A Cast of Many

*Barthazu*, pious. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Enchantment](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Potheca of the Pestle:** Proud recipient of a wizardly estate near Samarial and a seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#), Lady Potheca is publicly recognized as the head of the [Falconers' Guild](#). Its true master is in reality [Lady Marvis Black](#) (page 56). To keep their arrangement quiet, the Justiciar General blackmails Potheca about an affair she once had with a [Fifth Column](#) partisan, long since dead. Meanwhile, she studies elementalism in the [Cabal of the Rudiments](#) (page 87).

**Phrydian, Water Elementalist:** AR 30, LF 39, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +2, DR Lo, Size M—Str 61, Agt 67, Dex 72, Sta 78, Int 94, Wis 83, Per 89, MR 67, PH ♥\*/ ♠\*/ ♣\*/ ♠\*. **Faith:** *Astafeth*, casual. **Credentials:** [Bachelor](#) of [Abjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Residence:** [Lamerith](#).

**Saffor the Nefeoth:** Lord Saffor has been the High Wizard Chancellor's trusted chamberlain, his confidante, and adviser for more than a decade. Saffor hides his own feelings well: in reality, he despises his master. The chamberlain is the secret ruler of the [Maghia](#). He does not plan to harm [Lord High Vardalas](#) (page 59) as another would promptly replace him; he uses his position to obtain valuable information, which he communicates to his sect. Careful about what he shares with his disciples, he occasionally allows some of them to fall prey to the [Proctors](#) to avoid suspicion. Only a handful among the [Maghia](#) know who their true leader is. Saffor has been asking to be included in discussions between the [Marshal](#) of Caldwen and the [Preceptor](#) of the [Proctors](#) when the lord high's safety is concerned.

**Gandarian, Untitled Sorcerer-Rogue:** AR 60, LF 44, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 short sword +3, DR Lo, Size M—Str 72, Agt 89, Dex 94, Sta 83, Int 100, Wis 78, Per 44, MR 75, PH ♥-7/ ♠-7/ ♣-3. **Faith:** *Ashgaddon*, pious. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Alteration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Sniffwick the Swift:** Master Sniffwick represents the town of Alamir in the [Lower Chamber of Sorcerers](#) and stands as the [Factotum Fellowship](#)'s guild master (page 48). He remains steadfastly dedicated to preventing crime lords from interfering with his business

or that of his wizard patrons. Despite his swashbuckler's demeanor, Sniffwick excels as a master illusionist. A faithfully married Canisean, he fathered a litter of eight enterprising pups.

**Canisean, Untitled Illusionist:** AR 50, LF 53, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +3, DR Lo, Size M—Str 78, Agt 83, Dex 89, Sta 67, Int 94, Wis 61, Per 72, MR 67, PH ♥+4/ ♠+4/ ♣+6. **Faith:** *Zarghadin*, casual. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Illusions](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Stropesta Mortis:** Mistress Mortis represents the town of [Bisilthur](#) in the [Lower Chamber of Sorcerers](#). She also runs the [Fifth Column](#) under an alternate identity. She knows [Lady Gibberima](#) is watching her (page 55). Stropesta's minions are working to trick Gibberima's banking business into dealing with [crime lords](#) so she may discredit her foe. [Master Abachaia](#) (page 54), kingpin of the

[Spell Hackers' Cabal](#), is an eager participant in this nefarious scheme. Eventually, Stropesta hopes to convince [Mistress Latira](#) (page 56) to publish an article about this "odious crime against the state" in the [Arcanial Tribune](#). Her main target is, however, [Lady Kryovata](#) (page 55) whom she suspects runs the [Proctors](#). She's also planning to hire a [Haddanim](#) slayer to eliminate [Marvis Black](#) since she discovered the Justiciar General's personal liaison with Kryovata.

**Nicarean, Untitled Sorceress-Warrior:** AR 75, LF 44, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +3, DR M, Size M—Str 83, Agt 72, Dex 89, Sta 61, Int 94, Wis 72, Per 67, MR 83, PH ♥\*/ ♠-4/ ♣\*. **Faith:** *Urthaala*, pious. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Abjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Incubael](#).

**Svartgaldur, Son of Grim:** Master Svartgaldur represents [Tundar](#) in the [Lower Chamber](#). He

also runs [Odin's Ravens](#). Of Norse ancestry, he's been accused of sedition against the magiocracy several times, though nothing was ever proven. Svartgaldur hides his werebear affliction, however, fearing retribution from Nordheim therianthrope hunters. His wife, [Lady Crallas](#) (page 54) is aware of his curse and has been seeking a cure.

**Norse, Untitled Sorcerer-Warrior:** AR 60, LF 42, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 battle axe +2, DR M, Size M—Str 94, Agt 72, Dex 61, Sta 83, Int 89, Wis 67, Per 78, MR 83, PH ♥\*/ ♠+6/ ♣+4. **Faith:** *Odin*, pious. **Credentials:** [Bachelor](#) of [Conjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Balthezul](#).





# A Cast of Many

**Tabaris of Zagarath:** Lady Tabaris holds a seat at the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#) and a wizardly estate. One of the [Proctors](#), she investigates cases of smuggled, diluted, or stolen seitha with the help of undercover [Shebbai knights](#). Prominent in the [Cabal of the Alchemists](#) (page 81), Tabaris is an expert in seitha extraction and refining. Living with four rambunctious teenage offspring, she is a widow in search of her husband's killer (sent by [Ziav the Nagevah](#), page 59).

**Felisean, Wizard-Warrior:** AR 70, LF 58, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +3, DR Lo, Size M—Str 89, Agt 72, Dex 78, Sta 67, Int 94, Wis 61, Per 67, MR 83, PH ♥\*/♠ +2/♣ −2. **Faith:** [Dagleeth](#), Pious. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Alteration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Abyzael](#).

**Tallas Yavdon, the Younger:** The [College of Invocation's](#) chancelloress, Mistress Tallas also is an aspiring dracologist in the [Cabal of the Wyrms](#). A cautious ally of [Abachaia](#) (page 54), she also is the ruling [crime lord](#), under an alternate identity, in the town of [Succubael](#). She operates a number of [pleasure parlors](#) and gambling houses she acquired from her mother (whom she poisoned after a managerial disagreement). Of Nicarean ancestry long forgotten by most, she sympathizes with the [Fifth Column](#).

**Nicarean, Untitled Sorceress-Rogue:** AR 70, LF 69, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +4, DR M, Size M—Str 94, Agt 89, Dex 50, Sta 56, Int 100, Wis 61, Per 44, MR 75, PH ♥−6/♠ +5/♣ −4. **Faith:** [Astafeth](#), pious. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Invocation](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Garamial](#).

**Tangolo Nimoriën:** Master Tangolo represents the town of [Lamerith](#) in the [Lower Chamber of the Sorcerers](#). He secretly slew [Lady Potheca's](#) previous lover (page 57) while working for the [Proctors](#). In love with her, he now seeks her hand. [Master Arieiph](#) (page 54) witnessed the murder but will not reveal it to Lady Potheca as long as Tangolo actively supports him in the [Lower Chamber](#). The half-elven sorcerer now plans (rather unwisely) on hiring a [Haddanim](#) to slay the problematic witness.

**Phrydian, Untitled Sorcerer-Rogue:** AR 50, LF 25, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +2, DR M, Size M—Str 78, Agt 83, Dex 89, Sta 67, Int 94, Wis 44, Per 72, MR 83, PH ♥\*/♠ −2/♣ +4. **Faith:** [Naghilas](#), pious. **Credentials:** [Bachelor](#) of [Abjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Residence:** [Lamerith](#).

**Tenoboam Beb'zorah:** The [College of Grand Wizardry's](#) chancellor, the [Distinguished Magister](#) Beb'zorah is the most public member of the [Habritth](#). Barred by Caldwen's laws, his race prevents him from succeeding the [High Wizard Chancellor](#). Now a very old shatim, battered and infirm from youthful scrapes with past foes, he has little hope of overturning the laws soon enough to succeed [Lord High Vardalas](#) (page 59), an elf both younger than he and blessed with the gift of long life.

**Shatim, Untitled Archmage:** AR 55, LF 94, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 stiletto pen +4, DR VL, Size M—Str 44, Agt 72, Dex 78,

Sta 50, Int 106, Wis 94, Per 89, MR 58, PH ♥\*/♠ −2/♣ +6. **Faith:** [Dagleeth](#), casual. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Grand Wizardry](#). **Apparent Age:** very old. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Uz The Sinbound:** Grand Prior of [Astafeth](#) and a skilled slayer himself, His Grace Uz also runs the [Hand of Haddan](#). Very few disciples of the [Haddanim](#) are aware of their master's true identity and appearance. Uz holds dirt on many powerful people, enabling him to quash real efforts to eradicate his secret sect. Aside from the blackmailing and xenophobically-motivated slaying businesses, Uz operates all [pleasure parlors](#) in the town of [Garamial](#) and the entire [Shoggod Valley](#), siphoning profits to bankroll the [Temple of Astafeth](#). He plans on expanding his exploitation of debauchery to [Succubael](#), resulting in a clash with [Mistress Tallas](#) and her gang (page 58). It is uncertain as of yet how [Abachaia's Spell Hackers' Cabal](#) (page 52) would respond to this fight. Equally unknown remain the [Maghia](#) and the [Fifth Column's](#) reactions to a widening and increasingly bloody conflict. Greed may become the wedge undoing these sects' criminal *entente*, which the [Proctors](#) could eagerly exploit.

**Gandarian, Assassin-Prior:** AR 70, LF 53, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 poisoned staff +3, DR M, Size M—Str 78, Agt 83, Dex 72, Sta 61, Int 67, Wis 94, Per 89, MR 75, PH ♥−6/♠ −3/♣ +4. **Faith:** [Astafeth](#), zealot. **Credentials:** No college credentials. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Garamial](#).

**Valapox of the Quezzim:** Lord Valapox commands a wizardly estate and a seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). He also is an active member of the [Wild Ones](#). Using an alternate identity, he often hires adventurers to raid military compounds and free hippogriffs. For this, he provides potions of hippogriff control to coax the beasts into flying to the closest mountain wilderness. Valapox has had several disputes with [Phlux-Caladyne](#) (page 56) over the [military's](#) handling of mares and their fledglings.

**Gnome, Wizard:** AR 50, LF 58, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 dagger +3, DR Lo, Size S—Str 44, Agt 67, Dex 89, Sta 61, Int 94, Wis 72, Per 78, MR 58, PH ♥+5/♠\*/♣ +3. **Faith:** [Zarghadin](#), casual. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Grand Wizardry](#). **Apparent Age:** old. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).

**Vanash An'melek:** The [College of Conjuration's](#) chancellor is [Mistress Latira's](#) most outspoken detractor. Mistress Vanash despises the notion that shatim ideology must conform to self-defeating [Habritth](#) ideals. A [Maghian](#) radical, she believes demons (and the shatim, as their rightful inheritors) are true masters, the undead their slaves, and all other sentient life barely above the latter. She wants to replace [Saffor](#) as the [Maghia's](#) ruler, and when the time is right, will betray him to the [Proctors](#).

**Shatim, Untitled Sorceress:** AR 40, LF 75, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 magical staff +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 72, Agt 44, Dex 50, Sta 89, Int 94, Wis 83, Per 78, MR 58, PH ♥−3/♠\*/♣\*. **Faith:** [Shai-Mamnon](#), casual. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Conjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** old. **Residence:** [Balthezul](#).



# A Cast of Many

**Vardalas Dardael “The Green”:** The High Wizard Chancellor of Caldwen seeks to conjure a vision for the magiocracy’s future and dispel the many forces pulling it apart. Lord High Vardalas relies on two close allies, [Sir Daemian](#) (page 54) and [Lady Kryovata](#) (page 55) for the state’s immediate security. Suspecting his [chamberlain](#)’s treachery, he feeds him occasional false information to see where else it pops up. Caldwen’s ruler refrains from overt hostility toward the magiocracy’s foes to avoid falling into the same trap the Nicarean overseers once did. He prefers a status quo reducing his opponents’ influence through attrition rather than outright conflict. Vardalas has yet to select a bride. Competition is as fierce as it is relentless for this most-wanted bachelor—chiefly from Caldwen, Phrydias, Alfdain, Ellyrion, and most curiously, Aloreia.

**Tolarin Elf, Archmage:** AR 60, LF 81, MV 120’ (40’), TA 1 staff +3, DR Lo, Size M—Str 67, Agt 89, Dex 61, Sta 78, Int 100, Wis 83, Per 94, MR 75, PH ♥\*/♣ +2/♠ +3. **Faith:** *Naghilas*, casual. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Grand Wizardry](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Residence:** [Arcanial](#).



**Voyvoda Valvadeen:** The Grand Mistress of the [Shebbai](#) resides at the order’s Grand Commandery in [Tol Sirith](#). Her long years of exposure to raw mana prolonged Lady Voyvoda’s natural life. Her youth recalls the early years when the order was granted its official charter. Within thirty years thence, she became its Grand Mistress and the defender of its charter. Wized by the poisonous magic, Voyvoda earned a mystical understanding of its nature and its effects

on mortals. She now secretly questions the aristocracy’s gratuitous entitlement to raw mana. She believes the [Shebbai](#) should safeguard access to the most meritorious alone. She also intrigues to permanently restrict the [Office of Marshal](#) to commanders of the order, an opinion that would trouble sorcerers and wizards alike if they found out. She dreams of the [Shebbai](#) ruling the magiocracy someday.

**Ellyrian, Untitled Mage-Knight:** AR 75, LF 64, MV 90’ (30’), TA 1 scythe +4, DR M, Size M—Str 89, Agt 67, Dex 72, Sta 56, Int 89, Wis 83, Per 50, MR 83, PH ♥ +5/♣ +2/♠ +2. **Faith:** *Nekathal*, zealot. **Credentials:** No college degree. **Apparent Age:** old. **Residence:** [Abyzael](#).

**Yamakura Hayate:** Aside from holding a seat in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#) and the wizardly estate on Miyuki Island, Lord Hayate is entrusted with the 1449 Treaty of Hisetsu granting Miyuki’s autonomy within Caldwen. He also presides at the [Jiyū-kai](#) (page 50), laboring to preserve a fragile balance between fierce pro-Kumoshima feelings among islanders and his clan’s loyalty to the magiocracy. Kumoshiman skyships have been trading with merchant houses in Hisetsu. Delegations that came with them quietly stoke local xenophobia and try to influence [Jiyū-kai](#) members. Lord Hayate is married and has four young sons and daughters, [novices in the Arts](#), to ensure the Yamakura clan retains the island’s estate. He also is a cabalist in [Skymastery](#) (see page 91).

**Kumoshiman, Wizard-Samurai:** AR 65, LF 33, MV 120’ (40’), TA 1 sword +2, DR M, Size M—Str 89, Agt 94, Dex 78, Sta 67, Int 83, Wis 61, Per 72, MR 92, PH ♥\*/♣ +2/♠ −2. **Faith:** *Naghilas*, pious. **Credentials:** [Bachelor](#) of [Invocation](#). **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Residence:** [Garamial](#).

**Ziav the Nagevah:** The [College of Alteration](#)’s chancelloress, Mistress Ziav also is a high-ranking member of the [Maghia](#). A possible intermediary between the Lord Chamberlain, [Saffor](#) (page 57) and [Abachaia](#) (page 54), she also takes on occasional assignments as an ambassadress to Nordheim where she masterminds the smuggling of weapons from dwarven forges. Although he wasn’t identified as such, her late husband met an unfortunate end at the point of [Lady Tabaris’s](#) (page 58) disintegration wand during a failed smuggling attempt. The “official” story contends he died researching a powerful spell. In revenge, the chancelloress paid a demonic minion of [Uz the Sinbound](#) to slay Lady Tabaris’s husband, but so far the assassin failed to eliminate the rest of the Felisean family.

**Gandarian, Untitled Sorceress:** AR 50, LF 81, MV 90’ (30’), TA 1 magical staff +4, DR Lo, Size M—Str 50, Agt 56, Dex 61, Sta 67, Int 94, Wis 78, Per 89, MR 58, PH ♥\*/♣ +4/♠ \*. **Faith:** *Samaz*, casual. **Credentials:** [PhD](#) in [Alteration](#). **Apparent Age:** old. **Residence:** [Abyzael](#).



# Master & Servant

Demons and related game mechanics were originally introduced in [Beyond the Skies](#) (page 216). As a general rule, those dwelling in Caldwen serve masters and require a license. The Office of Demon Warrants administrates the identification, ownership (or rental), and operation of demons. A Grand Registrar of Demons oversees the office's activities, as part of the Ministry of [Homeland](#). Every large town in the magiocracy fields a regional office that can issue licenses for *wretches*. The main office at Arcanial is the only one releasing adequate documentation for *rascals* and unusual demon types.

## Documentation

A license includes an enchanted parchment with many seals and fold-out attachments. It describes the demon and identifies its origins, general nature (cur, hellion, frack, or fiend), past assignments and skills, intended usage, manner in which its binding was cast, the name of its owners (renters) past or present, and dwelling vicinity. The office always retains a copy; it may deny a license for the sake of public safety. Depending on the age of the subject, its license can be quite a lengthy document with seals and stamps applied for each renewal, and space reserved *for office use only*. Applying one's wand (or other casting device) to a fold-out attachment unfurls its contents to display all pertinent details. Such documentation is generally enclosed in a scroll case that can be opened in the same manner. Nonetheless, enchantments protect parchments from any sort of damage so long as the office's copies remain intact; they also are wholly immaterial to the touch of demonkind. These duplicates are stored in well-guarded vaults at the various issuing [offices](#).

## Licensing

When first coming into possession of a demon, its owner has not more than a fortnight to request a license from the office, though the ongoing joke among wizards refers to a *quarter of two fortnights to honor the gods minus 7 days to stay safe*. The initial licensing fee amounts to the subject's Life Force rating time 100 gold (as assessed by the issuing office), so for example a mature fiend might fetch 4,400 gold. Licenses must be renewed yearly, for a tenth of the initial fee (subject to a new Life Force assessment). If possible, the owner should bring the servant, preferably shackled, on a leash, in a carrier, or under some other restraining contraption, to the issuing office's waiting room to be examined by an office expert, else an appointment must be made for a private consultation at the owner's residence. Job vacancies for itinerant experts always seem to abound, especially in Arcanial. If a tad perilous, the job pays relatively well by the capital city's standard of living.

## Repossession

If an owner is insolvable, dead, or outlawed, the office will dispel existing licenses, dispatch repossession parties to seize delinquent demons, and reissue new documentation in the name of the issuing office. Repossession parties generally carry adequate equipment, such as enchanted nets, chains, cages, and shackles preventing a demon's escape, along with various protection

devices. Repossessed demons are most often auctioned off at seasonal fairs: in [Abyzael](#) on the summer solstice, [Nygardae](#) at the autumnal equinox, [Incubael](#) on the winter solstice, and [Anzael](#) on the vernal equinox. Considering the number of sorcerers in Caldwen, business at demon fairs can be brisk.

## Liabilities

Owners are legally responsible for the actions and welfare of their demons, as well as the proper maintenance of sorcery used to enslave them. Rogue demons are illegal in Caldwen and will be hunted down to be destroyed, banished, or brought to heel so they may serve a greater purpose. The [Falconers' Guild](#) usually handles unprincipled fracks and run-of-the-mill *wretches*. The [military](#) will join Falconers when hunting down renegade fiends or putting down demonic uprisings. Viewed as the ultimate masters among the [Maghia](#), *archfiends* are anathema under the magiocracy's present regime. The establishment considers them a peril to mankind as they cannot be controlled for long. It is a crime to try to coerce, to make pacts, or willingly serve *archfiends*, as nothing good is expected from these actions. The guilty will be imprisoned for life or executed before a disintegration squad, by exposure to a dreaded *cube of annihilation*, or by flinging it into a *deathly device of dimensional deconstruction*. Immediate relatives of the condemned are banished and their assets promptly seized by the [Treasurer of the Court](#).

## Usage

What are demons good for? A pragmatic society of sorcerous intellectuals doesn't concern itself much with the ethea and ideologies of creatures and people. Knowledge and spellcasting are far more important in its view. Demons are seen as tools propping up wizardly hegemony—some are more dangerous than others, hence laws and regulations for the benefit of public safety. The rest is merely cultural "color." A sorcerer may ask: *Is my hammer wicked? Perhaps it is, but it hammers what needs hammering all the same. Is my hammer dangerous? By all means it is, but what truly matters is how it is used. The size of one's hammer ultimately is a measure of the hand that wields it.* This old argument chiefly serves the purposes of a caste system restricting such creatures to the care and service of the magiocracy's elite.

There are many ways sorcerers and wizards employ demons—practically in any function that could have been delegated to mortal servants, bearing in mind that demons possess their own magic and harbor quasi-permanent aspirations to distort their masters' wishes. Therein lie an exquisite challenge and the demonstration of a liege's true power. It expresses status in an otherwise *blasé* society. When asked, licensed demons are bound to reveal whom they serve. Many bear their masters' symbols magically burned into their flesh. The ministries employ significant numbers, either in the [military](#) or for other duties, such as construction work, maintenance of roads and bridges, river crossings, hall monitors in colleges, mining, cleaning sewers, or guarding mausoleums, monuments, prisons, city gates, [wizard estates](#), etc. Demons do not age, they are tireless, and require no payment, thus their popularity among wizards. *Reformed* demons are those whose natures changed to non-malevolent ethea.



# Official License of Demonic Liegedom

## Warrant Type

☐ Ancillary  
☐ Recreational

☐ Commercial  
☐ Rental

☐ Military  
☐ Utility

Demon Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Cur  
☐ Frack

☐ Hellion  
☐ Fiend

Other Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Recognizable Features: \_\_\_\_\_

Known Kin: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Demon or Shatim Parentage

Township Active: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Binding: \_\_\_\_\_

Liege Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Binding: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Spellbinding, Magical Object, or Artifact

College Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Province & Township or Wizardly Estate

Past Lieges: \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestry: \_\_\_\_\_

Race or Ethnic origins

Signature of Proprietor & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Civil Status: ☐ Wizard ☐ Sorcerer ☐ Other

Who swears to be forthcoming and truthful

*For Office Use Only*

Registrar Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Office of: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





# Master & Servant

## The “Black” Market

Smarter demons have monetized their enslavement with their masters’ tacit approval. These beasts crave mortal souls. Possessing or devouring the essence of law-abiding citizens isn’t permitted. Receiving small tokens of Life Force willingly given does not apparently break Caldwen laws, however. If their binding or specific instructions from their masters allow it, demons may request such contributions in exchange for extracurricular services. For example: a beast watching a section of river may request small gifts for assisting those who would cross it; another might enjoy donations when answering questions or repairing a chariot’s broken wheel by a roadside, and so on.

Recipients of such goodwill can retain these tokens, trade them with other beneficiaries, or consume them as a slow way to increase their own powers. They usually imbue small, innocuous objects kept in a pouch (feathers, beads, coins, shells, charms, buttons, etc.) until consumed. Owners permit the practice because it helps keep servants somewhat more content and docile. In fact, some even allow demons to approach the limits of their magical bindings, taking the opportunity to bestow freedom in exchange for an unbreakable vow not to act against them and their immediate families, directly or indirectly. This too is a way of gaining the favor of demons yearning for freedom. The Ritual of Release banishes the subject to an outer plane so respect laws against turning rogue demons loose in Caldwen.

Tokens of goodwill drain a trivial amount of Life Force from experienced adventurers. For a farm boy, however, the loss could be debilitating. For others, recovery may demand a quest to slay a goblin and seize its treasure, thereby launching their adventuring careers. However sinister the event, from the point of view of unaging demons it’s the sheer number of times they can earn these minute gifts that matters. Since licensed beasts are protected by law, many of them look forward to tasks offering opportunities to earn donations without much risk to themselves. Judicious masters treat desirable assignments as rewards, and the least profitable as punishments. Truly unkind are those *forbidding* any rewards at all, such as guarding prisons or treasures for example; geas often reinforce such prohibitions.

## Tools of Lordship

Ubiquitous in Caldwen, demon vassalage concerns magic-users and temple priors. Qualified demonologists are, however, more skillful (see *Cabal of Demonology*, page 82). Unlike dabblers, they do not need to be in the presence of the summoned to subdue it. Success depends on the demons’ innate resistance to magic and, for some, imperviousness to the spells of mortals. *Archfiends* respond to a mortal’s summoning only if they wish to do so. Summoners should never enter a carceral circle during their rituals lest they should suffer a hideous demise.

**Summoning Demons:** This matter is deceptively simple, as magical items or appropriate spells in the chosen game system will achieve the necessary result. If none are available, several alternatives make it possible to call forth lesser demons relatively early in a sorcerer’s career. The College of [Conjuration](#) teaches three rituals:

- “Balthezul’s Minor Summoning” is part of the [Hexen Curriculum](#) (see *Second Circle*, page 76); it can be performed once a day to attract a random [wretch](#) in 2d4+4 combat actions. This ritual requires the sacrifice of a gem or other precious object worth at least 150 gold.
- “Balthezul’s Greater Summoning” belongs in the [Thaumaturgy Curriculum](#) (see *Third Circle*, page 76); it can be performed once a week to bring forth a random frack within an hour. This ritual requires the sacrifice of a magical item worth at least 300 gold.
- “Balthezul’s Final Calling” must result from personal research at the college’s [Fourth Circle](#) (see page 77); it can be performed once a month to summon a random fiend in 1d6+1 hour or, after studious preparations, once in a year, to beseech a specific *archfiend* in 3d6+6 hours. This ritual requires the sacrifice of a magical item worth at least 600 gold for a fiend, plus the permanent loss of a Stamina increment for an *archfiend* willing to respond.

Similar rituals are taught to priors with comparable experience at various temples honoring deities of Caldwen’s pantheon. They do not in any way bind the summoned. Non-spellcasters rely on magical devices they purchased, stole, or acquired in an adventure to achieve the same. Personality and ethos are crucial factors determining whether demons forcibly called forth are at all agreeable to frivolous chinwags. Addressing a demon bound to one’s own god does help, especially for pious hosts. A Personality Check indicates whether the beast attempts to escape, attacks its host, or discusses personal bargains and other pacts. Services willingly performed always come at a price.

Additional precautions can be used to confine the summoned when it appears (see *Mystical Circles*, next). Restraining magic will, however, provoke a demon’s immediate hostility. Further steps are needed to subdue the beast and impose upon it the host’s will (see [Demonic Subjugation](#) later in this section). Demons can be returned whence they came with a simple command word from the host, although the beasts receive Defense Checks. If a roll succeeds, the summoned decides whether to leave or to remain. If it fails, dismissal takes place regardless. Mostly immune to mortal magic, *archfiends* can always depart when it suits them.

**Mystical Circles:** Use mechanics from the chosen game system, if any, or the guidelines given here. Enchanted circles, pentacles, and other figures prevent the summoned from leaving or using their magic to attack conjurers. All three Colleges of [Abjuration](#), [Conjuration](#), and [Enchantment](#), as well as most temples honoring Caldwen’s gods, teach how to create these devices. They aren’t foolproof and have no bearing on whether a demon will seek retribution after its dismissal, but they may help with *demonic subjugation*. Unless of divine nature,



# Master & Servant

mystical circles do not affect *archfiends* at all. Conjurers must stay outside their circles and prevent tampering by anyone else.

Drawn in minutes with paint or chalk, *Hexen Curriculum* designs can restrain *wretches*; they only last several combat actions or until their occupants are dismissed. Priors often employ blood or salt to achieve the same effect.

More potent *Thaumaturgy* techniques call for magical writings and six candles made by a qualified [alchemist](#). Priors with comparable experience require instead prayers to be inscribed on the design's rim, along with blessed/unblessed candles, as appropriate. Either preparation demands 4d4 hours. Such confinement can handle *rascals* and last until all candles are extinguished. Burning candles of this type last an hour.

Powerful carceral devices of [Fourth Circle](#) mages or equivalent priors are engraved in stone, along with any inscriptions. Everlasting candles fitted on iron rods or holy/unholy everburning censers stand at the rim. Chains and manacles may lie within, which clasp the summoned when it materializes. Demanding wizardly or clerical enchantments, these means enable safe and permanent detention until occupants are dismissed. Only artifacts of divine origins can entrap *archfiends*.

**Demonic Subjugation:** Akin to shooting fish in a barrel, this process can only be attempted on a restrained subject. Considered barbaric and cowardly by expert demonologists, it is nonetheless the dabblers' main method for bringing demons to heel for any length of time, if not permanently. Some have compared it to subduing dragons. Since *archfiends* cannot be restrained, neither can they be subjugated.

Should subdual mechanics be unavailable in the chosen game system, use the following approach. Essentially, damage is inflicted upon the imprisoned demon until it yields or dies. Since one must not enter a mystical circle (which would negate its effects), only ranged weapons and magic can be used. Demons listed in this book (see *Game Statistics*, page 65) feature a Morale Rating (MR). As a subject sustains damage and it realizes that it cannot flee, it needs to succeed a Morale Check to deny its host's demands (roll its listed MR or lower). A check is required when the demon sustains its first wound. Another follows when the demon has lost half its Life Force. A third is required when the demon has less than a quarter of its Life Force left.

The nature of the mystical circle impacts odds a subject will fail its Morale Check. Due to their temporary and makeshift nature, *Hexen* designs result in a +17% bonus to a demon's MR. *Fourth Circle* carceral devices impose a -17% penalty to its MR. Specialized spells and magical weapons may also influence a demon's decision to surrender.

For example: "Garamial's Soulspear" taught in the College of [Invocation's Thaumaturgy Curriculum](#), inflicts non-lethal but exceedingly painful damage. Equivalent to a +2 magical weapon, it requires a normal attack roll and can reach as far as 30ft, inflicting M+1 piercing damage. The spell lasts as long as the spellcaster sustains no damage, allowing subsequent ranged attacks. A victim is rendered unconscious when it reaches zero life points, but otherwise

wakes up unharmed an hour later. This spell adds a -17% penalty to any victim's MR.

If a demon reaches zero life points without failing a Morale Check, its summoner cannot ever subdue it. If still alive, the beast must be dismissed or destroyed, lest it should seek revenge on its tormentor. Willfully releasing rogue demons in Caldwen is against the magiocracy's law. Failing any Morale Check forces the summoned to yield; its host may thus enforce a pact (see *Bargains & Pacts*, next).

**Bargains & Pacts:** The extent of failure of a demon's Morale Check determines the length of its bondage. If the roll failed by 50% or worse, terms of service are permanent. The pact is otherwise valid for 1d6 months (or at the referee's discretion, for as many separate quests however long they may take). Pacts are null and void if masters deliberately bring physical harm to their servants. Subsequent bargains are permitted when a demon approaches the end of its bondage. If no agreement is reached to extend its terms of service, the demon is dismissed (see [Summoning Demons](#), earlier). Those well rewarded for their efforts may be willing to remain in their masters' service (others may desire retribution against past cruelty).

The nature of a bond is such that a serving demon bears its master's mark, usually imbedded in its flesh. Furthermore, such contracts are legally transferrable, usually requiring the services of a licensing office to seal the new bargain and collect registration fees (see [Documentation](#) and [Licensing](#) earlier in this chapter). The mark of the new master replaces the old, and life goes on. Non-spellcasters may purchase demonic services in this manner.

**Possession & Exorcism:** To a certain extent, demons and spiritual servants of Caldwen's gods have the ability to possess mortals (see CC1, [Beyond the Skies](#), page 88). A sensitive issue in Caldwen, it relates to cultural aspects that go back to ancient Gandaria, when demons ruled. Now that some have ascended as Caldwen's gods, their priors see possessions by demons serving their spiritual lieges as blessings, events ordained by the divine. Some rivalry takes place between the temples in this regard. Priors of Ashgaddon, Avraoth, and Astafeth feel within their rights to exorcise possessions related to Nekathal or Zarghadin, and vice versa. No prior of Caldwen, however, would ever interfere with possessions related to Naghilas. The same respect does not extend to rogue demons (or any creature not serving deities of Caldwen).

All Caldwen spellcasters can perform exorcisms. Priors rely primarily on their ability to repel the undead (or use the chosen game's mechanics, if different). Demons are repelled as undead with a comparable Life Force. Taught as part of the [Hexen Curriculum](#) at the College of [Abjuration](#), the Ritual of Banishment endows secular spellcasters with the same ability (but only as regards possessing spirits). The process takes anywhere from 2 hours to several days, based on the possessing spirit's Life Force. At the end of the ritual, the exorcist attempts to repel the spirit. If the attempt succeeds, the possessing spirit is banished. If it fails, another exorcist with greater career experience may try again.





# Master & Servant

## Notorious Demons

**Ababub the Glutton:** This grossly fat, warty, and toad-faced frack is one of several at the service of the [College of Grand Wizardry](#). Ababub is directly associated with its chancellor, [Distinguished Magister Tenoboam](#). He often carries his master's palanquin atop a large shield or delivers messages on his behalf. The demon consents to its master leeching some of its Life Force to refresh himself, causing Ababub to crave sustenance making up for the loss.

**Arafor of the Drowned:** As mandated in Caldwen's constitution, this ancient fiend associated with the [Arafor River](#) became bound to serve and protect the head of state, presently [Lord High Vardalas](#) (page 59). The demon can eavesdrop on any discussion mentioning the High Wizard Chancellor within 100 yards of the river's banks. Arafor can comprehend any language and perceive who is involved in the conversation despite illusions, masks, and disguises. Prior to its enserfment, it fed on the spirits of those who drowned in the Arafor. Gray-green, white-eyed, and with the slimy, bloated body of a drowned ogre-like cadaver, it is now a [reformed fiend](#) with the following PH—♥+1/♠-3/♣-4.

**Dree-Naa the Lascivious:** This succubus of the frack variety serves [Uz the Sinbound](#) (page 58). A blue-skinned elf with feathered wings and a whip-like sting, she's able to alter her appearance at will. Dree-Naa often dwells in [pleasure parlors](#), either indulging in pillow talk to obtain useful information for her master, or seeking to eliminate targets of the [Haddanim](#). Dree-Naa is able to surreptitiously drain life force from unsuspecting patrons or to possess them for her own hedonistic pursuits.

**Maliith of the Seven Tombs:** This she-fiend guards the [Mausoleum of Keth](#). Maliith resents the terms of enserfment her master, [Belroth](#) (page 54) inflicted upon her, a painful and geas-laden curse. Rendering her violently hostile to all mortals save priors of Ashgaddon, this binding forbids Maliith to accept tokens of life force or to devour anything, be it flesh or spirit, unless her master's priors permit it. Her natural looks are those of a rotting baboon with the head and wings of a fanged fox bat, and kudu horns.

**Mephistra of the Omen:** Known as the *Lady of Nightmares*, this *archfiend* once was a consort of the dark prince Nabuloth. A forebear of [Mistress Latira](#) (page 56), she despises her offspring's rising power, which exceeds her own. Mephistra hopes to sway the benevolent shatim to her wicked ways, while Latira endeavors to develop her skills in demonology to reform her ancestor. She often appears as an oversized, gray-skinned, mostly hairless aye-aye with iron rings piercing her body.

**Nabuloth the Goat:** [Mistress Vanash](#) pledged her allegiance to the *Prince of Purulence*. She is in fact of Nabuloth's blood, born for the purpose of serving him among mortals. A latecomer to the



[Maghia](#), this demon prince endeavors to undermine a rival, [Yeddu the Stillborn](#), and become the leading influence among disciples of the ancient sect. Quiet for now, Nabuloth seeks the loyalties of weaker members. He may leave surreptitious clues for the [Proctors](#) to target Yeddu's faction. His anthropomorphic body bears ovine features (ram's horns, cloven hooves, goat-like face, etc.) and leathery wings.

**Nazruu of the Vultures:** [Master Neshuzu](#)'s late forebear (page 56), the rogue demon Zavriel, once served Nazruu, *Lord of Carrion*. The chancellor maintains a secret allegiance to the *archfiend* in exchange for help in avenging Zavriel. The *Lord of Carrion* also commanded the fiend [Thaagal](#) until he fell under [Sir Daemian's](#) control (page 54). Nazruu and some of its minions appear as clawed, leathery or partially feathered humanoids with vulture-like features.

**T'fazzit Manaborn:** [Voyvoda Valvadeen](#) raised T'fazzit since it emerged as a newborn cur from a mana conduit which Voyvoda guarded. It is now a mature fiend, however one fully [reformed](#) and devoted to the [Shebbai](#) cause. Stalwart bodyguard and messenger of the Grand Mistress of the Order, the she-demon suspects a weakness in [Thaagal](#), a demon serving the [marshal](#). Mostly anthropomorphic, T'fazzit bears features of a poodle-moth (fluffy white fur, fuzzy wings, feathery antennae, and big black bug eyes). PH—♥+2/♠\*/♣-6.

**Thaagal of the Shades:** Originally bred for war, this [reformed fiend](#) has become [Daemian Malcru's](#) bodyguard. The marshal taught [Thaagal](#) some of the values of the [Shebbai](#), but a slight weakness remains, which its previous master, the demon lord Nazruu, quietly exploits to try to regain its former servant. Massively muscled, [Thaagal](#) appears as a giant, six-legged, mummified mole-rat clad in plate armor. PH—♥\*/♠+4/♣-3.





## Master & Servant

1. *Rational* (d4), 2-3. *Practical*, 4-6. *Instinctive* (d10); ♠ *SPIRIT*, roll 1d4: 1. *Lively* (d4), 2. *Even-Tempered*, 3-4. *Stern* (d10).

**Cur:** AR 15 (unarmored), *Wretch* LF 6+4, MV 90' (30') or flying 150' (50'), TA 1 bite or spell + 2 claws, DR bite 2M or claws VL each, DC as monster; Size M (5'tall), MR 50, Min. Int 33

**Abilities:** Spellcasting (if any): SP I x2; teleport: only if called. **Defenses:** Requires +1 weapon to hit. Often found in packs of 4-12.

**Hellion:** AR 30 (unarmored), *Wretch* LF 17+8, MV 90' (30') or flying 150' (50'), TA 1 bite or spell + 2 claws, DR bite 2Hi or claws VL+1 each, DC as monster; Size M (6'tall), MR 58, Min. Int 44

**Abilities:** Call other 10%; spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x1; teleport: only if called. **Defenses:** 5% immunity to magic; requires +1 weapon to hit.

**Frack:** AR 45 (unarmored), *Rascal* LF 28+12, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others or 1 weapon, DR bite 3M+4 or other attacks M+2 each or by weapon +6, DC as monster; Size L (8'tall), MR 67, Min. Int 56

**Abilities:** Possession (1 individual at any single time; DC negates); call other 30%; spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x1; teleport: only if called. **Defenses:** 20% immunity to magic; +2 weapon to hit; half damage from physical or magical attacks by mortals.

**Fiend:** AR 60 (unarmored), *Rascal* LF 44+16, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others or weapon, DR bite 3Hi+4 or other attacks 2Lo+2 each or by weapon +6, DC as monster; Size L (9'tall), MR 67, Min. Int 67

**Abilities:** Possession (1 individual at any single time; DC negates); call other 30%; spellcasting: SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x2, SP IV x2; teleport: only if called. **Defenses:** 35% immunity to magic; +2 weapon to hit; half damage from physical or magical attacks by mortals.

**Dark Lord/Lady:** AR 70 (unarmored), *Archfiend* LF 89+20, MV 180' (60') or flying 240' (80'), TA 1 bite or spell + 4 others or 2 weapons, DR bite 4M+6 or other attacks Hi+3 each or by weapon +12, DC as monster; Size VL (15'tall), MR 75, Min. Int 78

**Abilities:** Possession (up to 4 individuals at any single time; DC negates); call other 40%; spellcasting: SP I x5, SP II x5, SP III x5, SP IV x4, SP V x3, SP VI x2, SP VII x2; teleport: at will. **Defenses:** 50% immunity to magic; +2 weapon to hit; immune to physical or magical attacks by mortals.

**Dark Prince/Princess:** AR 80 (unarmored), *Archfiend* LF 178+24, MV 180' (60') or flying 240' (80'), TA 1 bite or spell + 4 others or 2 weapons, DR bite 6Lo+8 or other attacks 4VL+1 each or by weapon +12, DC as monster; Size VL (21'tall), MR 75, Min. Int 89

**Abilities:** Possession (up to 4 individuals at any single time; DC negates); call other 50%; spellcasting: any spell at will; teleport: at will. **Defenses:** 65% immunity to magic; +2 weapon to hit; immune to physical or magical attacks by mortals.

**Yeddu the Stillborn:** Otherwise known as the *Prince of the Misshapen*, Yeddu influences both [Saffor](#) and [Ziav](#) to do its bidding, promising them a new and glorious dawn for the [Maghia](#), with itself as the power behind Caldwen. This demon prince can command large numbers of lesser beings to defend the sect if threatened. His arch-nemesis, [Naghilas](#), quietly watches, ready to dispatch its own surrogates to counter Yeddu's plans, including spellcasters of epic hero status and magical creatures. Yeddu looks like a slimy tangle of lamprey-like tentacles surrounding a central eye, topped with a set of giant bat wings.

**Minor Servants:** These typically include hellions guarding a place or acting as servants. Roll for a random PH (see *Game Statistics*, next). Here are evocative names—Roll 1d20: 1. Glanifeth of the Bridge, 2. Gasiel of the River, 3. Jex of the Gate, 4. King Snotpheles, 5. Abbalock of the Pustules, 6. Alaks Grubslayer, 7. Malphitt Windborne, 8. Shaddib the Mangy, 9. Raffat Skinbound, 10. Zebarath the Gibbonite, 11. Azeia Blackflame, 12. Azedor Halfborn, 13. Balzokree Twi-headed, 14. Beblis Ratbone, 15. Boddi Gnaash, 16. Hephitor Spawn of Yaan, 17. Nexag the Grellmore, 18. Suarotrillom the Bloody, 19. Tobileth of Vruuz, 20. Volvik Fornblod, etc.

## Game Statistics

Demons are fully detailed in [Beyond the Skies](#), page 216. All demons share the following abilities: magical empathy; regeneration (1 life point per spirit devoured worth at least LF 3). They also are immune to fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic. Roll for random ethea (PH) if needed—♥ *HEART*, roll 1d8: 1. *Benevolent* (d4), 2-3. *Dispassionate*, 4-8. *Malevolent* (d10); ♠ *MIND*, roll 1d6:



# Beasties in the Dark

Game statistics listed in the *WORLD OF CALIDAR™* books are non-game specific and streamlined to help convert them to your favored rpg mechanics. Most of them run on a percentile scale. Complete guidelines on interpreting these numbers are listed in the *Game Mechanics for The World of Calidar* pamphlet, offered at a very low cost in print or PDF on the [DriveThruRPG.com](http://DriveThruRPG.com) website, along with other Calidar books and foldup maps.

Relatively common in Caldwen, demons were originally described in CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#). Abbreviated [game statistics](#) are listed on the previous page. This chapter fleshes out monsters that can be used as familiars or allies. While patron deities task debeks with assisting pious followers, common mortals construct homunculi exclusively to serve them as familiars. *Archfiends* may entrust imp servants to their minions in exchange for absolute loyalty. Mana lions may associate with [Shebbai knights](#) of their own free wills.

## Debek

<b>Armor Rating:</b>	40
<b>Life Force:</b>	11
<b>Move:</b>	60' (20')
<b>Attacks:</b>	1 bite
<b>Damage Rating:</b>	VL
<b>No. Appearing:</b>	1
<b>Defense Check:</b>	F19
<b>Morale:</b>	75
<b>Size:</b>	Small (18")
<b>Intellect:</b>	High
<b>Philosophy:</b>	Varies

These diminutive creatures are servants of gods, typically dispatched to the prime universe to assist the faithful (usually allies of priors, magic-users, or mage-knights) or to benefit their patron deities' interests. As such, their philosophies vary dramatically depending on who sent them. Their missions can be permanent or temporary, as needed. Their spirits return to their deities' planes if debeks are destroyed in the prime universe or when their quests end.

Debeks can be permanently bound to objects, ideas, events, traditions, or people, such as, for example: fishing from the bridge to Hashem, the harvest at Beremon's farm, Captain Ashod's grave, Nev-the-Blind the old beggar, the *Blood Sword of Brim*, *Yeef's Tome of Darker Deeds*, stolen moonlight kisses at the *Fountain of Zamf*, the dreadful *Ring of Aan*, the Goat Festival in Carabban, most temples devoted to native Caldwen cults, etc. Depending on their goals, debeks can be nuisances or benign helpers, although in most cases they do retain mischievous, playful natures. The Ministry of Homeland has determined that debeks bear some demonic ancestry; harboring one in Caldwen therefore requires a [license](#) from the Office of Demon Warrants. To this day, this matter is still hotly contested in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#), especially by the clergy.

Debeks possess rogue skills and cast spells as priors (both as LF 3 characters). They can turn invisible and sense the presence of magic within 90' at will. Up to three times a day, they can teleport as far away as 360' or blend in/out of objects to which they are bound. Once per day, they can also drain magic from enchanted items or, if they so desire, bestow magic. They must touch the targeted items to accomplish their deeds (no DC required). This effect is temporary, lasting 1d4 days in



most cases. Bestowed magic remains within the realm of prior spells (SP I) or a +1 enchantment bonus. If a magic item is repeatedly drained during an entire month, its enchantment will be permanently dispelled. Debeks benefit from immunities common to demonic creatures (see *Game Statistics*, page 65). These creatures do not age and require neither food, nor air, nor water to survive, although they do crave magic either from stolen items or from gifts willingly given.

Characters likely associated with debeks: [Fazzika Whisperdark](#) (sent by Nekathal), [Flammaria the Torchbearer](#) (sent by Naghilas), [Tabaris of Zagarath](#) (sent by Dagleeth), and [Tallas Yavdon](#) (sent by Astafeth). See *A Cast of Many*, page 54.

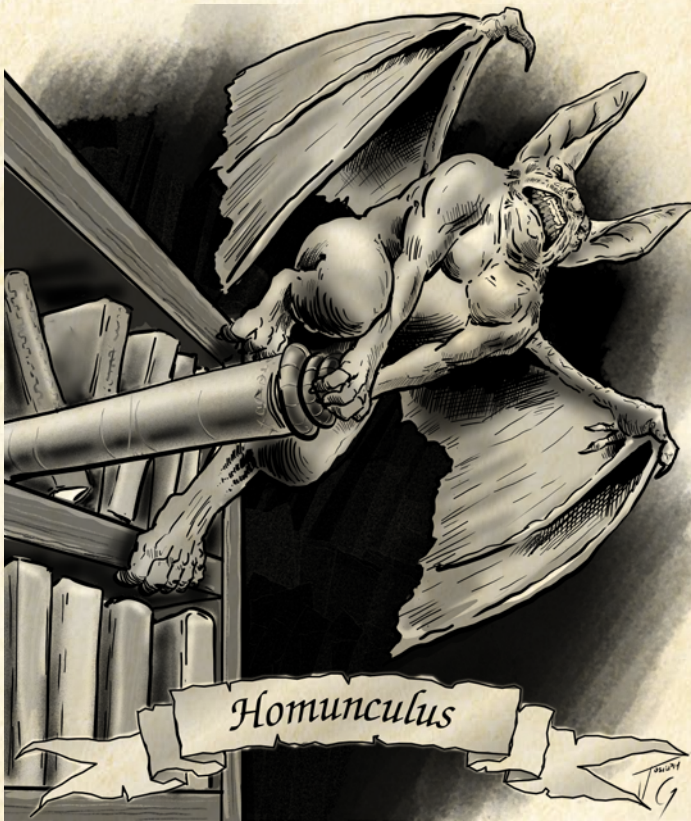
## Homunculus

<b>Armor Rating:</b>	20
<b>Life Force:</b>	8
<b>Move:</b>	60' (20')/180' (60') flying
<b>Attacks:</b>	2 claws/1 bite
<b>Damage Rating:</b>	(2) Min. /VL + poison
<b>No. Appearing:</b>	1
<b>Defense Check:</b>	As its maker's
<b>Morale:</b>	67
<b>Size:</b>	Small (18")
<b>Intellect:</b>	Average
<b>Philosophy:</b>	As its maker's

Made of flesh and bone, homunculi are constructs intended to serve their creators, either magic-users or high-ranking priors desiring familiars to assist them. Their Defense Checks and Philosophies are those of their makers. Though their physical forms reflect their creators' preferences, they usually stand about a foot and a half tall, with bat-like wings and



# Beasties in the Dark



leathery skin. Cosmetic appearance may vary depending on the maker's origins: gray in an urban setting, mottled green or brown in a forest, covered with white down in a snowy environment, or fitted with silvery scales, tail, and fins rather than wings if purely aquatic. Though they do not age, homunculi need air to breathe, food, and water, prompting them to hunt small animals or insects to survive. The Ministry of Homeland and its Office of Monstrous Regulations have concurred that homunculi bear no demonic ancestry and that therefore they are not subject to [licensing](#).

A homunculus and its owner remain in telepathic contact at all times. Both can sense what the other sees or hears. Though it cannot speak, the creature can in most cases comprehend its maker's intent, however arcane the latter's thinking, as well as read and grasp the general meaning of languages its maker knows. An owner can fully control its familiar's action up to 480' away. Beyond this, the creature behaves independently, although it remains fully aware of its master's thoughts and scrutiny. This mental link renders the homunculus immune to mind-affecting magic. The death of such a familiar results in both physical and psychic wounds to its maker, usually a traumatic loss in Intellect or Wisdom (as appropriate), and life points (some of them permanently).

The powers of homunculi vary according to their makers' designs and purposes. In general, these are creatures with cat-like agility and senses. Toxins in their saliva can paralyze prey. The severity of the effect depends on how badly a Defense Check fails after a successful bite. Critical failure results in total paralysis and death from asphyxiation within 1d4+2 combat actions. Failure by 50% or worse leads to loss of motor functions lasting 30 minutes. With a less severe failure, victims move at half speed and suffer a temporary 1d4 drop in Agility and Dexterity lasting 15 minutes. Large victims (7' or taller) should gain a

bonus to their Defense Checks; giant creatures are not affected at all. Homunculi can also fight with their claws, inflicting minimal damage.

Some homunculi possess magical abilities resulting from the manner in which they were brought into existence. Any such abilities remain at the referees' discretions. Moonsail, [Mama Goo's](#) familiar, enjoys two such enchantments. One enables it to teleport at will over short distances, up to 30' away each time. Another gives Moonsail the ability to store objects in an airless micro-plane and retrieve them at a later time. About a cubic-foot large, this space is often used to keep stolen items, dead prey, lost socks, or items Mama Goo might have entrusted to her familiar. Other likely homunculus owners may include: [Flumoxa of Zoraphet](#), [Honorio Morbide](#), [Marvis Black](#), [Stropesta Mortis](#), and [Valapox of the Quezzim](#) (see *A Cast of Many*, page 54).

## Imp

<b>Armor Rating:</b>	40
<b>Life Force:</b>	6+2
<b>Move:</b>	60' (20'')/180' (60'') flying
<b>Attacks:</b>	1 tail (or special)
<b>Damage Rating:</b>	VL + poison (or special)
<b>No. Appearing:</b>	1
<b>Defense Check:</b>	As Monster LF 19
<b>Morale:</b>	58
<b>Size:</b>	Small (24")
<b>Intellect:</b>	Average
<b>Philosophy:</b>	♥-3/ ♠-2/ ♣+1.

As a term, "imp" loosely refers to a general category of small, demon-like beings—at least this is so in Calidar's universe where *devilkind* has not made an appearance. So far, demons have been the prevailing supernatural beings in the lower planes, without a specific connotation as to their main ideology: though mostly malevolent and instinctive, demons may come to adopt other philosophies, as

demonstrated by the gods of Caldwen and a number of creatures serving the magiocracy. Though the philosophy listed in the imp's game statistics is the most commonly found among creatures of the lower planes, it can be altered over time and with sufficient bindings (see bottom of page 60).

The most common imp form is a creature two feet tall or less, with bat wings, small horns, a prominent nasal appendage, large pointy ears, a tail ending in a wicked sting, and either clawed or cloven-hooves. They are most definitely of demonic origins, thus requiring a [license](#) as far as the Ministry of Homeland is concerned. Imps typically serve *archfiends*, and though they can become the familiars of mortal spellcasters (as described earlier in the homunculus description), they always remain beholden to their true masters. Ultimately, they seek to do the bidding of their demonic lieges. If killed in the prime universe, their life force returns to their masters' planes.

Either use imp abilities described in your chosen game mechanics or what is suggested here. Both approaches are fine. The imp can transform at will into a large rat, a raven, or a goat, and back. While in its original form, the creature fights with its tail; its poisonous sting is deadly unless the victim succeeds a Defense Check; death occurs within 1d4+2 actions after being wounded. In its other



# Beasties in the Dark

forms, the imp fights as the chosen creature. Some breeds can shoot tiny balls of poisoned fire with their tails.

The imp's gaze has the power to beguile if the victim fails a Defense Check. The gaze requires a full combat action. Beguiling lasts until dispelled or if the victim signs a pact with the "friendly" imp. The pact comes in the form of a scroll which quickly vanishes to a hidden place in the imp's native plane once it is signed. The agreement sells the victim's spirit to the imp in exchange for its services. At the time of death, the victim's spirit is destroyed. The imp becomes a fiend when Life Force of 45 or higher has been earned, which may require several pacts (its bond as a familiar is broken, if any existed at that time). The imp's death in the prime universe or on its native plane immediately voids remaining unclaimed pacts.

The imp also has the ability to regenerate fully within 20 minutes, to turn invisible at will, and to commune with its *archfiend* master once per week. It fully benefits from immunities common to demonic creatures (see *Game Statistics*, page 65). It also enjoys a 25% resistance to magic, which it confers to whomever it serves as a familiar. Imps speak their own language and may converse, read, and write in most others used in the prime universe.

Personalities likely to employ imps as familiars: [Neshuzu](#), Son of Zavriel (linked to [Nazruu](#) of the Vultures), [Saffor the Nefeoth](#) (linked to [Yeddu](#)), and [Vanash An'melek](#) (linked to [Nabuloth the Goat](#)). See *A Cast of Many*, page 54.



generating 5 EPs on its own (see *Mana Enchantments*, page 95). A bite wound bears the same odds of the victim contracting [mana sickness](#) equivalent to a week-long stay inside a raw mana conduit. If the two front paw attacks succeed, extra attacks may be performed with its two hind legs. If all four attacks succeed, the mana lion drains up to 5% LF from the victim (at the referee's discretion). Its melee attacks and spells are potent enough to harm any demon, including *archfiends*. It is wholly immune to raw mana sickness as well as spells with a potency less than 4, weapons with enchantments less than +2, mind-affecting magic, poison, and energy drain attacks. This fantastic beast also regenerates fully within 2 hours at most, or less than an hour if inside a mana conduit.

If *Shebbai* knights befriended such a creature, it would fight alongside a combat unit (rather than an individual). It would bestow upon its banner a special enchantment, thus making it a great honor among knights to carry in battle. Mage-knights within 100 yards of a mana lion's standard temporarily earn enough additional Life Force to increase their combat and spellcasting abilities, as well as a significant bonus to their Morale ratings. Great dishonor befalls a unit if its mana lion is slain in battle.

## Rudimentals

These small creatures dwell in regions bordering two elemental planes. Qualified [rudimentalists](#) and their more experienced peers (see *Cabal of Elementalism*, page 87) occasionally compel such creatures to become their familiars, as described for the homunculus. Though they may appear as tailless imps, they neither bear demonic connections nor need [licenses](#). On the other hand, they require enchanted vessels

## Mana Lion

<b>Armor Rating:</b>	65
<b>Life Force:</b>	50
<b>Move:</b>	150' (50')
<b>Attacks:</b>	1 bite/2-4 paws or 1 spell
<b>Damage Rating:</b>	3Hi+5 bite/3M+1 per paw
<b>No. Appearing:</b>	1
<b>Defense Check:</b>	As Monster LF 50
<b>Morale:</b>	92
<b>Size:</b>	Large
<b>Intellect:</b>	High
<b>Philosophy:</b>	♥*/♣+5/♠*.

The mana lion is one of many strange beings born directly from World Soul [emanations](#). They all come into existence as non-corporeal beings. With time, mana dwellers learn to take on physical forms when they so choose. Most feed on raw mana deep beneath Caldwen's surface. Like the mana lion, some are predators hunting mana grazers and outsiders, such as careless

[mage-knights](#), demons, and others. Though they live within mana conduits, predators can venture miles away from World Soul emanations in search of prey. In the flesh or in its spirit form, a mana lion appears as a large, muscular feline with a red pelage and pearl-like eyes. Faint gold spots mark its short fur while its curly mane, thick brows, long-haired tail, and ample locks trailing from its limbs form long volutes of saffron light. The mana lion does not age and if it is killed, its spirit returns the World Soul at once.

This massive 20-foot-long (26 with its tail stretched out), 5,600-lb feline can cast spells like a sorcerer LF 25. It possesses all the special [abilities](#) of *Shebbai* knights and the senses of a cat. It can detect magic and move silently. Its breath is laced with raw mana,



# Beasties in the Dark



when taken away from their natural elements. Rudimentals can survive the length of an encounter (up to 15 minutes, whichever is shortest) outside their normal environments. Masters can summon their familiar out of or back into their vessels at any time. Lava, plasma, and steam rudimentals demand gold containers, typically the size of a common oil lamp, while the others can do with silver devices. They can only be harmed by magic or enchanted items.

Though somewhat mischievous, they are neither benevolent nor malevolent—they more likely behave in a manner pleasing their masters, whether the latter are elementalists or more powerful elementals. As their name suggests, however, rudimentals seem rude and grouchy to denizens of the prime universe. They do not necessarily mean to offend; rather, it is a behavioral oddity of their kind. Unfortunate gestures, annoyed attitudes, and ostensible releases of mephitic emanations are commonplace. Personalities likely to employ rudimentals as familiars: [Crallas of Hamiz](#) (dust). See *A Cast of Many*, page 54.

**Dust:** Born within the fringes of Tellurion and Aerion, this rudimental's imp-like form appears to be made of swirling dust. Alternatively, it can take the form of a dust devil, a small whirlwind darting hither and yon. It fights by clogging one's breathing apparatus with dust or blinding them. After a successful attack, the victim must spend the next action coughing and hacking to expel the foreign matter. Dust rudimentals are powerless against eyeless or non-breathing creatures (constructs, undead, other elementals, and certain enchanted creatures). Their mephitic signature smells like powdered stinkstone. They abhor steam rudimentals.

**Lava:** Hailing from the edges of Tellurion and Pyros, lava rudimentals look like wingless imps made of a black mineral crust with glowing lava visible in its many epidermal cracks. Multiple creatures can combine to form a crawling lava bulge. They fight by expelling clouds of burning

	Dust	Lava	Mist	Mud	Plasma	Steam
Armor Rating:	15	25	15	25	35	35
Life Force:	8+2	8+3	8+1	8+1	8	8+2
Move:	Lava & Mud: 60' (20'); Dust & Mist: 120' (40') flying Plasma & Steam: 180' (60') flying					
Attacks:	2	1	3	3	2	1
Damage Rating:	VL+2	L+2	VL	VL	VL+1	L+1
No. Appearing:	1d4+2					
Defense Check:	As Monster LF 14					
Morale:	83					
Size:	Small (12")					
Intellect:	Low					
Philosophy:	♥*/☹*/↘*					

ashes 20' long by 10' wide and high (no DC). Their mephitic signature smells of rotten eggs. These creatures despise mist rudimentals.

**Mist:** Found between the realms of Aerion and Hydros, mist rudimentals are barely discernable in a misty environment (roll 1-2 on a d6) or not at all in foggy conditions. They otherwise can take a cloud-like form. They do not possess an inherent attack method other than casting fungal spores at up to three targets within 20'. These molds inflict rotting damage to flesh (living or dead) and other organic material. In freezing conditions, mist rudimentals turn to frost and remain paralyzed until scraped off and returned to their containers. Their mephitic emanations smell of mildew. They loathe lava rudimentals.

**Mud:** From the periphery of Tellurion and Hydros, mud rudimentals look like oozing, glistening wingless imps, or bulging pools of viscous mud. In combat, they can spit with great force up to three globs of earthly goo 20' away. With each successful attack, the sticky mud causes a -5% Agility penalty to its victim. Each penalty increment requires a full combat action to wipe off. Their mephitic emanations smell of pungent humus. They detest plasma rudimentals.

**Plasma:** Natives of Pyros and Aerion's outer reaches, plasma rudimentals appear as blinding imps or pulsing clouds of light. Lightning fast, they always gain initiative in combat and aim dagger-like flashes at their foes' visual organs. Each successful attack requires a Defense Check. Failing one results in temporary blindness. Permanent cecity occurs after three failed checks. Their mephitic emanations smell of ammonia. Plasma rudimentals detest their muddy cousins.

**Steam:** Arguably the most impulsive of all, these scions of Pyros and Hydros appear as wingless, fog-like imps shooting jets of steam through their hands and feet to propel them through the air. They can otherwise adopt the form of fast-moving steam clouds. Quick and unpredictable, they always gain initiative in combat. In either shape, they can blast steam up to 20' away at single targets. Successful attacks are strong enough to inflict a -10% penalty on a victim's next attack roll. Their mephitic emanations smell of chlorine. They revile dust rudimentals.



# At the Heart of Magic

Caldwen's colleges are the foundation upon which the present magiocracy is built. Its goal promotes magic and the development of spellcasting as central components of society. Though colleges do not prevent anyone from becoming a student of the Arts and acquiring related skills, Caldwen first and foremost caters to its elite: sorcerers and wizards. They form the backbone of a caste-based society rather than a true democracy. Laws and politics unabashedly favor not only spellcasters over *mundanes* but wizardly aristocracy over working-class sorcerers as well.

Growing a civilization based on magic requires an educational structure deemed more efficient than the artisanal *single-master-to-single-apprentice* model. In other words, Caldwen is a spellcaster factory. Though magic-users outside the magiocracy often rely on individual tutors to gain their spells, those in Caldwen favor joining colleges. Benefits, in game terms, include at least a bonus to experience earned outside the colleges—such as when adventuring or applying one's skills for purposes other than academic. Other important benefits include social status and professional recognition through diplomas from accredited establishments.

**Acquiring New Spells:** When earned experience suggests magic-users ought to obtain new spells, students must return to the colleges where they previously enrolled. The spells to be gained are those actually taught there. Colleges focus on eight basic philosophies ([abjuration](#), [alteration](#), [conjunction](#), [divination](#), [enchantment](#), [illusion](#), [invocation](#), and [necromancy](#)). Not all game systems classify spells; use what works best in your campaign. Actual college entries later in this chapter define these philosophies in more detail. They correspond to the nine territories making up the magiocracy originally identified in CAL1 *In Stranger Skies*, page 77.

Colleges only provide spells corresponding to these philosophies. Students in the Arts, therefore, have a measure of control over what kinds of magic they are likely to obtain, based on their choices of college, rather than individual tutors deciding what spells they feel like imparting to their apprentices (or worse, the choice being entirely random). Caldwen students need to plan in advance, since they can only enroll in one establishment at a time.

Some spells belong in multiple philosophies. Their intent and effects can vary depending on which college teaches them. For example: wishes from a djinni could be relevant to Alteration and Invocation. If such was taught by the college in [Abyzael](#), the spell would only modify something that already exists. If the college in [Garamial](#) taught this power, it would create matter, energy, forces, or life itself. A student may have to earn a [Master of Arts](#) in both philosophies to produce either effects.

Formal college education does not exclude the ability to learn new spells outside academic circles (such as while adventuring), but there may be a risk that students fail to understand such magic. Bringing them back to the appropriate college and studying them there under supervision increases [odds of comprehension](#). A spell with multiple philosophies may be studied at a college as long as one of its philosophies matches the college's focus. [Spell](#)

[research](#) works the same way. Colleges provide adequate, if specialized, libraries and common spell component sources at generally lower rates than those offered by private resellers. Specific game bonuses earned from studying magic at the colleges are listed later in this chapter (see *Effects on Spellcasting*, page 77).

**Specialization:** Although specialization in spellcasting can exist on Calidar, as defined in the players' chosen game system, Caldwen suggests something different. Specializing consists in favoring one philosophy and denying its opposite entirely (see *Tradeoffs*, page 77). Because in Caldwen the end goal is Grand Wizardry—the mastery of all philosophies—specialization isn't common among wizards, though possible. It should be entirely suitable to another realm's spellcasting style.

**Attendance and Tuition:** College attendance requires part of a students' personal time between real life and professional activities (such as adventuring), typically week-long sessions, which are the minimum length of time needed to comprehend one new spell. Longer timeframes are needed for spell research, as appropriate to the chosen game mechanics. Academic activities can be fully roleplayed or to some degree abstracted during an adventuring player character's life to avoid bogging down the game.

Education isn't cheap—it demands tuition to cover costs and weed out penniless riffraff. Colleges collect local taxes, some of which fund their work and provincial expenditures, the balance going to the [High Wizard Chancellor](#) in Arcanial. Tuitions are listed for each of the classes described later in this chapter. Colleges waive tuition requirements for wizards and their immediate families holding a local [estate](#)—they receive free education from their provinces of residence. It is one way the magiocracy directly benefits aristocrats and gains their political favor.

At the game referee's discretion, endowments may otherwise be available for impoverished commoners with sorcerous potential. Allowances may come from temples, [sects](#), [cabals](#), businesses, municipalities, the [military](#), philanthropic associations, and so on. Moneylenders are eager to offer college loans, usually at questionable interest rates and with variously dire penalties for late-payment. Colleges may also “help” in other ways students excelling in “the games” (see next).

## The Games

Very popular among academic circles and local towns are competitions among colleges. There are four coveted trophies, making up the *Colleges' Tessathlon*. Winning all four games is exceedingly difficult and has only happened once in Caldwen's past. These competitions are a matter of pride and prestige. Youthful and talented [Bachelor](#) students are encouraged to participate, and the best often receive special treatment such as college grants, special tutoring to ensure good grades, benign punishment in response to sophomoric behavior,





etc. Much about college life revolves around social recognition (not just academic), and star participants in the games can become quite popular, which may help when applying for an aristocratic status (see *Wizard Estates*, page 44). Competitions are hosted in the provinces that won the previous year's games. Finals are always played in the city of Arcanial, before the [High Wizard Chancellor](#). The college of grand wizardry does not compete, but provides referees to ensure impartiality of events.

**The Dracoderby Crown:** This game pits two teams riding small, copiously beguiled dragons. The game consists in getting an enchanted ball through a large, levitating hoop on the opponents' side of the stadium. Each team fields two fast-riding strikers and two heavily padded, magically shielded backs on slower, older mounts. Armed with bats, riders hit the ball to pass it or to score. Dragons may either whip the ball with their tails or catch it between their fangs and spit it in a desired direction—if so, the ball absorbs the dragon's breath weapon. Its effect is released if the ball hits anything other than a player's bat, a dragon's tail, or its mouth (which changes the breath weapon). A wall of force prevents the ball from hitting spectators. If left to its own devices, the ball zigzags madly across the field, bouncing off sturdy flagpoles marking the arena's edges. Each rider is permitted up to 3 non-lethal spells per half-time. Quite brutal but spectacular, the *dracoderby* attracts big crowds and deplorable betting habits.

**Trophy:** The winning team's captain receives the coveted crown. Team members earn new spells and a year's worth of free tuition. The crown is magical and provides protection against the breath weapon of the rider's mount, and magical empathy with that breed. Wounded dragons are healed and released above the Dread Lands.

**The Pugminton Bell:** Named after the illustrious sorcerer, Sir Pugsworthy, who created this sport, the game consists in hitting a *pugglecock* over a net and into the opponents' end of the court. A *pugglecock* looks like an apple-sized feathered pug. Its flight path is generally unpredictable, on account of the projectile trying to dodge the players' rackets, causing them to chase it down until it can be whacked back to the other side. This semi-sentient, magical construct homes in on the closest of its two nests past each side's backline. If it gets to one or the other, the opponent scores a point. Aside from its panting, yelps, growls, and barks when hit with a racket, a *pugglecock* is 30% likely to release one of the following effects: roll 1d4—**1.** Fumble (halves the contestant's agility rating for 3 combat actions), **2.** Dart (a magical dart causes VL damage to the contestant), **3.** Doubles (produces 1d4 illusory *pugglecocks* to appear and confuse both sides until all of them are whacked with a racket, or the real one reaches its nest), **4.** Beguile (a Defense Check is required to summon the courage to whack the construct on account of its sad puppy eyes; this effect lasts 3 hits). Each contestant is permitted up to 3 non-lethal spells per game (typically two or three 21-point games complete a match).



# At the Heart of Magic

**Trophies:** The winners of the singles' and doubles' tournaments each receive their very own *pugglecock* familiars (these events are not split by gender). Some colleges modify their *pugglecocks'* looks to best reflect their establishments, such as the College of Necromancy using an undead construct. The *Pugminton Bell* is awarded to the college winning both events.

**The Spectral Glove:** This trophy is awarded to the winner of magically enhanced martial arts. A spell provides non-lethal effects to attacks and defenses when used within a circle specially enchanted for the competition. Martial arts skills are also a prerequisite. Protagonists make their moves, announcing what power they unleash, generally to throw an opponent, score with a punch or a kick, dodge an attack, paralyze for an instant, daze, jump, tumble, gain an extra move, perform a unique and spectacular combination of moves, etc. Terms used to summon a power are as colorful as their effects (*Tiger Claw! Monkey Dance! Dragon Fire!*), usually producing flashes of light, sparks, spinning stars, and so on. Some moves can be used multiple times, others can only be used once. There is nothing discreet about the fights as they are intended for show, notwithstanding the foreign notion that magic-users practicing martial arts seems a little strange. Contestants score points when knocking opponents down or out the circle, the highest total winning the competition.

**Trophy:** The coveted *Spectral Glove* trophy is a magical item enabling its owner to touch that which cannot be touched (such as immaterial creatures or those requiring magic to hit, something lying close by in the ethereal plane, or safely touching a life-force-draining monster). The ghost-like glove itself is immaterial except to its owner, and can be used to reach through a non-magical, physical barrier.

**The Spellgrim Wand:** This competition involves fencing with light beams about 4ft. long. Fencing skills are required along with a specially prepared site fitted with levitating 15'x15' platforms (twelve platforms on three separate levels). Up to eight contestants from different colleges start the fight. Platforms randomly teleport contestants who suffered a hit, or have no remaining opponent on their level. The colors of the beams also change randomly after hitting an opponent or after being hit. Roll 3d4—**3. Amber** (the contestant turns invisible), **4-5. Black** (hit blinds opponent for 3 combat actions), **6-9. Green** (hit scores 2 points), **10-11. Blue** (hit scores 3 points), **12. Red** (hit eliminates opponent outright). Each hit scores at least one point. Contestants are eliminated if they sustain 10 hit points or more, fall off the platforms, or get hit with a red beam.

**Scoring:** Contestants are awarded one *mark* for each opponent they have eliminated in the previous game; the one with the lowest score at the end of a game is out of the tournament. Ties are resolved according to the number of overall "green hits" contestants scored in the tournament, then "blue hits," "black," "amber," and "red hits" last. Otherwise, ties are further resolved with one-on-one duels. There are up to seven games. The tournament's winner is the one surviving the final game.

**Trophy:** The winner's trophy is a wand chosen by the jury. It has the ability to recharge itself when it touches a source of raw mana. It can be summoned to the owner's hand with a command word, regardless of where it may lie at the time, and returned to its former location with a second command.

## College of Abjuration



**Seat:** Town of [Lamerith](#). **Chancellor:** [Master Abachaia of Bamirith](#). **Mascot:** *Master Kaatsini*, a giant, semi-sentient armadillo. **Current Trophy Held:** *Pugminton singles* (rumors that cheating was involved remained unproven, denying [Meggidon](#) the *Pugminton Bell* award).

**Philosophy:** Lamerith teaches that the will to reject or to deny evokes the power to block, remove, undo, dismiss, or banish unwanted conditions or creatures. Lamerith focuses on protective spells or magic with an abjuration component.

**Description:** The main establishment lies inside a stone spur overlooking Lamerith's port. From the outside, several large terraces connect with the town below through passages carved out of the rocky face. Cliff-side entrances lead to great halls hired dwarves excavated and decorated, giving it an impression of austere grandeur and strength enhanced with sweeping columns, high vaults, and colossal, stylized statues. A thousand times besmirched by ever-present seabirds, two wizardly monuments sculpted in white stone stand on either side of the main door, each sternly holding a hand forward, palm out as if commanding all to stop. Though a few towers rise from the spur, much of the college lies beneath the rock where enchanted crystals provide needful illumination. Stone bridges connect the main halls over cavernous vaults, waterfalls, and inner lakes well below sea level.

## College of Alteration



**Seat:** City of [Abyzael](#). **Chancellor:** [Mistress Ziav the Nagevah](#). **Mascot:** *Mistress Pleebploobdloob*, a humanoid construct with the fins, tail, and head of a hippocampus. **Current Trophy Held:** *Spellgrim Wand*, taken from [Balthezul](#), the previous winners. In response, disgruntled conjuration students pelted *Pleebploobdloob* with balls of fermented demon dung, which reek as awfully as they are hard to clean.

**Philosophy:** Abyzael teaches that the will to change what already exists into something else evokes the power to subtly modify or completely transform a condition (*metathesis*), an object (*transmutation*), a creature (*metamorphosis*), or their locations (*transference*—especially moving oneself).



# At the Heart of Magic

**Description:** Much of the establishment in the regional capital lies beneath the sea, extending down into Heroth's Bed from a dark and gloomy tower near the port district. With the main entrance gate clad in copper long ago turned green from the marine breeze, the massive tower features three malachite sea serpents coiling from the bottom up, their heads facing outward. Every hour, the serpents shift and their heads point in different directions. A magical pyre at the top burns around rotating mirrors acting as beacons. The bulk of the college includes massive stone structures topped with translucent domes. Invisible shields seal large apertures in the walls, giving classrooms and great halls an aquarium-like feel. An enchantment on the outside renders the seawater much brighter and clearer than it ought to be at this depth, enabling blue-green light to filter inside. Ancient dungeons lie below.

## College of Conjunction



**Seat:** Town of [Balthezul](#). **Chancellor:** [Mistress Vanash An'melek](#). **Mascot:** *Mistress IliulluKik*, a frost salamander. **Current Trophy Held:** None. The college often won the *Spellgrim Wand* during previous seasons, but lost it this year to [Abyzael](#). The two magical academies have been long-time rivals. In response to an earlier slight, alteration students slipped *Mistress IliulluKik* some Kalataazi pepper, a fiery laxative.

**Philosophy:** Balthezul teaches that the will to call forth what exists elsewhere evokes the power to fetch an object or summon a creature (especially calling forth to the caster).

**Description:** This college stands outside the town's limits, in a lightly forested, often foggy area. An invisible shield protects the grounds' outer limits. The original building once was an elegant hunting hall, wooden and stave-built, with a high-peaked roof adorned with dragon head carvings, deer antlers, and Norse-style engravings. As decades went by, expansions were erected in the same style, but stuck together pell-mell in what is today a large, chaotic maze of creaking halls and swaying towers. One might also recognize parts of shipwrecked vessels appended here and there, alongside catwalks and rickety bridges connecting the various parts. Timber varies from dark brown to black, with adornments painted in bright colors. Dragon heads always seem to watch all who pass before them (they are linked to a crystal ball in the chancellor's office).

## College of Divination



**Seat:** Town of [Meggidon](#). **Chancellor:** [Master Gilganim Eyes-of-Dezvi](#). **Mascot:** *Master Enku-Namilil*, a benevolent male sphinx. **Current Trophy Held:** None. The college won the *Pugminton Bell's* doubles, nearly missing the grand prize when [Lamerith](#) took the singles final. Despite

the general consensus that divination competitors are often quite bad at most games, they always seem to enjoy the sheer dumb luck of being at the right place at the right time. For the sake of magnanimity, Meggidon decided to ignore not-so-farfetched rumors of deceit, though some rowdy students have vowed revenge.

**Philosophy:** Meggidon teaches that the will to perceive evokes the power to distinguish what normal senses cannot, to see through deception, or to fathom the unknown through a higher consciousness.

**Description:** Originally built in the early days of Nav-Gandarian colonization, the college embodies rectilinear architecture with pillars supporting open terraces, hanging gardens, square towers, ziggurats, canals, pools, and artificial waterfalls. Much of the structures are built of mud bricks adorned with stylized bas-relief carvings or ceramic tiles forming vividly colored mosaics. Imposing stairways and rounded archways enable access to the various levels, each guarded with statues of mythical creatures dating back to Gandar's ancient Munaani era. Sitting upriver from the town, the college straddles the Camorax, which feeds its waterworks and irrigates its many gardens before flowing through downtown Meggidon. A colossal hall of ceremonies stands beneath the main ziggurat at the center of the compound.



## College of Enchantment

**Seat:** City of [Anzael](#). **Chancellor:** [Master Arieeph Johirim](#). **Mascot:** *Master Chukukwak Doomtail*, a hooded cockatrice. **Current Trophy Held:** *Dracoderby Crown*.

The prestigious award remained with Anzael this year, frustrating their closest rival, [Incubael](#). As it were, their star green dragon suffered an acute bout of hiccups brought about by the buffoonery of Anzael's facetious captain, causing it to fumble crucial plays.

**Philosophy:** Anzael teaches that the will to enable or disable evokes the power to bestow properties upon objects and beings, or impair the will and abilities of others (affecting natural senses, however, pertains to the College of Illusion).

**Description:** The illustrious college stands on a large flying rock rich with [levitium](#), a natural but highly magical, gravity-reversing gas. Kept stationary with air-anchors, this aerolith attracts a layer of clouds masking it from onlookers below. The college itself is built of wood and double layers of tear-resistant enchanted canvas filled with powdered shrieking fungus, which acts as an effective sound barrier. Magic controls air temperature and pressure within 100 yards of college limits where tall wooden flagpoles hold safety nets. Painted in bright, garish hues, outside walls feature large windows fitted with shutters, balconies, suspended bridges between the main towers, and multicolored drapes shading the alleys below. Directly carved out of the rock, a skyship docking facility lies within the



# At the Heart of Magic

cloud layer. The *dracoderby* stadium, however, stands in Anzael proper, along with other competition venues.

## College of Illusion

**Seat:** City of [Incubael](#). **Chancellor:** [Master Neshuzu, Son of Zavriel](#). **Mascot:** *Azagorn the Mighty*, a miniature chimera—an elaborate, semi-sentient illusion that took many decades to perfect. **Current Trophy Held:** None. Frustrated with its failure to clinch the *Dracoderby Crown*, the local team secured a smoking hot red female, which they believe will distract [Anzael's](#) leading dragon.



**Philosophy:** Incubael teaches that the will to deceive evokes the powers to control one's natural perception of reality, to suggest thoughts and emotions, to dull logic, to blur the limits between conscious and subconscious, and to bring to life the imaginary. Illusion parallels Invocation in that phantasms may be tangible, as imagination, if strong enough, taps directly into Calidar's world soul—the very source of magic and life itself.

**Description:** A sight to be seen in the whole of Caldwen, the college seems to be made of faceted glass infinitely redirecting light and its spectral components. On sunny days, the edifice can be nearly blinding in its splendor. Under full moons, a silvery glow reflects throughout, while at other times iridescent shimmers run through the crystalline domes and finely chiseled walls despite the bleakest of weather. Mirror-like doors and windows often allow sight one way but not the other. Tall, slender towers stand over the college, reinforced with flying buttresses as delicate as lace. Gem-like turrets slowly levitate around the spires, each hiding untold secrets. Claiming an islet in the middle of the Mazuzel River, the edifice connects with the surrounding town through four white marble bridges, each with a tower gate controlling passage in and out. A motto engraved above the entrances reads: *Disbelieve naught, friend, as tomorrow's reality springs from today's imagination*. Clad in masonry with animated bas-reliefs and statues in ornate alcoves, the islet's embankment precludes access by boat, save at one carefully watched quay.

## College of Invocation

**Seat:** Town of [Garamial](#). **Chancellor:** [Mistress Tallas Yavdon, the Younger](#). **Mascot:** *Master Itzakan*, a feathered serpent. **Current Trophy Held:** *Spectral Glove*. Once again, a [Miyukian](#) champion collected the fabulous award, frustrating [Nygardae](#) anew. Accusations of foul play emerged. In response to the unproven allegations, rumors of illicit gambling among Nygardae's trainers followed.



**Philosophy:** Garamial teaches that the will to create something that did not exist evokes the power to bring into existence matter, energy, tangible forces, and to a certain extent, life.

**Description:** Inspired from Osriel and Nicarean elegant yet sober architectures, the college features rounded openings, recessed entrances, sturdy pillars, barrel vaults, large circular towers, and red-tiled roofs. Arcaded galleries surround courtyards and well-manicured gardens populated with the statues of illustrious invokers. What matters more than building style are barely perceptible currents of magic flowing along the passageways and swirling in the halls. They are omnipresent forms of energy that apprentices learn to recognize and manipulate in the course of their studies. A bell sounds at regular times, signaling arcane variations in the energy flux. Combined with the fragrance of incense suffusing the atmosphere and the melodious humming of students practicing mantras oft repeated, a feeling of calm and meditation prevails throughout. The keenest of senses might barely distinguish movement or a gaze among the ambient eddies, betraying a gossamer presence dwelling nearby in the ethereal plane.

## College of Necromancy



**Seat:** City of [Nygardae](#). **Chancellor:** [Mistress Latira Enizer the Issarim](#). **Mascot:** *Master Juggles*, a six-armed, skull-juggling acrobat skeleton. **Current Trophy Held:** None. Annoyed with [Miyukian](#) students clinching the award, pupils have floated the rumor that a [pleasure parlor](#) worker secretly seduced Nygardae's contender and used illicit narcotics, causing him to oversleep and miss a crucial event, a tragic mistake that cost the fine fellow his title.

**Philosophy:** Nygardae teaches that the will to master entropy and death evokes the power to control or corrupt the nature of existence, and all that dwells between life and mortality. It unveils the fabric and origins of Calidar's world soul, of the netherworld, and thus of the divine.

**Description:** Of breathtaking beauty, the college's black, polished stonework rises to dizzying heights, with pointed arches, high narrow windows, ribbed vaults, immense stained glass windows, and flying buttresses. Beneath sharply angled roofs clad in mirror-like obsidian, a host of imps and gargoyles perched on exposed corners spout rainwater or gaze gloomily at the world below. In dark recesses of the walls stand the ghostly carvings of notorious necromancers chiseled in white marble. Late at night, the sounds of a grand organ echoing deep inside signals students to return to their quarters. Standing on a tor bordering the Arael River, the college dominates the sprawling city. Corbelled and machicolated stone walls support slender towers marking the grounds' outer limits. Within lies a thick forest of mature oaks, hidden paths, and secluded glades surrounding



# At the Heart of Magic

private mausoleums. Flanking an imposing gatehouse, two skeletal figures veiled and armed with scythes guard the entrance.



## College of Grand Wizardry

**Seat:** City of [Arcanial](#). **Chancellor:** [Master Tenoboam Beb'zorah](#). **Mascot:** *Mistress Fahrflähla*, a miniature, butterfly-winged dragon. **Current Trophy Held:** None. Notable figures of the college act as impartial referees for the games. *Distinguished Magister* Beb'zorah was a famous competitor in his young age, having won the *Pugminton singles* for his native [Lamerith](#), and competed brilliantly for the *Spellgrim Wand* while studying [conjunction](#).



**Philosophy:** Arcanial teaches that weaving multiple philosophies together begets new magic. Its quest is to research unique spells and to manipulate roots of magic in ways other colleges cannot.

**Description:** The College stands in the capital city's [Upper District](#). Topped with copper-clad roofing, the edifice is best described as *wizardly baroque*. It marries complex shapes with curvaceous grandeur adorned with dizzying arrays of rich surface treatments, twisting elements, and gilded statuary heightening perception of arcane motion and refined sensuality. Sumptuous windows, turrets,

alcoves, and balconies abound for best romantic effect. Elaborate bronze fixtures, clusters of chubby imps high overhead, and extensive use of *trompe-l'oeil* art on walls and ceilings suffuse a melodramatic impression. Extravagant in the eyes of some, the iconic palatial college embodies Art as Magic's highest manifestation.

**Syllabus:** The conventional process of learning and earning credentials is explained in great detail in the following section (see *Academic Circles*, next). In this respect, the College of Arcanial differs somewhat. Students with [Bachelor's](#) in the other eight philosophies may register to earn their [Master's](#) of Grand Wizardry (see *Third Circle*, page 76). Only one program is offered; disregard *Post-Bachelor* and *Thaumaturgy Curriculums*. **Tuition:** double *Third Circle* fees.

Teachings focus on spells combining multiple philosophies. Contrary to other universes, magic-users in the World of Calidar incur significant penalties when researching such spells. Odds of success are halved for every additional philosophy involved. For example: if spell research calling for a single basic philosophy has an 80% chance of succeeding, adding a second philosophy reduces chances to 40%; adding a third reduces the odds to 20%; etc. Graduates holding a Master of Grand Wizardry (known as [archmages](#)) do not incur such penalties. Any magic-user is otherwise able to cast such spells without difficulty, although learning them may also demand some penalties, at the referee's discretion.

Graduates learn how to imbue their intellectual properties with [Dweomer Regulated Mastery](#). Spells they create usually include their names or pseudonyms. Archmages may be in the business of monetizing their magic. Protected spells can be made available to client magic-users for flat fees, either permanently or in bundles of ten after which DRMs block any further casting.

Teachings also develop the ability of archmages to memorize philosophies, as opposed to specific spells. The benefit is a greater flexibility in spellcasting. For example: an archmage allocates one entry level spell slot for Alteration magic; this memorized slot allows any single Alteration spell of the corresponding Potency to be cast later during the day, rather than a specific spell. On the other hand, this technique requires multiple slots for spells with more than one philosophy; memorizing such spells in the traditional manner is therefore more economical but less flexible.

Securing a [PhD](#) in Grand Wizardry confers graduates full immunity to all [First Circle](#) spells. They also earn a 30% immunity against higher Potency spells of a chosen philosophy determined by the nature of a final thesis presented to their peers (see *Fourth Circle*, page 77). At the referee's discretion, immunity ratings can grow by a small amount when archmages advance along their career paths.

## Academic Circles

Education in each of Caldwen's eight primary colleges consists of four circles, each divided into three curriculums. There





# At the Heart of Magic

is no established duration for any curriculum; each can take from a few months to years to complete, depending on one's abilities (in game terms, progressing past curriculums reflects a student's adventuring experience).

As magic-users become more experienced, many will switch colleges on a regular basis to fill gaps in their magic repertoires, earning new spells in one and moving on to the next, as needed. Location of residence isn't a major concern as public *spellports* enable quick transportation between major towns. Titled wizards typically use private *spellports* from their estates to reach their colleges. Obtaining room and board at the colleges is more popular with the working class, either inexpensive dormitories or private quarters for those who can afford them.

When enrolling at a different college, students start directly at the curriculum corresponding to their actual spellcasting skills, provided they hold the prerequisite diploma. For example, a sorcerer wishing to attend [Nygardae's](#) *Second Circle* classes must hold the basic [Spellcraft License](#) in necromancy. For most skilled magic-users, collecting new licenses may be little more than a formality, though learning new spells to qualify may take some time. The College of Grand Wizardry in [Arcanial](#) doesn't offer *First* or *Second Circle* classes; [Bachelor's](#) in all eight of the Arts are mandatory to attend *Third Circle* classes in Grand Wizardry.

## First Circle

**Apprentice Curriculum:** People or sapient creatures with the ability to sense magic or with an understanding of general sorcery concepts may enroll. Apprentices have not demonstrated the ability to cast any spell as yet. For someone who never once cast any magic before, this critical event could take years to complete. Some apprentices never succeed (a few may remain as hall monitors, hoping to glean a few more tidbits to achieve their dreams). **Tuition:** 1 gold/week.



**Novice Curriculum:** Students who can cast at least one entry-level spell in any single [philosophy](#) may attend this class. The goal is to learn one new spell of the current college philosophy. *First Circle* spells require at least a week-long session to learn. When a new spell is mastered, the student moves on to the *Spellcraft Curriculum*. **Tuition:** 10 gold/week.

**Spellcraft Curriculum:** This class welcomes students who've mastered more than one entry-level spell (at least one from the current college philosophy). The aim is to learn one more new spell of the current philosophy, at which point they may test for the Spellcraft License. **Tuition:** 50 gold/week.

**Spellcraft License:** This degree is awarded when all learned spells can be memorized and cast under duress. Spellcraft Licenses from accredited colleges are recognized throughout the

magiocracy. This license is the prerequisite to enroll in the philosophy's *Second Circle*.

## Second Circle

**Spellwright Curriculum:** This class is open to students with a Spellcraft License in the current philosophy. This curriculum teaches magic one spell Potency higher than *First Circle* spells (see *Spell Potency*, in CAGM01—*Game Mechanics*, page 2). *Second Circle* spells require at least two-week sessions to learn. When a new spell is mastered, the student moves on to the *Hexen Curriculum*. **Tuition:** 100 gold/week.



**Hexen Curriculum:** Students learn magic one spell Potency higher than the previous curriculum's. When a new spell of the appropriate Potency is mastered, the student moves on to the *Bachelor's Curriculum*. **Tuition:** 150 gold/week.

**Bachelor's Curriculum:** This class welcomes students who've mastered more than one Hexen spell from the current college philosophy. The aim is to learn an additional spell, at which point they may test for a *Bachelor of the Arts*. **Tuition:** 200 gold/week.

**Bachelor of the Arts:** This degree is awarded when multiple Hexen spells can be memorized and cast under duress. Prevailing in a one-on-one magical duel is also required to pass (the exact nature of the duel depends on the college). Contestants are randomly chosen among similar age groups. Juried dueling is conducted every three months during equinoxes and solstices. Spectators are welcome, mostly friends of the contestants or students in earlier curriculums. A Bachelor's is mandatory to enroll in the philosophy's *Third Circle*.

## Third Circle

**Post-Bachelor Curriculum:** This class is open to students with a *Bachelor of the Arts* in the current philosophy. Magic taught here is one spell Potency higher than Bachelor's curriculum spells. *Third Circle* spells require at least three-week sessions to learn. When a new spell is mastered, the student moves on to the *Thaumaturgy Curriculum*. **Tuition:** 250 gold/week.



**Thaumaturgy Curriculum:** Students learn magic one spell Potency higher than the previous curriculum's. When a new spell of the current Potency is mastered, the student moves on to the *Mastery Curriculum*. **Tuition:** 300 gold/week.

**Mastery Curriculum:** This class teaches magic one spell Potency higher than the previous curriculum's. When more than one new



# At the Heart of Magic

spell of the current Potency is mastered, the student may test for a *Master of the Arts*. **Tuition:** 350 gold/week.

**Master of the Arts:** In addition to a duel, candidates must create one new spell relevant to the current philosophy. The [College of Enchantment](#) at [Anzael](#) requires a magic item be crafted rather than a new spell. A Master's is mandatory to access the philosophy's *Fourth Circle*.

## Fourth Circle

**Fellowship:** This circle accommodates Masters—it is an exclusive fellowship allowing wizards and sorcerers to exchange ideas and discuss spellcasting philosophies. There are neither teachers at this level nor specific curriculums. Masters are trusted to improve their skills and earn new spells on their own. *Fourth Circle* spells require at least four-week sessions to learn (and much longer to create outright). Fellowship debates concern magic at least one spell Potency higher than *Mastery Curriculum* spells. **Tuition:** none.



**Doctorate in Philosophy:** The PhD diploma requires Masters to demonstrate before a jury of peers the ability to cast more than one spell at the top Potency available in the game world, and to present a thesis on the current philosophy. A thesis generally demands a quest. A simple majority vote among peer reviewers is enough to earn the prestigious college diploma.

## Effects on Spellcasting

To better understand terms used in this section and how they correspond to your chosen game mechanics, refer to *Calidar Game Mechanics*. A PDF download is available from Calidar Publishing at [DriveThruRPG.com](#).

**Tradeoffs:** Picking a college will result in several related advantages. On the other hand, each of the primary eight [philosophies](#) is in opposition to another. Therefore, advantages in one philosophy correspond to disadvantages in another—at least until the missing degrees are earned. Aside from diplomas, bonuses and penalties relate to the philosophy *currently* studied, so they can change over time as students switch colleges. At the referee's discretion, [Grand Wizardry](#) graduates may enjoy all the benefits without penalties.

- [Abjuration](#) (*the will to reject*) is in opposition to [Conjuration](#) (*the will to call forth*).
- [Alteration](#) (*the will to change what exists*) is in opposition to [Enchantment](#) (*the will to enable*).
- [Divination](#) (*the will to perceive*) is in opposition to [Illusion](#) (*the will to deceive*).
- [Invocation](#) (*the will to create*) is in opposition to [Necromancy](#) (*the will to master death*).

One may wonder why Alteration and Enchantment should be in opposition, but empirical wisdom demonstrates that they are. Colleges of Caldwen have, therefore, come to accept this natural order of the arcane as a fundamental law of magic. Grand Wizardry (the mastery of all philosophies) is in opposition to the complete lack of them, which is irrelevant in this context.

**Comprehending Spells:** After completing the [Apprentice Curriculum](#), students benefit from a +10% bonus to the odds of comprehending new spells in their *current* philosophy (at the referee's discretion), or in other philosophies for which they already hold a diploma. Spells from the philosophy opposed to the *current* one incur a -10% penalty to understand, unless the relevant degree was already earned. Other spells are unaffected. For example: a [Master's](#) of Invocation attempts to comprehend a Necromancy spell; a -10% penalty should apply unless the student already holds a diploma in Necromancy that is appropriate to the new spell's Potency.

At the referee's discretion, deciphering magical inscriptions could be an innate ability from completing the [Hexen Curriculum](#) onward. Detecting magic could be achieved up to three times per day. Both abilities require a 1-2 on a d6 roll to succeed without relying on related spells (as described in the chosen game system).

**Memorizing Spells:** If relevant to the chosen game system, a student can memorize one extra spell per Potency rank, provided it is chosen from those in the *current* college philosophy (or from those whose relevant degrees were already earned). This bonus is not cumulative for each diploma. For example: a [Lamerith](#) Bachelor already holding [Bachelor's degrees](#) from [Nygardae](#) and [Meggidon](#) could memorize one extra spell of each appropriate Potency rank from either [Abjuration](#), [Necromancy](#), or [Divination](#). Spells from the *current* opposing philosophy ([Conjuration](#)) can be memorized, but require two spell slots, at least until the missing degree is earned.

**Researching Spells:** Students and alumni may use their colleges' facilities to research new spells, as appropriate to the chosen game system. Unusual components are not provided. Nonetheless, spell research in the *current* philosophy should be treated as one Potency rank lower. Spells researched in any opposed philosophies count as one Potency rank higher, at least until the missing diploma is earned.

**Spell Efficiency:** Spellcasters holding degrees receive a +1 bonus to Defense Checks (DC) against spells of their *current* or acquired philosophies. They also incur a -1 penalty to Defense Checks against spells opposed to the *current* philosophy, at least until the missing diploma is earned. The reverse is also true when a target rolls Defense Checks against a student's spell attacks.

**Spell Affinities:** Certain races or cultures may possess an affinity for a specific philosophy. It is a tendency rather than a hard rule (at the referee's discretion, treat as an option, modify, or expand as needed). An affinity governs how many spells need to be







memorized at the beginning of a day. It enables a spellcaster to leave one spell slot *unmemorized* for future use. During the course of the day, the spellcaster may use up this available slot to cast a spell of the corresponding affinity, chosen at that time. An open slot can be allocated any appropriate Potency rank within the magic-user's ability. No single individual (other than unusual monsters) should enjoy more than one affinity. Affinity to magic does not manifest itself among individuals and monsters limited to *First Circle* spells.

- **Abjuration:** Caniseans & Natives of Nordheim, Araldür, or Lao-Kwei
- **Alteration:** Dragons, Efreet, & Natives of Narwan, Draconia, or Pyros
- **Conjuration:** Feliseans & Natives of Caldwen or the Outer Planes
- **Divination:** Humanoids & Natives of Phrydias or the Ethereal Plane
- **Enchantment:** Gnomes & Natives of Meryath, Belledor, or Hydros
- **Illusion:** Rakshasa, Djinn, Fairy folk, & Natives of Osriel or Aerion
- **Invocation:** Elementals, Elves, & Natives of Kumoshima or Tellurion
- **Necromancy:** Demons, Shatim, & Natives of Ellyrion or the Netherworld

"Natives" include humans or other unaccounted-for beings such as half-elves, half-orcs, were-beasts, etc. Old dragons, *archfiends*, elemental rulers, eternal, hierarchs, powerful undead beings, and other highly magical creatures (see CC1 *Beyond the Skies* page 211) can select multiple slots (one per spell Potency) should they ever memorize spells as a magic-user would.

## College Life

Some young wizards are notorious for inviting similarly-minded students to reside in their private estates. Known as fraternities and sororities, these cliquish associations nurture an overdeveloped sense of camaraderie, often leading to questionable mischief. Later in their careers, past members sometimes remain personal friends or convenient allies.

Contrary to mundane universities elsewhere in the Great Caldera, juveniles are a minority (which is why they often band together). This trend becomes more pronounced in upper circles, as some students may already hold diplomas from other colleges. Genders are not segregated in the rolls, and neither are races, ages, ethnic origins, spiritual beliefs, ethea, ideologies, or aristocratic pedigrees. It's all about magic (at least in theory). Personal behavior among students, on the other hand, is another story. Native-born Caldwen aristocracy tends to think itself above everyone else. Therein lies unspoken internal politics of colleges.

There is truly nothing like a just-licensed and still-wet-behind-the-ears *spellwright* rubbing elbows with an aging *Doctor* in *Necromantic Philosophy*, both on a quest for a *Bachelor's* of Divination. The youngster probably won't need magic to guess that showing respect to the old guy is the safest bet. Then, of course, the cheeky teen might be the son of a local aristocrat: brash, immature, and soon to be in big trouble. Wary of jealousy and ulterior motives among powerful spellcasters, older students typically grow more withdrawn and mistrustful. Spellcasters endowed with previous degrees will quickly rise through lower circles, in a matter of weeks rather than months or years for inactive or less-talented students. A college professor (or a monster beguiled for the occasion) stands in for duels with alumni of other establishments holding multiple advanced degrees, when no one else with comparable experience is available in their circles.



## Career Paths

**Path of Adventurers:** Students commonly change colleges, perhaps a bit less often for titled wizards who can attend classes in their provinces of residence for free. There are many reasons why students switch. Some have clear goals in mind and wish to obtain specific degrees in different philosophies to help them in their personal quests. It is, therefore, not uncommon for students to depart after being awarded new credentials, to follow the *Path of Adventurers*. Alumni can always return to previous colleges or choose another one to resume or perfect their education.

**Path of Rulers:** This career is an immense challenge, as [Bachelor's](#) in all eight [philosophies](#) are mandatory for being accepted at the [College of Grand Wizardry](#). Aristocrats are generally brought up with political ambitions; a [Master's](#) of Grand Wizardry is key to earning an [estate](#) in the Dominion of Arcanial. When a titled aristocrat leaves an estate, a celebration is customary, not so much for the departing noble, but for all the others gleefully moving up to fill the vacancy.

**Path of Teachers:** The third objective is a purely academic career. To many a sorcerer, it seems just as prestigious as the ways of aristocrats. It leads to tenure in a college and possibly becoming its chancellor. This position requires the college's [Doctorate in Philosophy](#). The absolute highest honor for a sorcerer is to ascend as the [College Chancellor](#) of Grand Wizardry in Arcanial, a nearly mythical achievement relevant to Calidar's *Eternal Glory* (see [CAL1 In Stranger Skies](#), page 86). An extended life expectancy may be needed for such extraordinary erudition, and at times, the post has remained vacant for lack of a suitable candidate.

## College Organization

Colleges include one to five separate locations, one main establishment in the regional capital and additional branches in or near large towns. For example, the [College of Alteration's](#) siege is located in the City of [Abyzael](#), with secondary branches in Hyrkianal, [Tol Sirith](#), [Azazul](#), and [Astaral](#). The [College of Necromancy](#), however, operates one large school in its capital city of [Nygardae](#). College budgets aren't equal, however. The two richest are the Colleges of [Illusion](#) and [Grand Wizardry](#). The poorest is the [College of Divination](#), with just one palatial compound in [Meggidon](#).

**Secular Education:** Villages often possess rudimentary teaching facilities, usually a single building, sometimes little more than a cottage serving as the teacher's personal residence. Attendance can be from a dozen to twenty pupils, humanly ages 6 to 14, whenever their parents do not need them in the fields, shops, or for other work. A few make it to middle schools located in larger towns. Typically for students 12-16, these private schools are run independently by their municipalities. Rudiments of spellcasting, runic calligraphy,

and magic lore are taught here in addition to mundane curricula, rarely with any actual spellcasting. Students identified as possessing natural talents for the Arts are sent to the closest colleges. Middle schools and colleges charge for tuition and board (if any), so they often concern more affluent townsfolk's households rather than rural hearths. Occasionally, a local sorcerer offers to send to a college his/her own apprentice or a farm child with spellcasting potential. Wealthy families, especially among the aristocracy, almost invariably rely on private tutors for their children, until they can attend a college.

**Supervision:** Middle school teachers typically hold a [Spellcraft License](#). College teachers in *First* and *Second Circles* possess at least a [Bachelor's](#). *Third Circle* instructors must have earned a [Master's](#), and are referred to as *Professors of the Arts*. All academic instructors in Arcanial must hold credentials in Grand Wizardry. Administrative and academic posts are often the purview of salaried sorcerers, though aristocrats sometimes choose to occupy these functions. Resident wizards are occasionally summoned to teach at their colleges, for which they receive no compensation—small price to pay for all that their colleges grant them. Aristocrats are, however, entitled to hire someone else with adequate qualifications to instruct in their place.

Some colleges employ fairy folk as proctors, especially brownies. Usually invisible, they take note of students' behavior, especially youngsters in the [First Circle](#), and give them so-called *brownie points* for good conduct (they never actually tell anyone about this). Good students sometimes get discreet help from friendly proctors when they find themselves in some difficulty. Other establishments prefer imp-like debeks, vigilant paintings, or living statues. Nygardae relies on ghostlings for run-of-the-mill surveillance, and at the very least magically-bound wraiths for security. Regardless of the monitoring apparatus, troublemakers are promptly reported to the assistant dean. Colleges always have demonic underlings serving chancellors.

**Chain of Command:** Administrative staff includes a college chancellor at the top of the chain of command. It is an immense responsibility combining the functions of headmaster with those of provincial viceroy governing a large part of Caldwen. Therefore, it isn't uncommon for a college chancellor to interact with the local military and law enforcement. The chancellor's duties are performed in conjunction with a board of regents that includes the top six college wizards (based on the estates they occupy). A provost oversees the college curriculums and vice-chancellors who run the various college branches, if any. Deans interact directly with instructors and students, and report to vice-chancellors. A large number of associates and assistants support these four basic posts. Caldwen bureaucracy can be intimidating, definitely so in the city of Arcanial. The High Wizard Chancellor, [Lord High Vardalas](#), interacts with all college chancellors. In conclusion, Caldwen qualifies as a magiocracy, a meritocracy, and a *dascalocracy*: a realm ruled by meritorious teaching mages.





# Secrets of the Cabals

Caldwen does not have a general-purpose “guild of sorcerers” requiring dues in exchange for the right to practice one’s craft. Colleges only collect tuition. On the other hand, there are so-called “cabalist guilds,” private associations concerning specific types of wizardry. The [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#) provides the official charters defining the cabals’ spheres of interest and giving them legal power to regulate their craft.

Six well-known cabals exist in Caldwen, each one focusing on two [philosophies](#) nearly exclusively and the special powers of their craft. Spellcasters holding [Master’s](#) or [PhDs](#) in philosophies other than those associated with cabalists lack the necessary train of thought to embrace guild craft. Cabalists can only progress past [Bachelor’s](#) degrees within the two philosophies of their craft. Ironically, [arch-mages](#) are unable by definition to become cabalists.

These cabals typically oversee three stages reflecting their members’ skills. Two are sanctioned with appropriate *Writs of Power*, certificates permitting professional work in guild-controlled communities (urban centers larger than a village). Cabals collect small monthly dues and services in exchange for instruction and the right to set up shop. Dues amount to 10, 20, or 30 gold depending on the cabal, typically per month during which the craft is practiced within guild-controlled communities. Special abilities are gained after completing each stage. Instruction is interspersed with extra-curricular activities, such as adventuring. Time spent in colleges cannot be commingled with guild-related studies.

In exchange for waiving dues, cabals occasionally call upon senior members to help instruct junior cabalists. They pay a stipend to their administrators and other employees. Senior members elect guild administrators and share any profits based on their seniority. Failing to pay dues results in guild status suspension. Reinstatement occurs when dues in arrears are paid, plus simple interest of 10% per month. Practicing the craft while suspended may result in charter-mandated penalties, including fines, expulsion from the guild, legal action before a court of magistrates, appropriation of assets, and/or forcible bone-breaking. Seized assets are auctioned off to senior members.

Cabalist Guilds		
Cabals	Philosophies	Stages
<a href="#">Alchemy</a>	<i>Alteration + Enchantment</i>	Apothecaries, Alchemists, Philosophers
<a href="#">Demonology</a>	<i>Illusion + Necromancy</i>	The Calling, The Flesh, The Spirit
<a href="#">Dracology</a>	<i>Invocation + Divination</i>	The Blood, The Fierce, The Wyrms
<a href="#">Elementalism</a>	<i>Abjuration + Conjuraton</i>	Rudiments, Fundaments, Elements
<a href="#">Necromancy</a>	<i>Necromancy + Divination</i>	The Passing, The Haunting, The Ascending
<a href="#">Skymastery</a>	<i>Enchantment + Invocation</i>	Portmasters, Spellbinders, Skywrights

## Cabal of Alchemy

This guild is the most common and most recognized in Calidar. Few towns lack at least one accredited apothecary. Cabalists have no specific ambitions other than perfecting their craft and attaining the skills needed to create a Philosopher’s Stones. It is believed that



such objects hold the secrets of the universe and the keys to godhood. Curiously, the craft involves two opposing philosophies, which some have argued is crucial to its special powers. **Main Guild House:** [Azazul](#).

## Apothecaries’ Cabal

This stage accommodates magic-users with [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Alteration](#) and [Enchantment](#). It teaches how to produce non- or para-magical compounds; the latter are substances with magical or near-magical properties generally seen as less potent than *First Circle* spells (see *Apothecary Abilities* later on). The *Apothecaries’ Cabal* requires at least four months to master. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Londo Festerborn](#) (aspiring apothecary, page 56).

**Learning Process:** Aspiring apothecaries learn to work with each of the four primary elements, each taking a minimum of a month-long session.

**Passing the Test:** A neophyte must demonstrate without a single error the ability to conduct four primary processes: effecting an uncommon compound, a para-magical combustion, a rare distillate, and a related vapor. Odds of success for each of these four processes (and for all others later on) equal 25 plus half the spellcaster’s Life Force (expressed as a percentage). A roll of 95 or more is always considered a critical failure. The neophyte must study each failed category for another month before trying all four again. If the demonstration succeeds, the apothecary may advance to the next cabal.

**Apothecary Abilities:** Apothecary compounds have limited effects, such as: postponing a poison’s damage, delaying symptoms of a disease or an infection, keeping small pests at bay, providing minor healing to physical wounds, producing sleep drugs, analgesics, tonics, sneezing powder, potent glues, unusual dyes, solvents, acids, lubricants, and so forth. Processes can generate solids (in whole or in powder), balms, oils, liquids, or vapors. Each non-magical dose takes 1d4 hours to prepare, costs 5d6 gold per hour of work, can be preserved up to a week, and allows a single use with effects lasting 3d4 hours (as appropriate). Para-magical concoctions take twice as long to prepare and cost twice as much per hour of work. A skill check is required—critical failure engenders harmful effects, at the referee’s discretion; critical success enables a compound to be preserved indefinitely in a sealed container. Whether an attempt succeeds isn’t always obvious at first, though once a formula is confirmed, future attempts receive a +10% bonus. Books of formulae are therefore precious to apothecaries.

**Travel Cases:** Adventuring containers may be put together, allowing up to six doses of various concoctions to be produced when away from the apothecary’s laboratory, after which the ingredients used must be replaced. Odds of success when working from a travel case incur a –10% penalty due to the limitation in components and equipment therein. A travel case costs 200 gold in a guild-controlled area, or up to twice as much elsewhere. It is relatively fragile and weighs 40 pounds. Its



# Secrets of the Cabals

contents are stored in stoppered tubes and vials that are waterproof. Books are somewhat impermeable unless permanently enchanted.

## Alchemists' Cabal

This stage accommodates qualified apothecaries with [Bachelor's](#) degrees. It teaches the art of magical potion brewing, using mechanics provided by the chosen game system. This cabal requires at least a month to master preparations for each of the spellcasting philosophies. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Tabaris of Zagarath](#) (qualified alchemist, page 58).

**Learning Process:** Aspiring alchemists learn potion-brewing techniques (and preparations of solid and gaseous equivalents) for at least four effects related to [Bachelor's](#) degrees already earned. Each of these techniques takes a minimum of a month to study.

**Passing the Test:** A neophyte must successfully prepare four different potions or equivalent compounds. Odds of success are those described in the chosen game system. The neophyte must study each failed potion for another month before trying all four again. If the demonstration succeeds, the alchemist may advance to the next cabal.

**Alchemist Abilities:** Magical potions (or other equivalent forms) function as described in the chosen game system. Effects should be limited to spells the alchemist has already learned. If properly sealed, potions can be preserved indefinitely unless dispelled. Whether an attempt succeeds isn't always obvious at first, though once a formula is confirmed, future attempts receive a reasonable bonus, at the referee's discretion. Alchemists must inscribe their formulae in their grimoires, using language decipherable only with magic. Grimoires are even more valuable to alchemists than apothecary formulae. Theft of any such tome is grounds for dismissal and possibly other unspeakable retribution. Guild alchemists should receive an additional bonus to their success chances, and a lower cost to accomplish their deeds, compared with non-accredited spellcasters.

**Travel Cases:** Field apparatus may be put together, allowing up to six doses to be produced when away from the alchemist's laboratory, after which the used ingredients must be replaced. At the referee's discretion, working from a travel case incurs a penalty to the chances of brewing potions due to the limitation in components and equipment therein. It costs the median price of six potions plus 30%, and weighs 40 pounds. When considering a specific potion while in the field, there always is a 20% chance that some critical ingredient will be unavailable in the travel case. Furthermore, these portable containers only permit duplication of existing formulae—they're inadequate for research. Some cabals occasionally sell conjurable cases, which can be summoned from wherever they lie hidden, whenever needed, and dismissed when the work is done. A controlling ring magically bound to the owner's conjurable gear triggers its enchantment with a command word. These

two items together are worth ten times a normal case's cost. Ingredients only need to be refilled when depleted (at the cost given above).

## Philosophers' Cabal

This stage accommodates qualified alchemists with [Bachelor's](#) degrees in all eight [philosophies](#). It is a fellowship of scholars seeking the secrets of the Philosopher's Stones. There is no formal instruction related to the *Philosophers' Cabal*. Success is measured in the ability to create one or more of the Philosopher's Stones. Members are called philosophers.

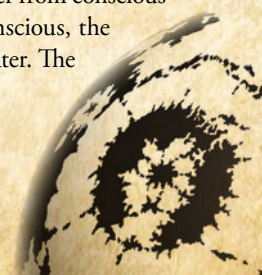
**Learning Process:** Preliminary research takes a year broken up into weekly segments to accommodate extracurricular activities. There are three known Philosopher's Stones. The first, dark as a moonless night, is called *Raven*. The second, called *Swan*, is as pale as the finest white opal. The third, the blazing *Phoenix*, shines as bright as the midday sun. Producing all three is an event known as the *Magnum Opus* (Great Work).

**Philosophers' Achievements:** Success depends on the aspiring philosophers' willingness to debate and share insights among their fellowship. Achievements are otherwise private and often rumored, as the stones' actual existence cannot be shown to prove one's skill.

**1. The Raven:** It requires a single process equivalent to brewing (without a single failure) potions related to all eight spellcasting [philosophies](#). Failure demands another year's worth of preparation for an additional attempt. Once obtained, the swirling black orb must receive a final abjorative enchantment of the highest Potency extant at Bachelor's level. If the enchantment succeeds, the *Raven* disintegrates, and the aspiring philosopher loses one Stamina increment. No magic less than divine can ever restore this loss or the stone itself. However, no undead creature can now touch the philosopher—any such contact would disintegrate, dissipate, or otherwise dismiss the involved part of the undead.

**2. The Swan:** It requires a second process (as above) involving eight potions other than those used for the previous stone. Once obtained, the shimmering orb must receive a final necromantic enchantment of the highest Potency extant at Bachelor's level. If the enchantment succeeds, the *Swan* disintegrates, and the aspiring philosopher sacrifices *two more* Stamina increments. This process bestows the permanent ability to regenerate half as fast as a troll.

**3. The Phoenix:** It requires a last process involving eight potions (as above), other than those used for the previous two stones. Once obtained, the fiery orb must receive a final divinatory enchantment of the highest Potency extant at Bachelor's level. If the enchantment prevails, the *Phoenix* disintegrates, and the aspiring philosopher must succeed a Stamina Check or die. If successful, this process bestows the ability to escape death, leaving its creator unconscious but with bare minimum life points whenever incurring an otherwise-lethal attack. Such an attack, whether physical or magical, should be sufficient to bring the philosopher from conscious state to outright death in a single blow. While unconscious, the philosopher appears deceased and wakes up an hour later. The





# Secrets of the Cabals

power of the *Phoenix* can also foil a deadly poison or some comparable mortal affliction. Its ability only manifests itself once a day.

An accomplished philosopher achieving a *Magnum Opus* receives enough notoriety points to attain *Eternal Glory* as a great sorcerer (see CAL1 *In Stranger Skies*, page 86). This achievement is enough to earn a divine favor (see CC1 *Beyond the Skies*, page 187), provided the philosopher has adopted a faith. If slain, the philosopher returns to Calidar as an incarnate (CC1, page 213) to complete any unfinished business, after which his or her existence continues as an eternal (CC1, page 211).

## Cabal of Demonology

A frightening field of study outlawed in most places, this craft is tolerated in Caldwen because of local culture and faith in deities with demonic ancestry. This stance is rooted in the fact that the darkest of evils can be redeemed. Demonology does not limit itself to such values, however: it is also about knowledge and power. Cautious about whom they allow in, demonologists do not reveal much of their craft outside their cabals, as peers, if they found out, would seek to eliminate transgressors. Some demonologists hide in Ellyrion, where the clergy harbors a most visceral hatred and fear of them. The *Daimonikon League* is the sworn enemy of the craft inside and out of Ellyrion (see CC1 *Beyond the Skies*, page 230). Caldweners outside the guild rely on coercion and violence to subjugate demons (see *Tools of Lordship*, page 62). The ways of demonologists are more subtle and far reaching. **Main Guild House:** [Bisilthur](#).

## Cabal of the Calling

This stage accommodates magic-users with [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Illusion](#) and [Necromancy](#). It teaches how to identify specific demons and establish consensual bonds. Its members are called theurgists.

**Learning Process:** Aspiring theurgists first build an appropriate library. Suitable books on demonology are hard to come by because they are kept by monsters or sorcerers unwilling to part with them, forgotten in faraway dungeons, or hidden in outer planes. If proven, theft from another cabal member is grounds for dismissal from the guild. Basic skills and initial research require a four month-long session, not including time to acquire books. Sessions can be broken up into weekly segments to accommodate extracurricular activities.

Based on its value and difficulty to obtain, each tome gives an aspiring theurgist a chance of identifying a random demon. Only one attempt can be rolled for each book, with odds 2d4% (cumulative for each volume). If successful, roll 1d20 to select the identified [demon](#): **1-10.** Frack, **11-16.** Fiend, **17-19.** Lord, **20.** Prince. Research yields the demon's common names, gender, its general background, its character, place of dwelling, what god or *archfiend* it serves (if any), and its powers (see CC1

*Beyond the Skies*, page 216). The aspiring theurgist may either ignore the result (though no information is lost), and continue looking for other books, or attempt to pass the test, provided the prerequisite four months of instruction have been completed.

**Greater Powers:** Roll 1d% to determine whether a demon serves or is related to a greater power—**01-39.** Rogue demon (serves no one); **40-49.** Serves a foreign god\*; **50-59.** Serves an *archfiend*; **60-63.** Serves Ashgaddon, **64-65.** Serves Astafeth, **66-67.** Serves Avraoth, **68-69.** Serves Barthazu, **70-71.** Serves Dagleeth, **72-73.** Serves Nekathal, **74-75.** Serves Samaz, **76.** Serves Shai-Mamnon, **77-78.** Serves Urthaala-the-Unquenched, **79-80.** Serves Zarghadin, **81-00.** Serves Naghilas. (\*) *10% chance the foreign god is a Ghülean entity, which would not become known until a later time.*



**Passing the Test:** With the assistance of qualified demonologists, the theurgist performs a Ritual of Calling, which requires a Personality Check. The roll incurs penalties if the demon's Life Force exceeds the aspiring theurgist's own rating, at the referee's discretion. If the check fails, the chosen demon ignores this and any future calls; odds of finding another demon are reset to 10% plus any newly acquired tomes. Each time a ritual fails, base identification chances increase +10%, and so on. If the ritual succeeds, research bonuses are eliminated; the theurgist permanently loses a Stamina increment while a spiritual bond with the chosen demon comes into effect (*archfiends* never enable bonds with mortals but may agree to pacts).

This bond transcends distances and planes; at no point during this process do theurgist and soul mate physically meet. The theurgist is marked with a random unholy stain (see CC1 *Beyond the Skies*, page 214), acting as the testimony required to advance to the next cabal. Theurgists may always attempt a Ritual of Calling on a demon they've previously ignored. This ritual prevents demons from bonding with more than one demonologist (though the opposite isn't true). It is unable to affect a previously subjugated demon (as described under *Tools of Lordship*, page 62). Leading a demon to undertake a course of action defying its greater power (if any) will permanently negate the bond.

**Theurgist Abilities:** A theurgist's bond grants both soul mates permanent empathic contact with each other. In game terms, the demon is beguiled and behaves as a friend. This spiritual covenant cannot be dispelled and remains in place unless one harms the other. A bond does not justify what should be considered abuse, such as "pumping" soul mates for free spells, magic items, and such. It should be considered a two-way street, and betraying it is tantamount to disregarding one's own ethos.

Once a day for the duration of one encounter, the theurgist also benefits from 1d4 basic immunities out of the 10 available to the chosen demon (roll once when the bond is established). Immunities are enjoyed so long as the bond lasts. A qualified theurgist enjoys a Personality bonus with all demons in general, a significant one if the theurgist is a pious follower of the god the demon serves (see CC1 *Beyond the Skies*, page 185). When requested to do so, a bonded demon should





accept serving its soul mate if it has the lesser of their Life Forces. On the other hand, nothing prevents a theurgist from actually being the servant, especially members of the [Maghia](#). Who serves whom isn't always obvious. Regardless of actual relationships, any demon brought to Caldwen must be legally registered, as described earlier (see *Licensing*, page 60). Bonded demons cannot be bought and sold.

## Cabal of the Flesh

This stage accommodates qualified theurgists with [Bachelor's degrees](#). It teaches how to engender a demonic creature. Its members are called progenitors. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Latira Enizer](#), a qualified progenitor. (Also see [Mephistra of the Omen](#), page 64).

**Learning Process:** The cabal teaches how to build an appropriate altar and conduct a Ritual of Sacrifice, a process taking four months. Learning the ritual demands prerequisite [Thaumaturgy](#) experience with either illusion or necromancy.

Aspiring progenitors continue to expand their libraries, as explained earlier. Rather than identifying demons, they now seek clues about seven omens that relate to upcoming events (set up by the referee). They range from utterly obscure and seemingly meaningless to capable of changing the course of history. They all have in common protagonists and opponents actively involved for reasons of their own. Aspiring progenitors must act to ensure all seven omens come true. If more than three fail, research must resume for another seven. If successful, aspiring progenitors may attempt to pass the test.

**Passing the Test:** Now that required omens have come to pass, arcane conditions are favorable to engender offspring. The Ritual of Sacrifice is then performed at the altar. A magical item worth at least 2,000 gold must be sacrificed if the aspiring progenitor's soul mate isn't associated with any god of Caldwen, otherwise use whatever offering is listed for the deity (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), pages 94-106). The bonded demon neither needs to be present, nor does its gender matter, as genetics of its kind differ entirely from that of mortals. Roll 1d% to determine the issue: **0** (or worse). Stillborn offspring; **1-5**. Cur; **6-15**. Hellion; **16-30**. Imp; **31-50**. Frack; **51-75**. Demon of the soul mate's kind; **76-00**. Shatim. The roll incurs a -5 penalty for each failed omen. *Archfends* would only agree to a Ritual of Sacrifice as the result of a pact; it would engender a fiend at best.

The progenitor can choose to terminate the ritual if the issue isn't what was desired, in which case the search for new omens must be restarted. If the result is acceptable, the progenitor permanently loses two Stamina increments and receives an additional stigma. If the offspring is an imp or any other similar creature, it becomes the progenitor's loyal familiar. All other creatures are permanently bound to their creator, as described earlier, regardless of their demonic parent's fate. Though materializing as newborns on the altar, they need a mere few weeks to reach the equivalent of a young adult's appearance. If the offspring is a shatim, it becomes the progenitor's apprentice until sent to a college. In all cases, the guild examines the result and enables the progenitor to advance to the next cabal.

**Progenitor's Abilities:** Qualified progenitors can perform subsequent Rituals of Calling and of Sacrifice without further Stamina losses; new books, omens, and altar offerings are



# Secrets of the Cabals

still required. At the referee's discretion, the total number of successful callings could be tied to the progenitors' Intellect scores; the total number of procreations could be tied to their Stamina scores. Multiple familiars are acceptable. Attention should be paid to potential rivalries among soul mates as demons are known to be jealous.

Basic immunities earned from demonic soul mates are permanent (rather than activated for just one encounter a day). Duplicated results are, however, ignored (no re-rolls). The progenitors' skin also grows leathery and endowed with the best of their soul mates' Armor Ratings, so long as their bonds last. The rating is natural (Agility bonuses are disregarded, but not additional magic).

The final ability of qualified progenitors is the healing and caring of demons. These beasts normally only heal when devouring souls, which is illegal in Caldwen. Guild members can trade their own life points to cure demonic wounds. This part of their craft is well paid as accidents aren't unheard of among working demons, even more so among those in the military. The process enables the healer to learn all about the serving demon, as if researched through books.

## Cabal of the Spirit

Secret and largely illegal, this stage accommodates qualified progenitors with at least [Master's degrees](#) in their principal philosophies. It is a fellowship of scholars seeking the secrets of True Names. There is no formal instruction related to their craft. Success is measured in the ability to affect *archfiends* without relying on pacts. Its members are called demonologists. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Neshuzu, Son of Zavriel](#), (aspiring demonologist—also see [Nazruu of the Vultures](#), page 64).

**Learning Process:** The true and tried method consists in acquiring books with the intent of uncovering the True Name of an *archfiend* contacted through a previous Ritual of Calling. Rather than identifying demons, aspiring demonologists now seek clues about the seven parts of a divine relic (set up by the referee). A quest is required to obtain each. The relic, once assembled, can reveal the *archfiend's* True Name, though it prevents the aspiring demonologist from sharing its secret in any manner conceivable, including with bonded demons and familiars.

Between quests, aspiring demonologists must research the Ritual of Scission, which will be needed soon after a precious True Name is uncovered. This ritual is as complex as a spell of the highest Potency available with a Master's degree. Research is also required for protection centered on the demonologist's altar. It is comparable to [Mystical Circles](#) of the fourth type, except it is intended to keep out unwanted visitors.

**Demonologists' Achievements:** Demonologists have little time at this point to achieve their final goals, as *archfiends* do not willingly allow mortals to know their innermost secrets. Possessing a demon's True Name enables one to ignore all its immunities, especially those preventing a mortal from being able to harm the *archfiend* at all.

Furthermore, the demon is unable to possess the indiscrete demonologist. For these reasons, *archfiends* will dispatch their demon

servants in increasing numbers and strengths to do away with what they see as an intolerable threat. Therefore, an aspiring demonologist must perform the Ritual of Scission as soon as possible.

This is always conducted in the same manner. It lasts 1 hour, after which an Intellect Check is rolled. If it fails, the rite continues for another hour (and so on). All soul mates, familiars, and offspring are summoned and tasked with preventing the ritual from being interrupted. The demonologist must succeed a Defense Check after sustaining damage to continue performing the ceremony. If the ritual ends prematurely, all bonds are forever severed, and the summoned are free to flee or to turn against the demonologist. Some offspring may elect to defend their progenitor, though wicked ones may take the side of the *archfiend* for their own sakes. If the ceremony runs its course, the demonologist must succeed a Stamina Check or die. If successful, this process opens one of three paths.

**1. Path of the Master:** The *archfiend* sustains a massive blow; all its enslaved victims are dismissed and scatter into the outer planes. As its True Name is still known, the demonologist may hunt down the *archfiend* and slay it. If so, the demonologist earns one of several new powers: roll 1d8—**1-2.** The *archfiend's* natural Armor Rating; **3-4.** Its natural claw attacks and hit rolls; **5-6.** Its ability to possess; **7-8.** Its ability to call other demons (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 217).

**2. Path of the Reformer:** The beast adopts both the faith and ethos of the demonologist. This is especially true if the demonologist isn't of a wicked nature. The *archfiend* receives a different True Name, in exchange for which it must endeavor to reform its own followers. Such an event is a first step for an *archfiend* to ascend as a demigod or as a minor deity with the sponsorship of a greater god. This fits the narrative that ultimate evil can be redeemed; it dovetails with the gestalt of Caldwen's divine pantheon and explains why the establishment tolerates it. The demonologist receives ample notoriety points to attain *Eternal Glory* as an epic hero (see CAL1 [In Stranger Skies](#), page 86). This achievement is enough to earn a divine favor (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 187), provided the demonologist has adopted a faith.

**3. Path of the Servant:** This goal is most appropriate to followers of the [Maghia](#). The demonologist becomes a prominent steward of the *archfiend*. While memory of the master's True Name is erased from mind and artifact, enough notoriety points are granted to attain *Eternal Glory* as an epic villain. News of such a feat will invariably reach the city of Arcanial. The demonologist, soul mates, and all known progeny must therefore go into hiding or live on an outer plane, as the magiocracy would declare them pariahs and perfidious criminals under Caldwen's laws.

## Cabal of Dracology

Dragons both fascinate and terrify. These ancient beasts attract insatiable curiosity from spellcasters wishing to unveil their secrets and own their powers. For some, there is the visceral desire to master such magnificent beings, to learn from them, or perhaps to protect them. The trouble



# Secrets of the Cabals

is that dragons are largely seen as evil monsters in Calidar's universe. Most are. Rumors of a war between dragons seem to imply evil ones killed their better kind, or perhaps merely drove them away. This field of study is a riven one, with as many quarrelsome cabals as colors of dragons. They all teach the same tools of the trade, but with different intents. As a business, dracologists dispense the care and knowledge of dragons, advising the military or the wiser mages, or ridding lands plagued by such creatures.

**Belledor & Phrydias:** This guild aims its sympathies at hypothetical benevolent dragons. It seeks to prove their existence, to facilitate their return to this world, and to banish or fell evil ones if they do not yield to the common good. The guild in Seahollow focuses on gold dragons and seeks to clarify false assumptions about them. Surrounded with mystery, this guild is more powerful than it appears. Information has filtered in from Lao-Kwei during the past century about such wondrous beings. The guild recently set up a legation on that faraway world. A third branch in Phrydias investigates new theories about metallic dragons other than golds. Exceedingly cautious about recruits, these cabals publicize neither their findings nor their members' identities. A number of Meryath spellcasters have joined this guild.

**Caldwen & Nordheim:** These dracologists abhor the arrogance and foolishness of slaying dragons. Regardless of ethos, they will protect them in any way they can. Their goal is to respect them, gain their trust, learn their secrets, and endeavor to cohabitate for the sake of peace. They keep quiet about their tacit willingness to serve dragons whom they see as the greater race. A main outfit in Meggidon concerns itself with black dragons. Another in faraway Nordhavn protects whites. Relatively obscure, other such cabals scattered throughout the Great Caldera focus on various other breeds.

**Ellyrion & Alfdain:** Ever the military types, Ellyrian dracologists dream of commanding dragons for the sake of power. They see them as invaluable airborne cavalry. All dragons must be subdued or slain, and their eggs seized so hatchlings may be raised to serve the empire. An establishment in Drakotiris concerns blue dragons. A rival outfit in Lathias specializes in green dragons. There is nothing secret about these cabals as both actively recruit spellcasters. Their demeanor is mostly martial. Primary strategic aims are to deny outer world powers access to Dread Lands' seitha deposits.

**Meryath & Osriel:** These cabals ostensibly support dragon-slaying expeditions to earn plunder, clues, spell components, precious new magic, and personal glory. The official narrative in Meryath is revenge for the death of Merion the Great. Its true goal is to acquire knowledge and money to bolster Meryath's war effort against the Draconic Knights. A major establishment in Meryathon focuses on red dragons. This guild is the best known on Calidar. Its policy is to shamelessly advertise/exaggerate its successes and to create popular heroes in order to attract new members. Guild fees

on captured hoards are hefty. "Anything goes" with this rough and tumble bunch. Another guild at Lorical in Osriel concerns merchant princes, profit, and the sale of spell components.

## Cabal of the Blood

Accommodating magic-users with [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Invocation](#) and [Divination](#), this stage teaches intuition and empathy with dragons. It requires at least four months to master. Members are called advocates. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Fazzika Whisperdark](#) (aspiring advocate, page 55).

**Learning Process:** Aspiring advocates must demonstrate interest in a specific dragon type. Along with studying the craft, the student must travel in search of information about the breed. This includes books, bones, scales, eggshells, sculptures, artifacts, and legends found in lairs, dungeons, and faraway places. Odds of uncovering relevant new lore are 2d4% (cumulative for each item). Only one attempt can be rolled for each. If valuable new lore has been found and the prerequisite four months of instruction have been satisfied, the aspiring advocate may attempt to pass the test.



**Passing the Test:** The Ritual of the Blood must be performed before experienced cabalists acting as witnesses. This divinatory ritual requires the aspiring advocate's blood to be deposited in a crucible. A simple question (at the referee's discretion) forms in the hopeful's mind about the chosen dragon. Drawing on personal intuition, the aspiring advocate must respond at once, usually with a yes or no answer. If the answer is incorrect, the blood in the crucible turns to ash. The guild duly records the information obtained in the process. The advocate must resume research for new lore; though chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent test receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If the answer is correct, the advocate permanently loses a Stamina increment while the blood vaporizes in a flash; any previous research bonuses are reset to zero, and the advocate may advance to the next cabal.

**Advocate Abilities:** As the result of the ceremony, a qualified advocate receives several abilities. The first is a significant bonus to Personality Checks when encountering the chosen breed. Related dragons and dracologists have a chance of sensing each other's presences within a 300' radius. Other breeds do not share this empathic link, and Personality bonuses become penalties. Qualified advocates can speak and write rudiments of their chosen dragons' languages (over and above normal limitations on the number of languages that can be learned, if any).

## Cabal of the Fierce

This stage accommodates qualified advocates with [Bachelor's degrees](#). Their goal is to master mystical dragon abilities. Members are called invocators.





# Secrets of the Cabals

**Learning Process:** The cabal teaches the Ritual of Invocation. Learning this ceremony takes four months and demands prerequisite [Thaumaturgy](#) experience with either invocation or divination. Sessions can be broken up into weekly segments to accommodate other activities.

Aside from studying the ritual, aspiring invocators continue their research for new lore, as described earlier. Each new revelation gives an opportunity to meditate on the mystical nature of dragons. The process relies on a crystal ball enabling its user's consciousness to reach that of a dragon, regardless of distance or planar location. The two become aware of each other's names and appearances. If the dragon isn't of the correct breed, the communion ends soon afterward, and lore research must begin anew. If the correct dragon is reached, the two also learn of each other's locations, ethos, and motivations. Meditation ends at this point. The aspiring invocator can continue experiencing more communions, or pass the test at any time thereafter. The number of communions determines the test succeeding.

Roll 1d% to determine the type of dragon contacted: **01-18.** White; **19-36.** Black; **37-54.** Green, **55-72.** Blue; **73-90.** Red; **91-99.** Gold\*; **00.** Unusual Dragon\*\*. (\*) A gold is reached or another metallic dragon, as needed. (\*\*) Unusual dragons include undead creatures, odd breeds such as shadow, mist, and others as appropriate to the chosen game system, or a dragon ruler such as Sayble from Draconia. If meditating from Lao-Kwei, substitute the dragons listed above with the following, in the same order: Winged, Underground, Coiling, Celestial, Horned, Spiritual, and Dragon King.

**Passing the Test:** If successful, the Ritual of Invocation grants one of several possible dragon powers. Odds of success equal 30% for communing with the correct dragon, plus 3% each for any of the other breeds (as described earlier). If the attempt fails, all odds are reset and meditation must resume anew. If it succeeds, the aspiring invocator sacrifices two more Stamina points in the process but earns a natural ability. Roll 1d12: **1-4.** Dragon Scale; **5-7.** Dragon Wings; **8-10.** Dragon Claws; **11-12.** Dragon Heart. After demonstration of the ability earned, the invocator may advance to the next cabal.

**Invoker Abilities:** Passing subsequent tests in order to earn other abilities is possible without further Stamina loss. Whenever any of the acquired abilities come into play, ghostly scales of the correct breed's color briefly shimmer on the owner's skin.

*Dragon Scale:* Qualified invocators always succeed Defense Checks vs. the breath attacks of their chosen breeds; they ignore non-magical attacks of the same type and receive a significant bonus against other types of dragon breaths. Natural Armor Rating also improves halfway between the ratings of the invocator and a large dragon of the chosen breed.

*Dragon Wings:* Once per day until dismissed, two immense spectral wings enable the owner to fly like a large dragon of the chosen breed. While flying, the invocator becomes incorporeal, though still visible (therefore immune to non-magical weapons and able to pass through non-magical solid objects). This ability can be dispelled.

*Dragon Claws:* Once per day for one encounter, the invocator can summon a pair of ghostly paws and perform two claw

attacks per combat action, up to 60' away. Hit rolls and damage correspond to a large dragon of the chosen breed. These paws are strong enough to lift 200Lbs (100Kg), though a Defense Check allows escaping their grip. This ability can be dispelled.

*Dragon Heart:* Once per day, the invocator may perform one breath attack. The size and shape of the affected area and the type of attack are those of the chosen breed, inflicting damage equal to the spellcaster's current life points.

## Cabal of the Wyrms

This stage accommodates qualified invocators with [Master's degrees](#) in their principal philosophies. It is a fellowship of scholars seeking to fulfill their guild's objectives to the highest degree. There is no formal instruction related to their craft. Success is measured in the ability to complete one of three paths. Members are called wyrm lords. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Tallas Yavdon the Younger](#) (aspiring wyrm lord, page 58).

**Learning Process:** Aspiring wyrm lords endeavor to satisfy their cabals' objectives. For this, they must commune with a huge dragon of the correct breed if that hasn't yet occurred, possibly alerting it of their intents. Meanwhile, they must also research the Ritual of Dedication. This ritual is a complex spell of the top Potency available with a Master's degree. It requires three components which disintegrate during the ceremony, including any body parts or magical items from the dragon and its two parents (scales, bones, broken claws, blood, etc.) Once done, the wyrm lord may perform the ritual.

**Wyrms' Achievements:** Aspiring wyrm lords have one of three options, depending on their cabals' objectives. The ritual is the same in all cases. It lasts 1 hour, after which an Intellect Check is rolled. If it fails, the ceremony continues for another hour (and so on). When the ritual ends, the wyrm lord is teleported to the dragon's location. A Stamina Check is then required. If the roll fails, the wyrm lord dies on the spot. If it succeeds, one of the paths listed below applies.

**1. Path of Ascendancy:** The dragon acknowledges the wyrm lord and leaves behind 1d4 eggs before departing to another realm. Hatchlings emerge, permanently bound to the wyrm lord. At the referee's discretion, they could be treated as familiars; their bonds can be transferred to another master (such as a warrior). They become free when their master perishes. Their parent will not interfere with the wyrm lord's affairs, and friendship is most unlikely. This path may be repeated, starting with brand new research and Rituals of Invocation, though it results in the loss of a Stamina increment rather than risking death.

**2. Path of the Soul:** The wyrm lord pledges all personal possessions, wealth, and known magic. The dragon may very well demand a quest to test the dracologist's character and resolve. If the wyrm lord succeeds and returns to meet the dragon, the pledge is accepted and the bond sealed. The wyrm lord becomes either a protector or a servant of the dragon. Combat damage to either of them is divided equally between the two (up to half the wyrm lord's life points), regardless of their respective locations. If one dies, so does the other. Failing to protect or to serve



# Secrets of the Cabals

(or any betrayal) will break the bond and result in the dragon's eternal hatred for the wyrm lord. This path may not be repeated.

**3. Path of the Slayer:** The dragon suffers a massive wound, bringing its life points on a par with the wyrm lord's. A fight to the death ensues, as expected by the guild. Aside from any treasure plundered, the surviving dracologist receives enough notoriety points to attain *Eternal Glory* as an epic hero (see CAL1 [In Stranger Skies](#), page 86). This path may be repeated along with its death-defying Stamina Check.

**Final Benefit:** After acquiring all the paths, qualified wyrm lords may use their natural invocator abilities of *the wings*, *the claws*, and *the heart* three times per day.

## Cabal of Elementalism

This field of expertise is perhaps the least understood. Like [Alchemy](#), it stems from two opposite [philosophies](#): [Abjuration](#) and [Conjuration](#). Alchemy demands the ability to handle all four elements up front and seeks to transform them. Elementalism endeavors to harness a single element from the mystical powers of nature, whether lifeless or sentient, bordering to some degree with demonology and dracology.

The position of elements on the diagram shown in CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#) (see page 7) can be altered. Each element interacts with the others in the prime universe, therefore, all elemental planes connect directly with each other, not just with two despite what a flat representation suggests. Elementalists understand this relation; the best of them eventually master all elements, going through the cabals four times over. These are known as Grand Elementalists. Multiple cabals exist in the Great Caldera allowing elementalists to pursue their careers.

**Cabals of Air Elementalists:** Alfdaín hosts a guild studying air elementals high in the mountains across from Tëodyl, largely an Elëan affair. A counterpart dwells in Caldwen, though it travels the skies. It usually stops for supplies in the winter above the town of Nazghial in the province of [Incubael](#), or in the summer, above Hyrkaniel in the province of [Abyzael](#). Its mid-season flight generally lingers above the Pentacle Mountains.

**Cabals of Earth Elementalists:** Miscellaneous foreign spellcasters created a guild in Araldûr, for the benefit of Hamarfold's Mining Academy. Its imposing underground facilities are dedicated to the study of earth elementals. Paid by the Temple of Khrâlia, they are required to work with dwarven engineers below ground as part of contractual obligations. Foothills above the town of [Labael](#), in the province of Balthezul, harbor Caldwen's guild.

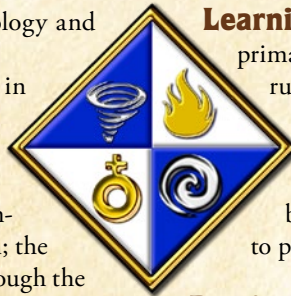
**Cabals of Fire Elementalists:** This well-known establishment stands in Ibbar, in Narwan's northeast corner. It counts a number of

efreeti and demi-djinni cabalists. Caldwen enjoys its own in [Gargarith](#), in the Dominion of Arcanial. It is connected with the temple of Urthaala-the-Unquenched (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 104), which financed its development and remains the guild's prevailing stakeholder.

**Cabals of Water Elementalists:** Last but not least, the water elemental branch is located below the sea, not far from Manukea, in the far south of Meryath. Former cabalists have founded a rival business in Caldwen, located at Samarial, in the Province of [Lamerith](#). Many of its elementalists found employment all along Mantra Bay's shores and the Hexlords Coast.

## Cabal of the Rudiments

Accommodating magic-users with [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Abjuration](#) and [Conjuration](#), this stage teaches how to acquire magical affinities with a chosen element. It requires at least four months to master, plus several adventures. Members are called rudimentalists. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Potheca of the Pestle](#) (aspiring water rudimentalist, page 57).



**Learning Process:** Aspiring rudimentalists must choose a primary element and travel on expeditions to acquire related rudimentals from the wild (see *Beasties in the Dark*, page 66). Live specimens must be studied in a guild laboratory and documented. Four months are also needed to learn the Ritual of Melding. If all conditions have been satisfied, the aspiring rudimentalist may attempt to pass the test.

**Passing the Test:** The Ritual of Melding blends the surviving specimens' essence with the aspiring rudimentalist's body. Odds of success are 2d4% per specimen (cumulative). If the roll fails, additional specimens must be acquired, and new research started (as described earlier); though chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent test receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If the roll succeeds, the aspiring rudimentalist permanently loses a Stamina increment but earns the desired elemental affinities; any previous research bonuses are reset to zero, and the rudimentalist may advance to the next cabal. Aspiring Grand Elementalists no longer sacrifice their Stamina with subsequent rituals.

**Rudimentalist Abilities:** A qualified rudimentalist receives several natural abilities, including: **1.** Basic communication with sapient beings of the chosen element (verbal or using written pictographs, over and above normal limits on the number of languages that can be learned); **2.** Dismiss creatures of the chosen element, like a temple prior would repel undead beings with comparable Life Force; **3.** Produce once a day for 1d6+6 combat actions a minor mephitic emanation related to the chosen element, such as smoke (fire-related), fog (water-related), dust (earth-related) or breathable air, expanding in all directions at 30' per combat action.



# Secrets of the Cabals

## Cabal of the Fundaments

This stage accommodates qualified rudimentalists with [Bachelor's degrees](#). It teaches cabalists the magic to channel the power of elementals. Members are called fundamentalists. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Crallas of Hamiz](#) (qualified earth fundamentalist, page 54).

**Learning Process:** The Ritual of Channeling requires at least four months of research after which the aspiring fundamentalist feels a nearly overwhelming thirst for elemental Life Force. The ritual must then be performed. Its effects last until enough life points have been consumed to match or exceed the aspiring fundamentalist's own, thus requiring multiple encounters.

**Passing the Test:** The aspiring fundamentalist needs to face one or more elementals of the chosen nature. Encounters can take place while adventuring or in a laboratory; elementals can be conjured with the appropriate spell. The goal is to lay hands upon the creatures as if to heal them. In a fortuitous encounter, a Personality Check is required; if it fails, encountered elementals become hostile to the aspiring fundamentalists. With conjured creatures, control ends immediately after laying on hands.

Ritual-empowered contact harms both subjects (no Defense Checks). The amount of damage depends on the elemental's size: M for a small creature, 2M for a medium-size creature, or 3M for a large one. This damage represents the number of life points consumed. In all cases, wounded elemental creatures either flee immediately or become belligerent. They may be dismissed, using rudimentalist abilities (as described earlier). Two Stamina increments are lost when the thirst has been fully quenched, imbuing the fundamentalist with related abilities. Aspiring Grand Elementalists no longer sacrifice their Stamina with subsequent channelings.

**Fundamentalist Abilities:** Once a day, qualified fundamentalists may blend with their chosen elements when within a 30' range (solid stone or sand, wind or a noticeable draft, liquid or frozen water, or open flames). The element may not be of magical origins or part of a living being. It should be large enough to match the fundamentalist's size (shape is irrelevant). Blending lasts until dismissed or dispelled, includes carried equipment, and enables seeing and hearing (but not speaking or casting spells). Movement is possible through the element, downwind at the speed of air flow, at the fundamentalist's normal movement rate within fire or water, or at half speed when in solid stone or sand. Mud, bricks, mortar, cement, lava, smoke, dust, fog, gases (other than air), liquids (other than water), and organic substances are not suitable for blending. The effect ends when the fundamentalist dismisses it or when another spellcaster dispels it.

Once a day, qualified fundamentalists may also alter up to 900 cu. ft. of their chosen elements (as defined in the previous paragraph) when present within a 30' range. Material can be shaped into a single object (for example: a bridge, a wall, or stairs 1'x10'x90', or an excavation 6'x5'x30'), as long as no part reaches more than 90' away from

the fundamentalist. Any surface decorations, specific sculpting, or intricate features require Intellect Checks. Sand, wind, fire, and liquid water can be made solid, while solid rock can be turned into sand. These effects can be combined and last until dispelled or dismissed.

## Cabal of the Elements

This stage accommodates qualified fundamentalists with [Master's degrees](#) in their principal philosophies. It is a fellowship of scholars seeking to tap into the power of the World Soul. There is no formal instruction related to their craft. Success is measured in the ability to control forces of nature. Members are called elementalists.

**Learning Process:** Aspiring elementalists must research the Primordial Ritual. Its complexity is comparable to any spell taught in the [Fourth Circle](#). Once done with research, aspiring elementalists must travel to the Dread Lands or any comparable environment on worlds other than Calidar to achieve their ambitions. The region they visit must correspond to the chosen element (mountain or desert for earth; an aquatic environment for water, the skies for air, or a volcano for fire).

**Elementalists' Achievements:** Once on site, aspiring elementalists perform their Primordial Rituals, provoking reactions from the Dread Lands. Aspiring elementalists must survive at least the first combat action in three subsequent encounters with elemental spirit lords *alone* (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), pages 202-203). Fleeing each time may be a wise tactic. These encounters must take place within a day of each other. The fourth one demands being swallowed whole. Since the spirit lord targets an isolated being, the first attack will be its bite; because its target is willing, success is automatic, and the offending intruder is swallowed whole. If still alive, the aspiring elementalist must succeed a Stamina Check or perish instantly. If the roll succeeds, the final ritual is complete—the spirit lord disintegrates while the elementalist earns its vitality and any appropriate career-advancing experience.

Qualified elementalists earn natural abilities from one of four spheres: Time, Thought, Energy, or Chaos (Grand Elementalists eventually master all four).

**1. Time:** The elementalist no longer ages naturally, is immune to magical aging, and receives a bonus to Defense Checks vs. necromantic magic. Thrice a day for one encounter, the flow of time can be doubled or halved for 4d6 creatures within a 90' radius (Defense Checks allowed). Once a day for 1d4+4 combat actions, the elementalist can stop the flow of time outside a 15' radius protective sphere.

**2. Thought:** The elementalist is immune to mind-affecting attacks and receives a bonus to Defense Checks vs. illusion magic. Three times per day for one encounter, all emotions can be altered empathically within a 90' radius. Victims must succeed a Defense Check each time they attempt to follow a course of action in conflict with their prevailing feelings. Altered emotions persist 1d4+1 combat actions outside the area of effect.

**3. Energy:** Receives a bonus to Defense Checks vs. invocation magic. Three times per day for 1d4+4 combat actions, light can





be fully controlled within a 150' radius; it can be dimmed, made brighter, displaced, eliminated in some areas or everywhere, etc. Once per day for one encounter, the elemental is immune to one form of energy (heat/cold, electrical, sonic, kinetic, or magic). Once per day for 1d4+4 combat actions, gravity can be altered (reversed, eliminated, or its direction changed) within a 30'x30' area.

**4. Chaos:** The elemental receives a bonus to Defense Checks vs. alteration magic and is immune to random magical effects, such as those of gremlins, enchanted decks of cards, etc. Three times per day, quantum probabilities can be altered, allowing any single dice score to be ignored and rerolled during play. The elemental is also immune to [mana sickness](#) (see page 98).

**Final Benefits:** Fundamentalist abilities can be used three times a day. Furthermore, a spirit lord of the 1<sup>st</sup> category can be summoned once per adventure, up to one of the 4<sup>th</sup> category for an accomplished Grand Elementalist. These forces of nature remain entirely under the elemental's mental control so long as concentration is unbroken and they stay within 90'.



## Cabal of Necromancy

Seen with suspicion and fear in most places, this field of expertise prevails over all other cabals in [Nygardae](#). In truth there are two rival cabals: a benevolent one practicing *white necromancy* and another, malevolent, described as *black necromancy*. The former relies on their craft ultimately to help and protect the dead, whether rightfully

deceased or undead, so they may find everlasting peace. Located outside the small town of Pheneoth, the *White Cabal* occupies a great tower of bone-colored marble on Nygardae's northern shores; its activities are overt and legally accepted. The *Black Cabal* seeks to exploit the world of the dead for the benefit of the living. It rejects demonic hegemony over the departed, and for this reason, it isn't always on good terms with the [Maghia](#). Unscrupulous, covert, and against the law, it has had over time different guild houses; the present one hides near the Camorax River in nearby [Meggidon](#), beneath the town of [Cumphaal](#). Though their objectives differ, the two cabals feature identical structures.

It should be noted that magic to speak to the dead or to bring them back to life is inexistent or exceedingly rare in Calidar's universe. Furthermore, Nygardae is the only province that openly permits the presence of undead. Convicted criminals may be condemned to undeath for a specified duration lasting years or for perpetuity, as zombies or ghouls, after which they are put to rest. The worst punishment is to linger as a sentient being forever bound to serve. Laws require a rune be burned into the convicts' skin for identification; the rune prevents the undead from harming the living. The only permissible existence of mummies, vampires, and greater undead in Caldwen concerns citizens in good standing who became undead. They must register as such and, unless they are part of the *White Cabal*, remain confined to their domiciles or to approved receptacles when travelling (sarcophagi, coffins, or other identifiable containers). Other undead forms, including all incorporeal manifestations, are banned outside college laboratories and personal residences; they must be put to rest before vacating these premises. Knowingly allowing any course of action enabling the undead to threaten the living is unlawful.



# Secrets of the Cabals

## Cabal of the Passing

Accommodating magic-users with [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Necromancy](#) and [Divination](#), this stage teaches how to strengthen one's personal affinity with the dead. It requires at least four months to master, plus several adventures. Members are called necrologists; they also are professional scribes monitoring deaths in their neighborhoods and composing obituaries.

**Learning Process:** Aspiring necrologists spend sixteen weekly sessions to develop the otherworldly intuition required for a spirit board, which is part of the Ritual of Inquiry. Forays are also required into places where rogue undead may roam. Cabalists must collect remains from undead they had a hand in putting to rest: **1.** four skeleton skulls; **2.** a trio of zombie hearts; **3.** a pair of ghouls' tongues; **4.** a wight's liver. All ten disembodied parts must be preserved in tar-filled urns and brought back to the cabal. If all conditions have been satisfied, aspiring necrologists may attempt to pass the test.

**Passing the Test:** The Ritual of Inquiry enables aspiring necrologists to wield their spirit boards to question the Ætherian Scrolls (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 207). Odds of success are 2d4% per set of 10 disembodied parts (cumulative). If the roll fails, additional sets of remains must be acquired, and new ritual studies undertaken (as described earlier); though chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent test receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If their rolls succeed, cabalists permanently lose a Stamina increment but acquire the macabre intuition needed to reveal the names, faiths, and times of death of the remains' late owners; any previous research bonuses are reset to zero, and the necrologists may advance to the next cabal.

**Necrologist Abilities:** Qualified necrologists receive several innate abilities, including: **1.** Speaking the common language of the Netherworld, over and above normal language limitations; **2.** Requiring all undead succeed a Defense Check before touching or attacking the cabalist in any way; **3.** Gaining a Defense Check with a significant bonus against undead magical attacks (diseases, energy drain, aging, etc.) that may not otherwise allow one; **4.** Repelling undead as clerics do (based on the chosen game system).

## Cabal of the Haunting

Accommodating qualified necrologists with [Bachelor's](#) degrees, this stage teaches how to handle the undead and endeavors to clarify the mechanics engendering their affliction. It requires at least four months to master, plus several adventures. Members are called necronomists. **Prominent Cabalists:** [Honorio Morbide](#) (qualified necronomist in the *White Cabal*, page 55), and [Flumoxa of Zoraphet](#) (qualified necronomist in the *Black Cabal*, page 55).

**Learning Process:** Sixteen weekly sessions are required to master the Ritual of Rousing, which strengthens the aspiring necronomists' affinities with the Netherworld (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 207). Between their study sessions, cabalists must collect remains from undead they had a hand in putting to rest: **1.** the shadowy effluvium of four wraiths; **2.** the hearts from a trio of mummies; **3.** ectoplasm from a pair of spectres; **4.** a vampire's ashes. All remains must be preserved in alchemically-treated urns and brought back to the cabal. If all conditions have been satisfied, aspiring cabalists may attempt to pass the test.

**Passing the Test:** The Ritual of Rousing enables aspiring necronomists to use their spirit boards and recall the souls of those whose remains they brought back. Odds of success are 2d4% per set of remains (cumulative). If the roll fails, additional sets of remains must be acquired, and new ritual studies undertaken (as described earlier); though chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent test receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If their rolls succeed, cabalists permanently lose two Stamina increments but recall the undead spirits; any previous research bonuses are reset to zero. Wraiths and specters return in their former incorporeal forms. The spirits of mummies and vampires require bone and flesh exhumed from recent graves for them to inhabit.

In the *White Cabal*, these spirits become bound to destroying rogue undead, and they depart at once to hunt them down. After eliminating enough rogue undead to exceed ten times their own Life Forces, they disintegrate and find eternal rest. Until then, if defeated, they keep rising to fulfill their quests. These undead bear the *White Cabal's* symbol and aren't legally considered rogue.

In the *Black Cabal*, recalled spirits serve their necronomist masters until destroyed or dismissed. The combined Life Forces of these undead may not exceed twice the cabalists' own. These undead bear the *Black Cabal's* symbol and are considered rogue monsters.

**Necronomist Abilities:** Qualified cabalists can repair damaged or wounded undead beings, and determine which kind of undead inflicted lethal wounds upon a corpse. They can also perform Rituals of Inquiry and Rousing without further Stamina losses; new remains are still required. Potential disputes are likely among sentient undead as they are quarrelsome and vengeful.

Qualified necronomists may sense the presence of the undead and their types (but not their actual locations) within a range of 90'. This perception is similar to an ability to detect secret passages—automatic detection on a roll of 1 on a d6, performed by the referee. Voluntary detection can increase the score to 1-2 on a d6, but requires 10mn of concentration and betrays the cabalists' presence to all undead within range. Detected undead cannot surprise necronomists and their associated parties.

*White Cabalists* can reanimate, once per adventure, a recently departed creature whose Life Force is equal to or less than the necronomists'. The spirit of the deceased remains in its original body; it bears a deathly pallor as it is most sincerely undead. All previous abilities and career advancement are retained, although the reanimated must conform to the tenets and wishes of the *White Cabal*. The condition is permanent



# Secrets of the Cabals

and, while the reanimated is subject to being repelled as any undead of equivalent Life Force, it is immune to poison and mind-affecting attacks.

*Black Cabalists* can temporarily control undead that would otherwise have been destroyed as a result of being repelled (see [Necrologist Abilities](#), earlier). The combined Life Force of undead servants cannot exceed twice that of their controlling cabalists, including those recalled during a Ritual of Rousing. Verbal commands can be issued. Control is forcibly negated if dispelled, or if another party repels the affected undead. Servants are destroyed when their controlling necromancers dismiss them.

## Cabal of the Ascending

This stage accommodates qualified necromancers with [Master's degrees](#) in their principal philosophies. It is a fellowship of scholars seeking to reach a state of existence as undead beings of the higher order. There is no formal instruction related to their craft. Success is measured in the ability to extend one's dominion to the Netherworld. Qualified cabalists are called greater necromancers.

**Learning Process:** Cabalists must research the Ritual of the Crown. Its complexity is comparable to any spell taught in the [Fourth Circle](#). During research or after it is completed, aspiring cabalists must gather necessary components: a skull, a heart, a tongue, a liver, and a spirit. Components must come from separate undead beings the cabalists had a hand in putting to rest, each with a Life Force equal or superior to the aspiring necromancers'. The Ritual of Rousing will recall without error the spirit of the defeated undead, which can be trapped inside a gem worth at least 1,000 gold.

**Necromancers' Achievements:** Once the components are gathered, the Ritual of the Crown must be performed. Its odds of success amount to 2d4% per component (cumulative). If the roll fails, all components disintegrate; additional sets of remains must be acquired, and new ritual studies undertaken (as described earlier). Though a later ritual's chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent attempt receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If their rituals worked, cabalists must succeed a Stamina Check or perish instantly. If the necromancers survive, components disintegrate, except for the gems. The necromancers become spellcasting undead, known as lich lords, whose essence remains trapped in their gems. *White Necromancers* look like reanimated undead, while their darker rivals appear as skinbound, skeletal monsters.

All original character abilities are retained, plus immunities to non-magical weapons, poison, mind-affecting attacks, necromantic magic, and spells taught below [Third Circle](#). Their natural Armor Ratings become 50%. Greater necromancers are, however, vulnerable to undead repelling. Referees are encouraged to adapt/modify the above to better fit their chosen game systems.

**White Necromancers:** Their touch inflicts Hi damage and requires rogue undead roll a Defense Check. If their rolls fail, those with Life Force ratings less than a mummy's disintegrate; the others are forevermore bound to the tenets and wishes of the *White Cabal*. After slaying a demon or a *Black Cabal* rival, greater necromancers can bestow deliverance upon undead under the fallen foe's control. The delivered shed their undead afflictions, atone for past evil deeds, and rejoin the World Soul cycle. Greater necromancers can also summon all beings they'd reanimated during their existence to act as the *White Cabal's* champions.

**Greater Black Necromancers:** Essentially, this cabal's necromancers are the sorts of powerful undead monsters described in the chosen game system. If identified in any setting of Calidar's universe, they would be hunted down. Their role is to set up a dominion in the Netherworld and rule their own undead. There is no longer any limit to the actual number of undead that could fall under their control (see necromancer repelling ability, earlier). They can communicate mentally with undead commanders controlling their armies.

## Cabal of Skymastery

Enchanters able to work on skyships exist throughout Calidar's universe. Their talents and personal styles vary a great deal from one culture to another. This has led sorcerers to form a cabal whose objectives are to establish reliable techniques and ways to ascertain skills pertaining to skyship magic. The Great Caldera is a good place for such a cabal to be established, as the local realms are relatively accommodating. The town of Maracandal in west-central [Anzael](#) was chosen for the main guild house. It is a particularity of main-world Calidar shipbuilders to combine Munaani, Alorean, and Kragdûras methods when possible. This prompted the cabal to establish several related branches.

The one at Aërin, in Alfdáin, specializes in home-grown elven designs, under patronage of the Temple of Sphiel (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 35). Another at Manzibar, in Narwan, focuses on airborne *sambug* and *baghlah* dhows, *shabbak* galleys, and small feluccas, as well as flying carpets. The outfit in Arthenion, in southern Ellyrion, specializes in Nicarean-style warships. The empire does not trust Caldwen sorcerers, so cabalists there are mostly natives or from Meryath (Caldwens operate under false identities). The last branch stands at Hûlmar in Araldûr, under the auspices of the Temple of Ghedrun Evercraft (see CC1, page 50). It is more experienced with dwarven engineering. Over time, information from these branches filters back to the Maracandal headquarters.





# Secrets of the Cabals

## Portmasters' Cabal

Accommodating magic-users with [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Enchantment](#) and [Invocation](#), this stage teaches extrasensory inspection and appraisal applied to port and skyship operation. Membership requires Law (aerial) and Accounting (basic) as prerequisite skills. Four months to master the Ritual of Arithmancy and several adventures are needed to become a qualified portmaster. **Notorious Cabalist:** [Lord Yamakura Hayate](#) (qualified portmaster, see page 59).

**Learning Process:** Aspiring portmasters must depart on at least three shipborne adventures. They must be part of the crew, working as officers, and investigate at least three skyship wrecks heretofore unrecorded. They must return to the cabal with up to six different items belonging to these wrecks (no more than two from each), possibly including: a coin from the wreck's treasure, its bell, its anchor, its compass, its captain's log, and/or a bone from a crew member (preferably the commander's). Studying the cabal's ritual takes sixteen weekly sessions, which may be completed between investigations and offshore adventuring. If all conditions have been satisfied, aspiring portmasters may attempt to pass the test.

**Passing the Test:** The Ritual of Arithmancy enables cabalists to invoke a fraction of the original crews' experience from the recovered skyships' artifacts. Odds of success are 1d6% for each of the items (cumulative). If their rolls fail, the learning process must be undertaken anew (as described earlier) and other artifacts acquired; though chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent test receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If their rolls succeed, cabalists permanently lose a Stamina increment but acquire a mystical understanding of skyship operations and unveil details of the wrecks' tragic ends. Any previous research bonuses are reset to zero, and the portmasters may advance to the next cabal.

**Portmaster Abilities:** Qualified portmasters receive several innate abilities, including: **1.** Assessing accurately the general contents, volume, weight, and value of a skyship's freight, as well as the correct port fees to be collected; **2.** Determining whether a skyship is airworthy, and which part(s) need repair or replacement (including enchantments); **3.** Knowledge of skyship lore: succeeding an Intellect Check about a specific skyship may yield a rumor, an old airman's legend, or a clue about it or its crew (one roll per vessel); **4.** Sensing whether a crew is up to no good. The latter ability is akin to finding secret passages—inadvertent detection on a roll of 1 on a d6, performed by the referee; deliberate scrutiny increases this score to 1-2 on a d6, but alerts the crew that the visiting portmaster may be on to them.

## Cabal of the Spellbinders

Accommodating portmasters with [Bachelor's degrees](#), this stage teaches how to bind invocative magic to skyships to create

special enchantments. Membership requires Engineering (aerial) as a prerequisite skill. Four months to master the Ritual of Empowering and several adventures are needed to qualify as a spellbinder. **Prominent Cabalist:** [Phlux-Caladyne Anachronius the Cacophrene](#) (qualified spellbinder, page 56)

**Learning Process:** Aspiring spellbinders must depart on at least three more shipborne adventures, as officers or commanders. While away, they must sail through up to three manifestations of natural power among the following: **1.** *Santermo Fire* (electric), **2.** Atmospheric Hurricane (kinetic), **3.** Great Vault Turbulence (gravitational), **4.** Planar Warp (magic), **5.** Phlogiston Storm (fire), **6.** Any other life-threatening effects at the referee's discretion. These experiences prepare the spellbinders' minds for their cabal's ritual. Studying this ritual takes sixteen weekly sessions, which may be completed between offshore adventures. If all conditions have been satisfied, aspiring cabalists may attempt to pass the test.

Calidar's *Santermo Fire* is a green aura manifesting itself on skyships, under certain atmospheric conditions; it provokes small bolts of energy to form and shoot randomly on exposed decks and between masts. A phlogiston storm is a conflagration of alchemic nature that may occur at high altitude or in the Great Vault. All events described above present dangers to skyships and their crews.

**Passing the Test:** The Ritual of Empowering enables aspiring spellbinders to invoke the nature of their experiences and bestow them in the form of powerful enchantments on a skyship. Odds of success are 1d6% for each of the experienced manifestations (cumulative). If their rolls fail, the learning process must be undertaken anew (as described earlier), and other manifestations must be experienced; though chances of success are reset to zero, each subsequent test receives a cumulative +10% bonus. If their rolls succeed, cabalists permanently lose two Stamina increments but enchant a skyship's hull with an effect of their choice (preferably related to past experience); this creates a permanent bond between the vessels and the cabalists (see *Abilities*, next). Any previous research bonuses are reset to zero, and the spellbinders may advance to the next cabal. This in no way replaces the ability to perform conventional enchantments, as defined in the chosen game system.

**Spellbinder Abilities:** Qualified spellbinders can repeat Rituals of Arithmancy and Empowering without further Stamina losses. Once per day for a few minutes, the empowerment's bond enables its originator to sense the conditions of all vessels they empowered—in what direction and how far away they are (+/-10 miles), what outer plane they may have sailed to, and how much damage they may have sustained. Once per day and for up to 10mn when aboard a connected vessel, they may visualize all rooms therein. Once per day, they can repair one enchantment on a part of a damaged skyship (such as a magical sail, the steering system, a magical weapon, or a 900sqft. hull section) provided the crew replaces the material parts;





such repair demands 1d4 hours of uninterrupted work. A qualified spellbinder has the roguish ability to hide in shadows on any skyship.

## Cabal of the Skywrights

This stage accommodates qualified spellbinders with [Master's degrees](#) in their principal philosophies. It is a fellowship of scholars seeking to awake the gift of thought in magic they invoked. There is no formal instruction related to their craft. Success is measured in the ability to turn skyships into living, sentient beings. Qualified cabalists are called skywrights.

**Learning Process:** Cabalists must research the Ritual of Awakening. Its complexity is comparable to any spell taught in the [Fourth Circle](#). During research or after it is completed, aspiring skywrights must first secure sources of raw mana (see *Blood of the World Soul*, page 94). These may be accessed with permission from their owners, or less amicably by any other method. Mana strength must be no less than befitting an [archmage](#) (thus, located in the Dominion of Arcanial). Permissions could be granted in repayment for worthy services requiring at least one other offshore adventure. Cabalists must enter the mana conduits and meditate on the nature of life for seven full days. Mana sickness is almost unavoidable in those conditions, though desirable in this case; referees will adjust sickness damage to fit the chosen game (see *Mana Sickness*, page 98).

**Skywrights' Achievements:** While at death's door or close to it, aspiring skywrights must perform their Rituals of Awakening and make their Stamina Checks. Failure results in death, otherwise the ordeals cure the sickness and any disfigurements that may have occurred. Successful rituals bestow the gift of thought to skyships of the cabalists' choice.

Qualified skywrights possess an empathic link with their "sentient" skyships; the link is permanent and isn't limited to a range or single plane of existence. A vessel can only accommodate one skywright's connection although skywrights can bond with more than one ship. They (and carried equipment) can blend within their skyships' structure, move at 30' per combat action, and reappear anywhere else on their vessel. While embedded within their vessels, skywrights can see and hear normally from whatever location they've reached. Half the damage inflicted to the skywrights while they are aboard their skyships is transferred to their vessels' hulls and decks. Skyships roll Defense Checks as their skywrights or as the material with which they were constructed, whichever is best. Three times per day, skywrights can issue mental commands for their vessels to perform one attack against all foes aboard, inflicting 1Hi damage per strike; these attacks can consist in a yardarm suddenly swinging or falling from above, a door slamming violently, a deck plank angrily swatting about, a belaying pin springing loose, and so on. These attacks always surprise their targets. Finally, skywrights can perform other Rituals of Awakening without the Stamina Check.



# Blood of the World Soul

Mana is what attracted ancient Gandarians to this region of Calidar, as early as [227 CE](#) (see *History of Caldwen*, page 24). In truth, adventurous demons had already visited the place, since raw World Soul emanations tend to attract outer planar creatures. Knowledge filtered back to Gandarians who served demons on Munaan, and resurfaced among the *Maghia* when the first settlements were established on Calidar in 885 CE. The presence of rogue demons also explains why settlers from other realms had shunned this region.

A number of local creatures such as [Arafor](#) of the Drowned interacted with *Maghian* adepts early on, leading them to better understand the nature of mana and the location of vents. They learned that a weakness in the World Soul caused a breach to form deep below ground, through which emanations escape to the surface. Some believe that successive Ghülean invasions in Calidar's history inflicted this wound, one that may take eons to heal. Like veins in a body, other conduits possibly exist elsewhere on Calidar, perhaps opening in the Dread Lands, but none that Caldwen's mages know about have been found elsewhere in the Great Caldera. They installed enchanted tabernacles to seal known vents out of concern that Calidar's World Soul was essentially bleeding. Rather than permit these sources of raw magic to be wasted, mages endeavored to protect them so they could be made to serve useful purposes.

Silent, invisible, and odorless, emanations can only be detected with magic. Their wondrous billows act as a gas, accumulating in sealed caverns or filtering through cracks. When concentrated enough, raw mana condenses into glowing, opalescent fluid well below ground, dripping, flowing, or cascading upward in sepulchral silence. Deeper yet and upside down on a cavern's ceiling lies a lake fed by the World Soul's rupture, surrounded by a beach of silvery sand. As divinely serene and gorgeous as it is lethal to the living, rarely does it forgive those who ever behold it, nor does it spare their will to pull away. They die soon afterward. This is one more reason mages endeavored to stopper the toxic mana, not to mention outer planar horrors, which at times crawl out and terrify locals.

Without doubt, a desire remains to remove rogue demons hiding below ground as well as stray outer-planar beasts—little more than parasites in the magiocracy's point of view, leeches feeding upon what wizards see as the noblest of essences. It is bad enough that some should devour mana to engender offspring but, even worse and most sacrilegious, almost all of them leave behind dung so foul it corrupts the flow. Some conduits, soiled beyond all hope, have been ordered backfilled and forever sealed.

Duty was granted to the *Order of the Shebbai* (see page 52) to protect and maintain mana vents, from magical tabernacles to the bowels of earth where the wicked venture no further. The knights expel or slay trespassers, sell captured demons at [seasonal fairs](#), and keep the conduits clean for the mana to flow in its purest form. Theirs is a singular trade requiring unique powers meant to serve the wizards whose estates house the tabernacles. The mana they are given to control is both a source of magical might and a symbol of lordship.

## Et Mana Fuit

By design, each of Caldwen's nine regions counts exactly 12 wizard estates. The best of mana vents were preserved and entrusted to the magiocracy's aristocracy, while countless others were backfilled, sealed, hidden, and all records of their locations locked away. Like Kumoshiman gardeners carefully pruning the branches of a precious bonsai tree, the *Order of the Shebbai* removed unwanted conduits so that mana would flow more strongly through the remaining 108 tabernacles.

It also was deliberate that these devices should remain in the hands of Caldwen's nobility in order to deny the *Maghia* access to mana with which they could threaten the established regime. Most land owners originally were ethnic Nicareans, sworn enemies of the sect. By law, only those who were qualified sorcerers could retain their domains. The others

were expropriated for the benefit of Nav-Gandarian spellcasters, especially those known to oppose the *Maghia*.

Over time, families of Nicarean origins proven to be loyalists of the empire (or those heavily suspected of such) went missing inexplicably; no one dared ask why. Most were content with unanswered questions, and the few who might have known the truth were first in line to earn an estate and a title. Whispered rumors allude to former aristocrats and their entire families locked up deep beneath [Carcer Island](#).

One titled wizard per province is listed in this book (see *A Cast of Many*, page 54), the ones holding their provinces' seats in the [Upper Chamber of the Magi](#). For most of them, which estate they occupy is left for referees to determine. The map on page 96-97 shows the locations of all 108 properties. They are numbered 1-12, according to their perceived desirability, based on a combination of location, facilities sizes, and strength of mana supplied, 12 being the most desirable.

There are five broad categories of estates: 1. Free Standing, 2. Subterranean, 3. Submarine, 4. Skyborne, and 5. Vanishing. All bear various enchantments originating from their mana sources. Whether on, above, or below ground, they are allocated private lands about 30 miles across. In addition to their aquatic environment, marine estates hold rights to the surface, collecting tolls from passing vessels; this process often involves sea dwellers working for the estate. Vanishing estates feature abodes and their tabernacles becoming immaterial, invisible, or subject to a large-scale illusion on command; their mana flows remain under control in both cases.

Servants often provide needed domestic services, while tenant farmers work surrounding lands (if any are available for hunting, fishing, or farming). Trespassers are unwelcome on private estates, and are likely to face guards under a *Shebbai* knight's command. These properties are generally not shown on local maps, though it is customary to warn outsiders not to stray far from towns, villages, and beaten paths. Natives know where not to go. Recognizable by their uniforms, household retainers travel on private skyships (or submersibles) to pick up supplies from nearby communities. Other residents use their own magic to reach their destinations.





## Mana Power

The enchanted tabernacle at the top of a vent regulates the flow of mana and transforms it so spellcasters can use it safely. This device comes in any shape conceivable, which visitors may not necessarily recognize for what it is. Some wizards prefer a statue of themselves, others what looks like a wondrous fountain, an altar, a [mystical circle](#) engraved in the floor, a fancy mosaic, an open flame, etc. The tabernacle's core enchantment requires [Shebbai magic](#) (see page 98). It cannot be dispelled due to the effect of the mana, and its base (if it has one) blends in with the floor so it cannot be removed easily. It is usually located below ground, to cap the mana conduit. Levitating towers, however, possess two tabernacles, where a hidden lower one transmits its mana flow to the one above.

This device can be [damaged](#) (see page 98) with blunt weapons; it sustains half damage or no damage at all from most other attack types. A provincial tabernacle is strong enough to sustain failed Defense Checks against four average bolts of lightning cast at [Bachelor's](#) strength (including its ability to take only half damage from magical attacks). A Grand Wizard's tabernacle can sustain twice as much. Wizards often protect their tabernacles with an invisible shield requiring its own command word to enter. Illusions and a collection of other magical wards are often employed as well.

## Tabernacle Settings

Four settings determine how these devices function: all of them require command words. The new owner and the assigned *Shebbai* knight perform a housewarming ritual to replace these command words immediately after moving in.

**Sealed:** This setting demands a command word spoken by the head of the household, the assigned *Shebbai*, and a college legate. It causes the tabernacle to seal the vent, blocking all emanations. It is only used if the mana was corrupted. Shutting off mana in this way, however, may result in catastrophic consequences, as some estates' enchantments draw their magic from the tabernacles (flying towers would come crashing down, submarine properties would be flooded, etc.)

**Dormant:** This setting preserves all enchantments within the estates, but forbids any other uses. The head of the household or assigned knight can switch the tabernacle to its *Dormant* status. Flying abodes, marine dwellings, magical barriers, *spellports*, guardian constructs, and most other things enchanted in the estates can still draw upon this source of magic. It is used for properties that have been temporarily vacated, or when residents are moving in or out.

**Awake:** The head of the household alone can switch the tabernacle to its *Awake* status. Aside from supporting the estate's enchantments, this setting enables the current owner to stand next to it and draw

magic from the tabernacle. The head of the household can cast any known spells without having to memorize them beforehand and beyond normal spellcasting limitations, although this comes with a risk (see [Mana Sickness](#) later in this chapter). Range, area/individuals affected, and duration are all doubled outright. The owner enjoys a significant bonus to Defense Checks, while targets of mana-enhanced spells sustain a substantial penalty to theirs. This setting also enables the head of the household to observe any location within the premises, as if using a crystal ball, and issue mental commands to retainers, household demons, and constructs up to the limits of the estate.

**Howling:** Either the head of the household or the assigned *Shebbai* knight may switch the *Howling* status on or off. It is only done during a mana surge. Mana does not always flow evenly. Though uncommon, surges happen as unpredictably as thunderstorms. Contingent enchantments cause a *Dormant* or *Awaken* tabernacle to produce a haunting howl rising to a crescendo of banshee-like shrieks when a surge builds up. The event could result in the tabernacle's destruction, if not an explosion engulfing the entire abode. Collateral damage has never been observed beyond a 15-mile radius. The tabernacle should be set to its *Howling* mode after the building is evacuated so surging mana can be released safely (see *Mana Sickness*, page 98). Until reassigned by the order, the estate's *Shebbai* knight remains on site to protect vacated premises from intruders or to take action during a surge.

## Mana Enchantments

Drawing on mana to perform enchantments eases the process of creating magical objects, within limits. Any mana-imbued enchantment is confined to the limits of the estate where the item received its dweomer; effects are permanently dispelled the moment this item is taken past its estate's border (or if the mana conduit is sealed).

All mana enchantments require knowledge of spells related to the intended effects. When in doubt, the referee decides what spell Potency is appropriate. As a rule of thumb, creating a sentient or semi-sentient construct demands spells of the *Fourth Circle*; one that acts solely according to a set of instructions relates to the *Third Circle*; one responding only to the wizard's mental commands merely requires a *Second Circle* enchantment.

The number of enchanted items and the scale of their effects are also limited. Provincial estates possess 15 "enchantment points" each (EPs for short), plus the ratings listed on the map (1-12 bonus EPs). These estates therefore enjoy ratings from 16 to 27. Grand Wizard estates in the Dominion of Arcanial receive twice as many (therefore 32-54 EPs). The table that follows shows how EPs can be spent. Depending on its extent, demonic drain or corruption can fully negate mana output if left unchecked (see [Despoiled Conduits](#), later in this section).

This in no way invalidates traditional enchantments and can be used in conjunction with substances like [levitium](#), especially as regards levitating towers. Mechanics suggested herein are











Maglocracy of Caldwen

meant as guidelines more than hard rules. The head of the household can freely dismiss any mana-imbued effect rated less than “grand” on the following table; the latter require the assigned knight to concur. Mana does not differentiate between secular and clerical magic (thus, wizard-priors may rely on their whole range of spells to create effects). Creating any single mana-powered effect takes an hour per circle.

### Mana Enchantment Costs

Scale & Potency	1st Circle Effects	2nd Circle Effects	3rd Circle Effects	4th Circle Effects
Small	2	3	4	5
Medium	3	5	8	10
Large	4	7	12	—
Grand	5	9	—	—

**Small:** Any handheld object.

**Medium:** Something the size of a door or a large piece of furniture.

**Large:** A sizeable statue, a stairwell, a room (generally something considered part of the structure.)

**Grand:** The whole building or the entire estate’s surface.

**Allocating EPs:** The *Mana Enchantment Table* shows the cost in EPs for each object receiving a mana-imbued dweomer. Costs reflect the general Potency of spells used and the target’s scale. For example, assuming an estate is rated 21 EPs, its mana supply could support a *Second Circle* effect applied to the entire property (9 EPs) plus two gates enchanted with a *Second Circle* effect (10 EPs), and one handheld object possessing a *First Circle* effect (2 EPs).

Additional powers included within the same item require half their normal EP cost (rounded up). For example, a large, programmable construct (12 EPs) that can shoot balls of fire (3 EPs) would cost 15 EPs. For the sake of game balance, effects that inflict large amounts of damage should be limited (usage once a day or three times a day, at the referee’s discretion).

Vanishing estates rely on Grand *Second Circle* enchantments (becoming invisible, featuring a large scale illusion, or becoming incorporeal, a derivative of certain monsters’ gaseous forms), which cost 9 EPs, unless the enchantment was performed using conventional methods. Marine dwellings are usually built to be waterproof, but the entire estate could receive an ability to breathe underwater (9 EPs). Some estates in Nygardae are enchanted in such a way that any creature dying on the premises becomes a skeleton or a zombie under the head of the household’s power, and so on. It is considered proper etiquette to leave behind any enchantments of a Large or Grand scale when vacating an estate. The next resident then has the option of replacing any unwanted effects.

**Despoiled Conduits:** Whether rogue demons drain mana for their own pleasure or litter it with corrupting dung, slime, rotting cadavers, ectoplasm, and whatever other waste imaginable, the result is the same—it reduces the flow to zero if left unchecked. The stream can weaken at the rate of –1 EP per week for a single wretch or –3 EPs for a rascal; the loss rate increases for each additional creature involved. At the referees’ discretion, the rate can be higher for other outer planar monsters. The culprits need to be removed, and their accumulated waste cleansed (see *Conduit Purification*, page 99).



# Blood of the World Soul

**Damaged Tabernacles:** The drop in EPs available to the estate is proportionate to the damage inflicted (see *Mending Tabernacles*, page 99). If it sustains more than 50% damage, the tabernacle goes into *Howling* mode. If the device is destroyed, raw mana immediately fills the entire building. As EPs are lost, the cheapest mana-imbued enchantments are lost first.

## Mana Sickness

Raw mana is poisonous to mortal creatures. It is food to demons, and soothing to both them and the undead. Exposure lasting longer than a day bears a 30% chance of causing mana sickness, plus 10% for each day thereafter. Checks are made at the end of each day until exposure ends. These odds are reset if no further exposure takes place during the following month. Dwarves and most mage-knights enjoy lower odds of contracting the illness: 20% after the first day plus 5% for each subsequent day. Paladin-type characters are typically immune (as appropriate to the chosen game system).

The sickness itself inflicts 1M desiccating damage per day and prevents any other healing, magical or otherwise; each day of illness requires a Stamina Check; each failure results in disfigurement, raspy voice, wheezing, an increasingly skinbound appearance permanently reducing one's Personality score by 1 increment (or -5%). By the time this ability score drops to its minimum or below it, the victim resembles a mummy. If the sickness is ever cured, half of all lost Personality (rounded up) is regained at the rate of one increment per month.

Mana sickness is not contagious. Though normal healing spells cannot cure this illness, a *Shebbai* knight may be able to treat it, a process requiring "*laying on hands*" (see page 99). Only one daily attempt can be performed on a diseased subject. This action cures some of the harm (1M damage) and requires a Wisdom Check. If it yields a "critical hit," the illness is cured. If the roll results in a "critical failure," the treatment has no further effect, and the sickness is incurable by mortal means. With any other result, a knight can try again the following day.

**Other Dangers:** Tabernacles reduce mana toxicity. All living creatures within the estate are subject to a milder form of the disease. It is rarely contracted provided mana isn't tampered with directly. A *Shebbai* knight's laying-on hands ability can cure this malady right away. Unborn progeny may be affected, but then they have a 30% chance of being born permanently immune to the poison. The *Shebbai* usually request parents allow their offspring to join the order's ranks early on. Knights related to resident families are often assigned to their estates, although their true identities aren't always revealed to all involved. Horses, pets, and other creatures born with the immunity are also sought after, as they are generally smarter than normal animals and likely to become mage-knight familiars.

A head of the household drawing mana magic directly from the estate's tabernacle risks exposure to the full effects of the disease. Base odds are 1% for *First Circle* spells, 2% for *Second Circle* spells, and so on. When the tabernacle howls (during a surge), every living being in the estate is subject to the affliction in a course of hours

rather than days, as described earlier. If demonic dung despoils the conduit, base odds of contracting mana sickness can increase +10% up to +30% for all involved, depending on the extent of corruption. Tainted mana also tends to attract rogue demons more than usual.

## Shebbai Magic

The knighthood generally includes warriors with an affinity for spellcasting, either secular or clerical (though all are referred to as "mage-knights"). It teaches conventional spellcasting independently from Caldwen's colleges (therefore without any of the advantages they provide). Because their craft relates directly to this toxic essence, many a knight suffers some degree of disfigurement. For this reason, most wear ornate masks and gloves. They speak only when necessary or while among themselves.

## Resistance and Immunities

Abilities of the *Shebbai* knights stem from three origins: immunity at birth, *Shebbai* ancestry, and arcane conditioning.

**Immunity at Birth:** Introduced in the previous section, full immunity may benefit offspring exposed to the disease. The same can be observed with animal life, most likely horses, cats, and dogs.

**Shebbai Ancestry:** Knights of the order enjoy lower odds of contracting the illness: 20% after the first day plus 5% for each subsequent day. In addition, offspring born to knights of the order enjoy a stronger resistance to the mana sickness; their base chances of contracting the illness drop -12% for each immediate parent in the order, -4% per grandparent, and -1% per great-grandparent. Base chances can easily run into the negatives, allowing additional days of exposure before risking any chance of affliction. Odds are reset after a week away from mana emanations. Consanguine unions are not permitted.

**Arcane Conditioning:** This conditioning is vital for unrelated recruits so far unexposed to mana. It is a process consisting of low-dose exposure increasing over time, herbal treatments, and *Shebbai*-induced meditation. This process ends when surviving the first bout of mana sickness, after which probabilities of contracting the illness remain at 20% after the first day plus 5% for each subsequent day. Odds are reset after a week away from mana emanations.

**Long-Term Exposure:** Knights who aren't naturally immune may contract the illness on one or more occasions during their lives, in particular those assigned to estates for long periods. Use the following to estimate how disfigured they may be if randomness is desired. **Squires:** minus 1d2-1 Personality increment (or -5% as appropriate); **Young Knights:** minus 1d4-1 with ancestry or minus 2d4-2 if unrelated; **Mature Knights:** minus 1d6-1 with ancestry or minus 2d6-2 if unrelated; **Elder Knights:** minus 1d8-1 with ancestry or



# Blood of the World Soul

minus 2d8–2 if unrelated. Animals are just as subject to the sickness as mage-knights; they suffer similar symptoms and can be cured in the same manner.

## Rituals and Abilities

Aside from conventional spell use, knights enjoy several natural abilities relating directly to handling mana, in most cases after they complete their probation as squires.

**Conduit Purification:** A single mage-knight may cleanse accumulated waste corrupting a mana conduit. The ritual takes an hour per lost EP (see *Despoiled Conduits*, earlier), possibly up to 54 hours.

During this ritual, the knight walks the length of the offenders “territory,” which covers 300’ per corrupted EP, possibly as much as 3 miles (5.4 Km). Any creatures involved need to be removed before the ritual can be safely completed. It can be interrupted when the knight needs to rest or to eliminate traps left by previous occupants, unexpected obstacles, and random encounters (see *Beasties in the Dark*, page 66). The ritual can resume at any time later on, but no earlier than the next day.

Squires (or trusted household retainers) should stand by the tabernacle, as conduit waste in the form of foul-smelling soot will spew into its chamber. Sheets must be deployed to protect all surfaces (and protective gear worn), while residue is carried out by the bucketful and dumped into an appropriate pit outside the residence.

**Consecrate Tabernacle:** A knight commander may empower a new tabernacle. The process lasts an hour per involved EP (16-27 in the provinces or 32-54 in the Dominion of Arcanial). This ritual requires a number of knights equal to the flow’s rank (1-12) to assist their commander. The ritual is performed where the mana vent reaches the tabernacle’s chamber; the knight commander may willingly interrupt the process as needed.

**Demon Enmity:** Mage-knights despise demons, rogue or otherwise, due to their experience cleaning up after them and fighting them in adverse conditions. The order forbids using them unless *reformed* (see page 60). When fighting demons, mage-knights receive a +2 bonus to attack rolls and to Defense and Morale Checks (or as appropriate to the chosen game system). Commanders are often entrusted with magical swords inflicting additional damage to demons.

**Laying-On Hands:** Mage-knights (and immunity-born creatures) have the ability to treat mana-related diseases by placing a hand on the afflicted—see *Mana Sickness*, page 98. A trained pet or a familiar will achieve the same for its master, if disabled, with a hoof,

a paw, or friendly licks. A young knight can perform this action once in a day, twice for a mature knight, thrice for an elder.

**Mana Banishment:** A knight commander may permanently block or reroute a conduit with this ritual in order to seal off a corrupted section or strengthen another branch. The process lasts an hour per involved EP (16-27 in the provinces or 32-54 in the Dominion of Arcanial). This ritual requires a number of knights equal to the flow’s rank (1-12) to assist their commander, plus others to protect them from random encounters. The ritual is performed at the exact spot inside the conduit where the flow is altered, and must not be interrupted to succeed.



**Mend Tabernacle:** The mage-knight assigned to an estate may repair damage to its tabernacle (see *Damaged Tabernacles*, page 98). Mending progresses at the rate of an hour for each 10% of the tabernacle’s total structural points to be repaired (or fraction thereof). The process requires the original debris or a source of similar material as part of the ritual. It can be interrupted as needed.

**Sense Raw Mana:** A knight or any creature born with immunity to raw mana may sense the presence of a conduit within 120’ or a mana-imbued magic item within 60’. The perception is similar to an ability to detect secret passages—automatic detection on a roll of 1 on a d6, performed by the referee. If immune at birth, pets can be trained to signal the presence of raw mana; their detection rolls succeed with a 1-2 on a d6.

**Shebbai Empathy:** Knights and all creatures born with immunity to raw mana are able to share empathic feelings (mostly emotions or very simple thoughts—two words at most). Using this ability more than once a day requires an Intellect Check; if the roll fails, the ability is lost for the remainder of the day. Shebbai empathy does not require visual contact, and extends up to 120’. Rarely, this sense can be willingly masked, allowing an exchange between two subjects while excluding others. Elder mage-knights can break through a lesser being’s veiled empathy with a Wisdom Check. Mage-knights with empathically-linked mounts gain a significant bonus to their riding skill checks.

**Shebbai Foresight:** Mage-knights assigned to an estate (and immunity-born creatures that are aware of a conduit’s presence) may sense an upcoming mana surge. This perception is similar to an ability to detect secret passages—automatic detection on a score of 1 on a d6, performed by the referee the day before the surge. The score increases to 1-2 twelve hours before, and 1-3 an hour before. Add +1 to success scores for animals born with immunity.



# Sky City of Arcanial

Caldwen's capital city no longer sits on the ground as it originally did. Unique in the whole of Calidar and its moons, it is a wonder dwelling in the sky. Three main districts levitate, one above the other, slowly rotating in opposite directions. Massive chains hold the city's various quarters together and provide solid moorings to redoubts guarding the outer perimeter. Spinning along with the city, these fortifications act as air anchors preventing the whole of Arcanial from drifting with the wind. Terraces and pools in each district feature waterfalls cascading all the way to the ground through an opening at the city's center. So-called "inlets" separate quarters or individual structures, allowing space for small flying vessels to navigate in and out of the city.

The oldest and most prestigious district caps the city. It is built of white rock naturally rich in *levitium*. It houses the [High Wizard Chancellor's](#) palace, the magiocracy's ministries, foreign embassies, the Great Library, the College of Grand Wizardry, and private dwellings of Caldwen's rich and famous. Constructed with bricks and mortar saturated with *levitium*, the Middle District shelters the upper middle class, a military quarter, theaters, quality hostels, temples, and all manner of mercantile businesses. The most recent addition, the Lower District, is built of *levitium*-treated wood. This tangle of structures tethered together with ropes and hanging bridges, is home to the less affluent—comparable with the lower middle class in provincial towns, as the cost of living in the capital is so much higher than anywhere else in the magiocracy. It is a place for tenements, modest temples, a *Shebbai* hospital, the infamous *Li'l Carcer*—an insane asylum—warehouses, workshops, slaughterhouses, cheaper taverns, and modest businesses.

Water of dubious purity cascades from the bottom of the flying city into a large retaining pond in Port Arcana, at ground level. A stout stone wall was erected around it after rumors emerged of odd wildlife dwelling in its turbid depths. A sewer drains into a busy harbor connecting through a canal with the nearby Arafor River some 5 miles to the east. One of the few standing structure predating the floating city, the old temple of Naghilas sits within walking distance of the skypoint. Where skyships and river barges meet, travelers and merchandise galore wait under the watchful eyes of the magiocracy's guards to be ferried "uptown." Sadly, in the eyes of many living aloft, the gentle farmland that once lay below has grown over the years into slums, stables, smoke-belching smithies, warehouses, and shoddy hostelrys surrounding the harbor area, the walled pond, and the canal. A paved road crosses through Port Arcana, leading to Haurith and Alamir. Merchants and farmers must endure the cacophony and pestilence rising from throngs of stubborn livestock and irritated cart drivers caught in perpetual traffic jams. Out of the chaos, flying barges confer a third dimension to the undying hubbub. Bargemen often boast with a smirk: *Neither snow, nor rain, nor curse, nor specter of death stays these barges from the swift completion of their appointed flights.* On the barges' way back, common trash that city magic failed to dispatch is flown away and dumped into a great pit some forty miles away. For the right price, appropriate and reputable transportation can be secured at the skypoint. Freight barges aren't the most comfortable or glamorous, but they are cheapest. Woe

betide visitors uncouth enough to forgo private passenger vessels, however, for this is a matter of personal status.

## Levitium

*Levitium* is a magical gas native to Calidar. In its natural form, it binds with fine-grained, metamorphic minerals known as cloudstones. It is believed that *levitium* is related to Calidar's world soul, the result of high pressure and heat permanently binding its magic to the mineral. Similar in appearance to white, blue, gray, or black marble, it can be carved and polished, but it is a bit more brittle than true marble. *Levitium* alters the physical properties of objects with which it is bonded, causing them to levitate. Its concentration determines how high these objects may rise through the atmosphere before settling at a certain altitude.

Cloudstones can lift weight (such as man-made structures, living beings, hardware, ice, snow, etc.) equal to what their unenchanted mass would have been, without adverse effect on attainable altitude. Excess weight reduces altitudes cloudstones can reach. Loads twice a cloudstone's unenchanted mass prevents it from rising at all. Additional enchantments or air anchors are often needed to stabilize cloudstones and prevent them from rolling over or drifting.

Cloudstone deposits generally lie deep below ground. Seismic activity may accidentally release cloudstones, often leaving rubble-filled chasms or lakes where a deposit was exposed. During eons of Caldwen's existence, many such monoliths have risen and now wander the skies at the whims of winds. It isn't always easy to tell natural clouds from these boulders as they often fly at the same altitudes. With time, they erode, break apart, and lose their *levitium*, gradually returning to the surface. Rendering unbound *levitium* inert, rainwater returns the magical gas to the soil in an unending cycle. Much of the cloudstones in Caldwen and Araldûr have already been extracted. Narwan and northern Belledor own the last few good mines. The business of salvaging airborne monoliths is brisk, lucrative, but dangerous because sky-dwelling monsters or pirates may have already claimed them. Wind storms sometimes drive cloudstone debris, peppering imprudent skyships and their crews. Other vessels actually use nets to capture wandering rubble, like they would fish in the sea. As one might suspect, great deposits of cloudstone still lie beneath the Dread Lands, untouched.

Natural cloudstones, especially if mined from pristine deposits, feature the best concentrations of *levitium*. Caldwen's capital city's Upper District is built with large blocks and slabs of mined cloudstones. Small stones and gravel may be ground and made into bricks and cement. Cheaper but less durable, these are used predominantly in Arcanial's Middle District. *Levitium* can otherwise be extracted from cloudstones. Mixed in an alchemical solution, it can be absorbed in dry soft wood, like pine, such as that found in the Lower District. It is the cheapest levitating product, but also the least effective and durable. This process is incompatible with hardwoods and metals, from which skyships are generally constructed. Navigating vessels, therefore,



# Sky City of Arcanial

require separate enchantments to enable flight, which are much more expensive, considering time, skill, and the number of spells needed.

Some monsters on Caldwen are naturally imbued with *levitium* in their flesh and blood. These creatures consciously master their levitation abilities, vectoring them in order to control their flight despite the absence of wings or other propulsion methods. Some are better than others. Their blood may be used as a component for potions of levitation.

## Historical Summary

Arcanial was originally founded in 890 CE, as a Nav-Gandarian colonial outpost under Nicarean control. It quickly grew as settlers arrived from Munaan and spread out into the midlands, along the Arafor River. Construction of the Great Library ended in 962 CE, after 30 years of hard work. It was torched in 1018, after forbidden works were discovered there. Periods of unrest followed until the civil war in the early 1200s. The city became fully independent in 1211, when its Nicarean garrison departed. Construction of a new library commenced in 1248, and was completed in 1262. A series of grisly murders took place in the poorer quarters in 1290, unresolved to this day. Such slayings have resumed inexplicably every 25 years.

Prosperity and growth marked the 1300s, until a catastrophic flood ravaged the Arafor Valley in 1416. A long-term plan was devised to move the city off the ground and out of reach of the Arafor River. By 1420, the first levitating buildings were sent aloft. Cloudstone trade was booming, along with *levitium* brick and mortar workshops. Centuries-old dungeons were gradually backfilled or their entrances sealed and buried. Ramshackle Port Arcana fully replaced the old capital city on the ground by 1490, save for the old temple of Naghilas, which stood on a low rise near the skyport and the river docks. A new temple was built in the city aloft. To this day, unrest erupts occasionally, as sprawling slums keep encroaching upon surrounding farmland, shabby abodes of those too poor to live aloft or waiting for a place to move in.

## Upper District

Some 560' across and 340' tall, five city blocks make up this part of Arcanial, including the lord high's palace at the center surrounded by four pie-shaped quarters. Massive chains anchor together the Upper District and four armed redoubts. Their metal links are coated with alchemical oil that is exceedingly slippery, repelling ice and snow during the cold season, nests, bird droppings, and intruders unwisely walking across. More than a hundred feet away on the perimeter, the small fortifications pull the city blocks outward to keep them in place, while slowly rotating clockwise. Wooden bridges connecting the four quarters can stretch and warp to withstand slight shifts among the levitating sections. The four quarters' outer rim terraces lie 80ft below those nearest the center. The palace garden on the loftiest terrace lies another 40ft higher than the surrounding city

blocks. Beneath free-standing buildings on the Upper District, the four quarters and the palace include as many as 14 lower floors, with street-like hallways, transversal crossways, and staircases. A cross-section of the Middle District (see page 107) gives an idea of how they fit within the structures.

## Redoubts

About 30' across, these four fortifications bear several permanent enchantments. The first is to pull sections of the district outward to keep them in place. Another causes the redoubts to slowly spin clockwise, accomplishing one full rotation in a half-hour, for game purposes at approximately MV 10' per combat action at the outer perimeter. The



redoubts include an iron anchor embedded in a cloudstone platform mounting two siege weapons. A small tower stands at the forefront, providing the garrison with shelter. A pole with a flag on top of the tower indicates the wind direction. Large navigational sidelights alert night-flying vessels of the redoubt's location (facing outward: one red light on the left, one green on the right, one white in the middle.)

**Commander (1):** AR 40, Sorcerer LF 14, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 dagger or spell, DR VL or by spell, Size M—Str 67, Agt 61, Dex 72, Sta 56, Int 89, Wis 78, Per 83, MR 83, PH ♥\*/♣+4/♠\*

**Sentinels (4):** AR 30, Warrior LF 8, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword or heavy crossbow, DR M+1 or 2VL, Size M—Int 56, MR 83 (67 without commander), PH ♥\*/♣+4/♠\*

**Artillerists (8):** AR 30, Warrior LF 8, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword, DR M, Size M—Int 67, MR 83 (67 without commander), PH ♥\*/♣\*/♠\*

**Deck Weapons (2 Ballistae):** Crew 4, Ranges: 100/200/300, RoF: 1 shot per 2 combat actions, DR Hi+6—AR 30, SR 9. Normal and enchanted munitions are stored in the tower. Kept in padlocked racks, magical projectiles include 4 *Seekers* (only miss with a critical failure), 2 *Firelances* (6 Lo fire damage on impact in a 40' radius), and 2 *Skybolts* (6 Lo electrical damage at impact point).

## Lord High's Palace

**1. Lighthouse:** About 40' at its widest point, this tower stands 140' high. The highest floor houses a levitating ball of light and, within it, a set of rotating mirrors producing two beams, as any common lighthouse should. It is designed to guide skyships sailing at night toward the city. An enchantment within the light detects large groups of creatures moving directly toward the beam within a 100-mile range. A ladder leads to another chamber, just below. It holds a large crystal ball that shows a close-up view of what the beams



# City of Arcanial

## Upper District





# Sky City of Arcanial

detect. A demon is bound to the two chambers, with the thankless task of monitoring the crystal ball at all times, or of dispatching intruders. The beast can “freeze” any image on command, or allow others to appear while the lighthouse’s beams rotate. The demon relies on six imps as messengers and servants to fetch reinforcements. A trap door in the floor opens onto wooden stairs spiraling down to the lighthouse’s garden entrance where a teleporter connects with the palace below. Outside windows and portals are purely decorative trompe-l’oeil sculptures requiring a command word to cross through what is otherwise solid cloudstone. On the outside, dozens of alcoves house gargoyles keeping watch on the garden below.

**Radovar of the Four-Eyes (fiend):** AR 60 (unarmored), Monster LF 44+16, MV 120’ (40’) or flying 180’ (60’), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others (claws & tail sting), DR bite 3Hi+4 or 2Lo+2 all others, DC as monster; Size L (9’tall)—Str 106, Agt 78, Dex 56, Sta n/a, Int 67, Wis 61, Per n/a, MR 67, PH ♥-6/ ♠+2/ ♣-2

**Abilities:** Magical empathy; possession: 1 individual in presence of the demon (DC with -3 penalty negates); *call other* 0% (blocked); spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x2; can use the powers of any single eye one at a time (requires a combat action to activate)—white eye: detect invisible; red eye: detect magic; green eye: detect illusions, black eye: X-ray vision.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 35%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**Items:** *Ankle Watcher*—this device provides protection against non-magical missiles (useless for a fiend), plus a hidden enchantment allowing its maker ([Lord High Vardalas](#)) to sense its location. It may be removed if its magic is successfully dispelled, but it clasps shut on anyone who touches it afterward.

**Red Imps (1d4+2):** AR 40 (unarmored), Monster LF 6+2, MV 60’ (20’) or flying 180’ (60’), TA 1 gaze or 1 tail, DR VL + poison, DC as monster LF 19; Size S (2’tall)—Str 33, Agt 94, Dex 61, Sta n/a, Int 50, Wis 44, Per n/a, MR 58, PH ♥-3/ ♠-3/ ♣+1

**Abilities:** Shape change, beguiling gaze, making pacts, deadly poison sting, regeneration, invisibility, 25% resistance to magic (see *Beasties in the Dark*, page 66).

**Immunities:** Fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**2. High Garden:** The palace’s terrace is a garden at the base of the lighthouse. A magical portal allows access to the building and to a teleporter connecting with the lower level. As with windows on the lighthouse, the doors are trompe l’oeil carvings requiring a password to get through. Gargoyles keep watch on the garden. They stand inside alcoves on the outside wall of the lighthouse. These gargoyles are familiar with palace residents. They will attack anyone else without a palace guard escort, possibly picking them up and dropping them over the garden’s outer edge before returning to their alcoves. Pairs of guards stand at the garden’s railing, above the locations where the chains connect with the palace. They hail any

approaching vessel, demanding to see either the visitors’ invitation cards or palace summons before escorting them inside. Boarding platforms embedded in the walls deploy when flying vessels approach the edge of the garden, enabling visitors to disembark safely. The garden is a source of spell components for the lord high. Among common plants hide rare ones; some are poisonous, others dangerous in some ways. Guards know not to tamper with these plants.

**Palace Guards (8):** AR 35, Warrior LF 8, MV 90’ (30’), TA 1 halberd, DR Hi+2, DC as warrior; Size M—Str 89, Agt 67, Dex 50, Sta 83, Int 61, Wis 61, Per 61, MR 83, PH ♥\*/ ♠+4/ ♣\*

**Gargoyles (2d6+6):** AR 25 (unarmored), Monster LF 11, MV 90’ (30’) or flying 150’ (50’), TA 2 claws + 1 bite or 1 horn, DR horns and claws VL or bite M, DC as monster; Size L (6’tall)—Str 83, Agt 61, Dex 50, Sta n/a, Int 50, Wis 44, Per n/a, MR 92, PH ♥\*/ ♠-4/ ♣\*

**Abilities:** Immune to non-magical weapons; +2 bonus to hit plus double horn damage with swooping attacks (no other attacks during the same combat action); can grab a victim and fly away with it after scoring two consecutive claw attacks on the same foe.

**3. Palace:** Aside from its lighthouse and garden terrace on top, the palace is roughly cylindrical, 120 feet across, and about 14 stories tall. Its vertical surfaces feature ornate baroque-style windows, elegant balconies, and collegial arms nestled in alcoves. A huge orb-shaped illusion at the bottom replicates the sun or one of the three moons of Calidar depending on the time of day, providing appropriate lighting to the Middle District hovering just beneath.

Internal ceilings arch approximately 10’ high, save for large, ceremonial rooms occupying two floors. Other than features indicated above, decorations commonly include animated tapestries, watchful paintings, coats of arms, flags, wall friezes, stylish moldings, fancy wooden paneling, slender columns, and an array of tiles, parquet, and carpets specific to each floor. The aromas of incense, dried flowers, and wood wax suffuse the atmosphere. Some discomfort may be experienced by visitors unused to the floating impression and slightly shifting shadows common to levitating abodes.

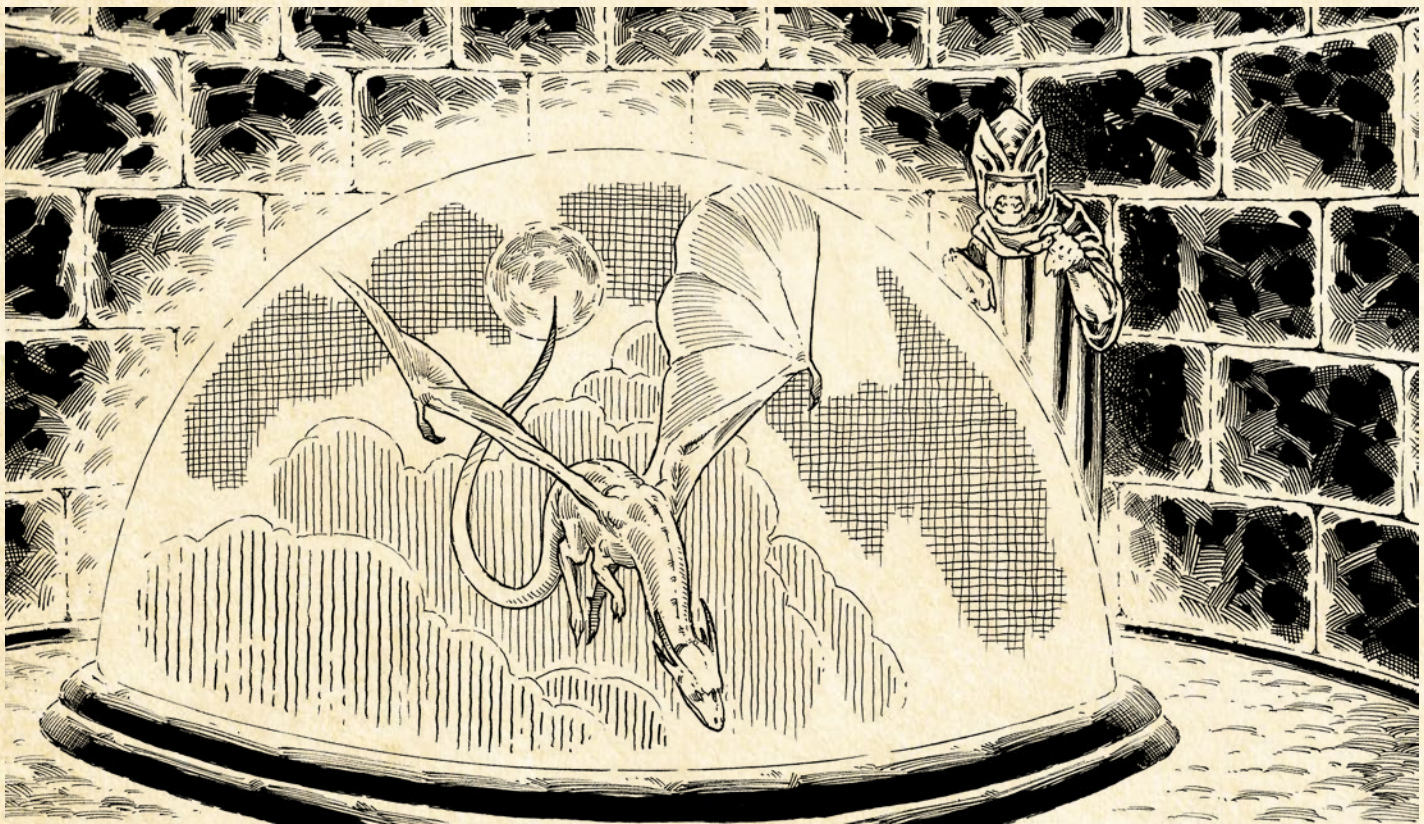
The floors bear bird names, listed in alphabetical order, the ones coming last indicating lower levels. Most floors include common chambers such as garderobes, powder rooms, teleport chambers, and guard rooms. Nearly ubiquitous, broom closets hold animated mops, brooms, buckets, and dust pans—devices that go about their chores on their own, jabbering and groaning all the way. Wizardly trickery was used in some chambers where dimensional distortion allows larger rooms to exist inside smaller spaces, or square ones to fit within curved walls. Illusions also come into play to make ceilings appear higher than they really are. **Author’s note:** these “cheats” come in handy for game referees endeavoring to map out the entire palace.

Upper floors (1-5) house essentially recreational and ceremonial chambers. Beneath them (6-7) lie offices and meeting rooms intended for government work. Guest rooms and other private facilities follow (8-11), including the lord high’s own chambers which occupy all of the *Harrier’s* floor. The bottom floors (12-14) are those reserved for servants, guards, stores, and service areas.





# Sky City of Arcanial



**1. Abyzael Auklet:** Visitors teleporting from the entrance in the lighthouse land in the *Green Room*, which serves as an art gallery and a waiting area for visitors granted an audience with the lord high. This level includes space for the throne room's vault rising from the floor below. Stairs curve down to the next lower level alongside the palace's outer wall. Prevailing colors are green, white, and silver.

**2. Black Swan:** The *Mages' Memorial Gallery* circles partly around the throne room (which rises through the floor above), its antechamber. Serving as a chamber of audiences, the throne room is called *Nygardae's Hall*. More or less haunted and fitted with a magnificent stained-glass window, it stretches past the bounds of the palace's outer wall. Prevailing colors on this floor are black and gold.

**3. Crane:** The circular hallway on this floor is called the *Dream's Walk*, a gallery featuring illusions. A chapel consecrated to Naghilas occupies the center of this floor. Prevailing colors are dark red and ivory, and follow stylized Miyukian decoration.

**4. Dove:** This floor is called the *Clockworks Gallery* where all sorts of mechanical devices are kept. A circular opening at the center allows a view of the *Great Hall* on the floor below. An aviary occupies a chamber opposite the stairs' landing. Prevailing colors are vivid blues, purple, and gold.

**5. Eagle:** The stairs lead to the *Trophy Hall* showcasing the heads of various monsters felled in the magiocracy's history, a cloakroom, and the palace's Great Hall. This large chamber rises partly through the floor above and extends beyond the palace's outside walls. It serves as a reception hall or a ballroom. A balcony opposite the main doors acts as a landing dock for dignitaries arriving on

floating gondolas; a force field blocks the balcony entrance when the Great Hall isn't in use. The prevailing pattern is white and gold.

**6. Flamingo:** Otherwise known as the *Pink Floor*, this level houses the *Grand Cabinet* used for the magiocracy's staff meetings, private council chambers, and offices for palace dignitaries and their aides. The prevailing colors range from coral to dark salmon with black and gold flourishes.

**7. Gray Gull:** This floor's circular gallery, known as the *Skyward Glories*, displays artifacts related to skyship lore. It houses several more offices, the lord high's *Chart Room*, which holds a collection of skyship charts and geographical maps, and a library with a sitting room known euphemistically as the *Crow's Nest*. This floor's prevailing theme is nautical, with windows in the style of skyship sterns, brass lanterns, and rope-like motifs; eerie chancies, the squawks of gulls, and a ship's bell ringing the watches can vaguely be heard.

**8-11. Harrier, Kingfisher, Nightjar, and Owl:** These four floors provide guest bedchambers, boudoirs, antechambers, baths, and dressing rooms. The lord high claims the entire *Harrier* level as his own domain, which also includes a personal library, laboratory, a spellcasting room, a private teleporter, and indoor docking for a private gondola. A magical portal and two palace guards control access to this floor. The *Harrier* decoration theme suggests wheat fields and grasslands. The *Kingfisher* floor depicts daytime lake and riverine scenery, while the *Nightjar* evokes nocturnal wilderness and mystery. On the *Owl*, the art style favors sylvan settings colored in sunset or moonlight tones. All decorations change with the seasons and are animated to respond to the presence of visitors.



# Sky City of Arcanial

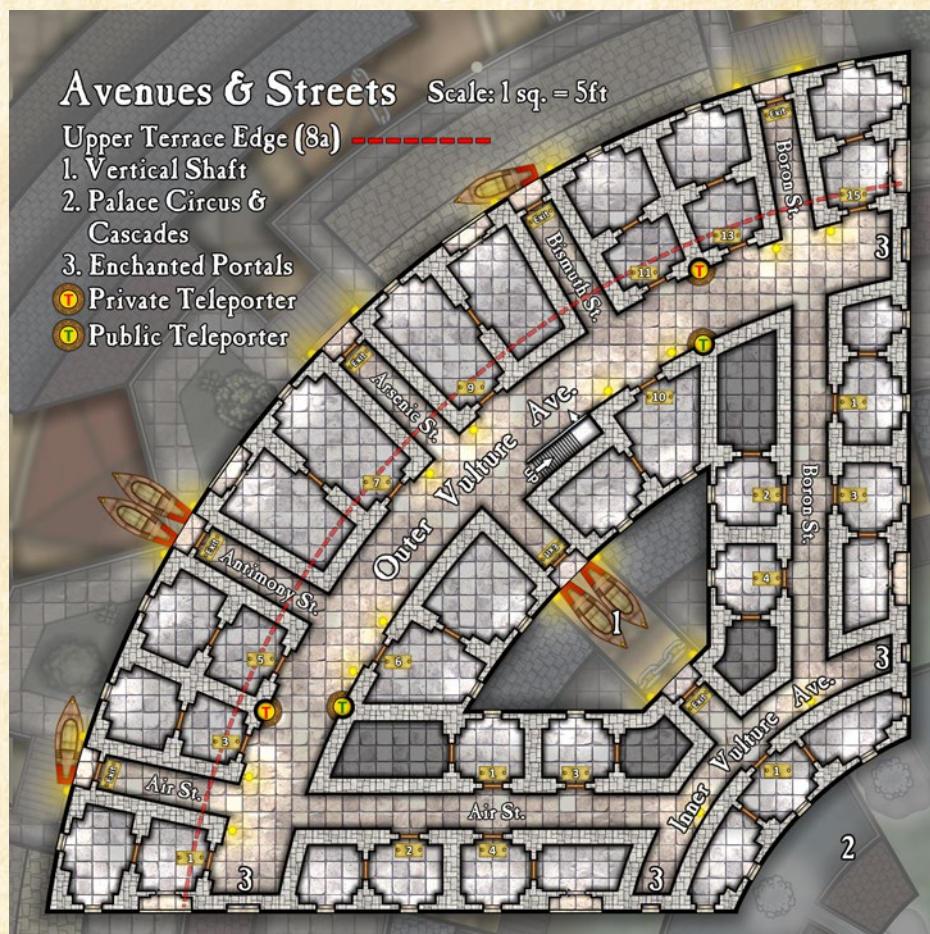
**12-14: Parrot, Raven, and Vulture:** The last floors at the bottom of the palace house the servants and the palace's garrison. Bare, undecorated cloudstone is the norm here, with fallow glowing balls embedded in the ceilings or in the walls. Dormitories, private chambers, common rooms, and an armory occupy all of the *Parrot* level. The palace kitchen, scullery, laundry room, and repair workshop take up much of the *Raven*. A refuse shaft expedites anything tossed in to a chasm known as *The Pit*, 40 miles out of town. The *Vulture* level holds food and beverage stores, tableware, linen, servant uniforms, and all things needed for a palace staff to provide regal service at all times. A portal aligned with a main hallway can open and allow freight barges to unload goods purchased by the head intendant.

## Outer Quarters

The areas forming the Upper District's rim are identified as follows—clockwise: *Integrity* (bearing the largest dome-shaped structure), *Fortitude* (with the green roof), *Intellect* (with the star-shaped abode), and *Foresight* (home to the Great Telescope and the College of Grand Wizardry). Each quarter includes a fifty-foot-wide open shaft near their midpoints (4). The terraces closest to the lord high's palace are the highest. They accommodate the *Magi's Promenade* (5), which runs through all four quarters, across bridges (6a. *Of Integrity*, 6b. *Of Fortitude*, 6c. *Of Intellect*, 6d. *Of Foresight*), and alongside gardens known as *Gandar Greens* and *Cascades* (7). Intervening stairs lead down to the outer rim. The gardens each feature a pool permanently linked with the Plane of Hydros. Water at the surface drains through large spouts, cascading to a second set of pools in the Middle District. The *Terraces of Integrity* (8a), *Fortitude* (8b), *Intellect* (8c), and *Foresight* (8d) located at the outer rim are the lowest.

The spaces between the four quarters are called inlets (9). They are named after the closest and most important buildings (9a. *Homeland*, 9b. *War*, 9c. *Observatory*, and 9d. *College*). At 80' wide, they enable flying gondolas to travel between the quarters, though navigation is delicate because of chains and bridges stretching across the ways. The four inlets connect with the *Arcanial Circus* (10), which is the space separating the palace from the surrounding quarters.

Multiple floors lie beneath the terraces, up to 14 levels where the district stands the tallest. They are named after birds, like those inside the palace. Concentric avenues and transversal streets enable foot traffic on the floors beneath the terraces. There are two avenues on most floors, a wider one near the outer rim, and a much narrower one near the inner rim. They are named after the floors where they are located. So, on the highest floor beneath the terrace, the two avenues



are called *Outer Auklet* and *Inner Auklet*. Outer avenues are 15'-20' wide; all other hallways are 9'-12' wide. Enchanted portals stand where avenues reach the inlets. They are essentially "wormholes" linking the quarters together. When facing a portal, one only sees and hears the next quarter's avenue, as if the intervening inlet did not exist.

There are typically as many as five transversal streets in each quarter, therefore up to 20 in the entire Upper District. Not all of them are necessarily straight. They are named after alchemical terms and alphabetized in clockwise order. The first street in the sequence runs closest to the *College Inlet*, beneath the Ministry of Magic (11). The full sequence is listed below.

- **Integrity:** Air, Antimony, Arsenic, Bismuth, Boron.
- **Fortitude:** Cinnabar, Copper, Earth, Fire, Gold.
- **Intellect:** Iron, Lead, Magnesium, Mercury, Phosphorus.
- **Foresight:** Platinum, Salt, Silver, Sulfur, and Water.

Any wizard worth his or her alchemical salt knows this sequence. Street numbers run from the inner to the outer rim, while on avenues they run clockwise, starting near the intersection with *Air Street*. Residents often refer to a location as *the corner of Outer Auklet and Cinnabar* for example, which refers all at once to the floor, the quarter, and relative location (*Fortitude's* first street in this example). An actual address could be stated as *Nº5 Air St. on Vulture*, located well below the



# Sky City of Arcanial

Ministry of Magic (11). Odd numbers lie on the streets' right sides (facing toward the outer rim) and on the avenues' outboard sides. Residential blocks contain one or more separate dwellings, with chambers about 15'x20'. Doors stand where the streets reach the district's outer rim and its vertical shafts. These entryways enable flying gondolas to pick up/drop off residents and visitors. Street and floor names are carved on the outside walls; doors are barred during night hours. A glowing ball hangs from the ceiling at each intersection. Night patrols typically make their rounds along the outer avenues.

**Integrity:** This quarter houses an important part of the magiocracy's sprawling bureaucracy responsible for carrying out policies of the lord high, the wizards' councils, and the collegial authorities. Four important ministries occupy the main buildings standing above the terraces, and much of the space on the floors beneath them. Facilities include countless offices, antechambers, meeting chambers, sitting rooms, scriptoriums, archives, supply stores, and one or more docking bays. Private residences are also located below terrace levels. As Treasurer of the Court, [Kryovata the Icy](#) can often be found in this area.

**Ministry of Magic (11):** Some of its more important bodies include the Offices of Civil Spellcasting Etiquette, Magic Item Regulations, Ancient Artifacts Appropriation & Curation, Underage Magic & Juvenile Affairs, and the Official Records of Common & Restricted Spells, Potions, & Devices.

**Ministry of Wealth & Welfare (12):** It oversees the Offices of Tolls, Taxes & Forcible Confiscations, Wizardly Mints & Treasury, Commerce & Lending, Collegial Grants & Endowments, Art & Entertainment Benefactions, Destitute Wizards Resettlement, Abandoned Familiars Rescue, Misplaced Socks & Other Lost Valuables, Recently Unemployed & Maimed on Duty, and Rehabilitation of the Accursed, Afflicted & Unjustly Maligned.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs (13):** It includes Offices of Nearby & Faraway Realms (including a bureau for each embassy, legation, or mission outside Caldwen), Dread Lands Exploration & Exploitation, Outer-Planar Treaties & Tacit Truces, Foreign Aid & Other Briberies, Wizardly Passports & Sorcerer Visas, and the Board of True & Verified Citizenships.

**Ministry of Homeland (14):** This part of Caldwen's administration regroups the Offices of Wizardly Health & Sanitation, Homeland Census Archives, Land Reclamation & Mining Endeavors, Tower Estate & Urban Initiatives, Mundane Farming and Fisheries, Forbidden Plants Regulations, Monstrous Regulations, Public Teleportation, Arcane Emergency Repair, Undead Investigation & Accountability, Restless & Hazardous Locations, and Major Curse Removals.

**Fortitude:** Much in the same manner as the previous quarter, two more ministries and an autonomous office call this part of town home. Several notorious personalities can often be found in this neighborhood: [Daemian Malcrux](#) (the [Marshal of Caldwen](#)), [Phlux-Caladine](#) ([Admiral of the Skies](#)), and [Marvis Black](#) (Justiciar General). [Lady Kryovata](#) also works in the vicinity (as the Preceptor of the [Proctors](#)), although her

presence is discreet. Little happens here that any of these personalities wouldn't become aware of in a short time.

**Carcer Island Authority (15):** This autonomous office answers directly to the lord high, although it connects directly with the other three ministries. It governs all that concerns imprisonment at [Carcer Island](#), the Eye of Marderon, and the administration of these two facilities.

**Ministry of Justice (16):** Under the authority of the Justiciar General, this ministry oversees all courts in Caldwen and handles appealed cases at the High Court (17). It also includes the Office of Ministry Quarrels Arbitration, which manages conflicts among ministries, and all types of law enforcement, including the Offices of Arcane Narcotics & Artifacts Surveillance, Magi Immigration & Customs Enforcement, and Wizardly Dueling.

**Ministry of War (18):** It oversees the three branches of the magiocracy's military—land, sea, and skies. The latter branch also administers the Office of Skyships & Seitha Regulations, which sets standards for aerial navigation and skyship construction, as well as the handling, taxation, and protection of strategic reserves of seitha. Although part of the Ministry of War, the [Proctors of the Halls](#) responsible for foreign intelligence and internal security of the magiocracy are not under the Marshal of Caldwen's authority. The proctors' "Great Hall" (19) is adjacent to the ministry's main facilities.

**Intellect:** This part of the Upper District is mostly residential. Many titled wizards and relatives own a secondary dwelling on this quarter's lower floors, aside from their provincial abodes. The most prominent resident is [Flammara Torchbearer](#) (Grand Prioress of Naghilas). Foreign embassies and a few notorious structures have found a place here among the magiocracy's rich and famous.

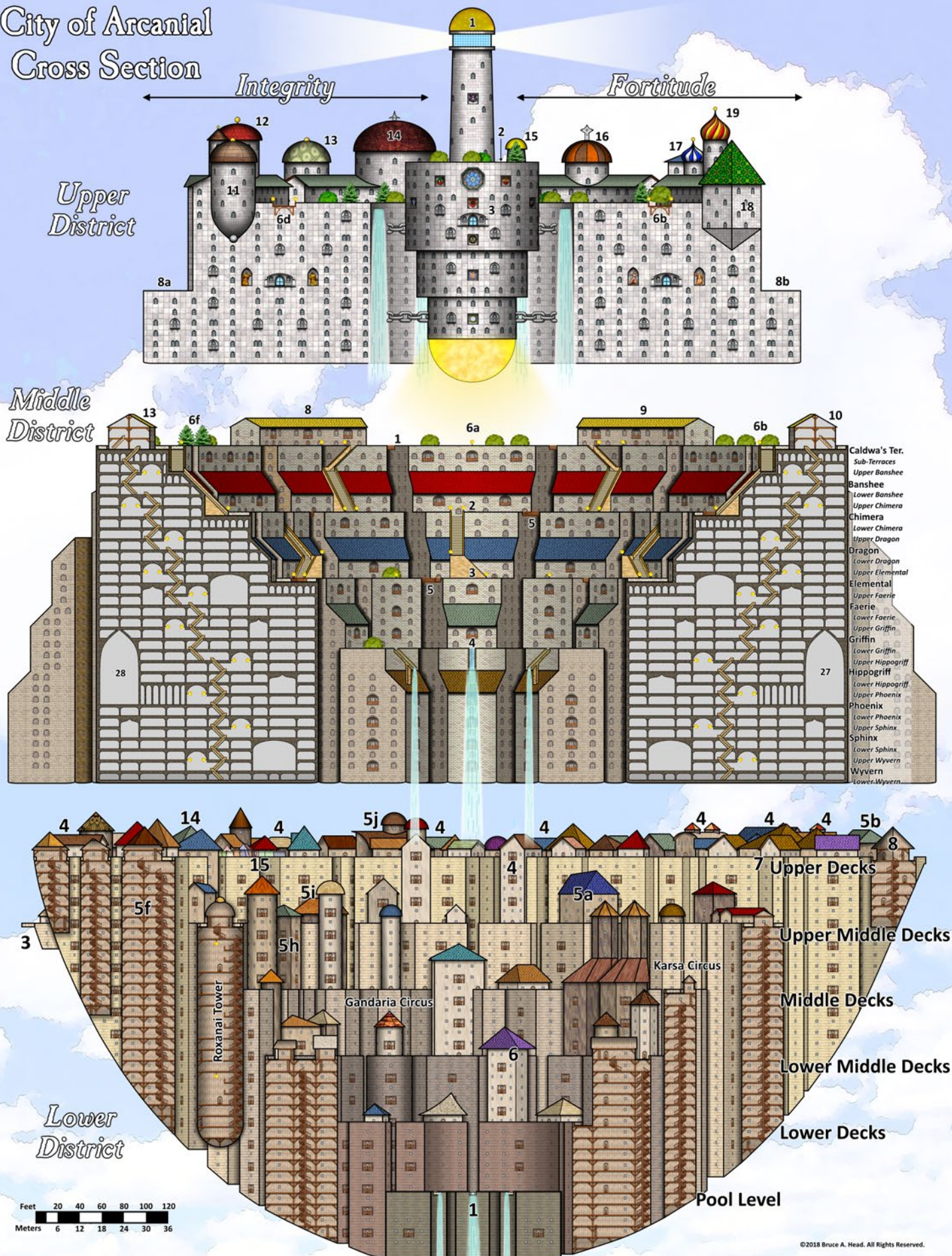
**Upper Chamber of the Magi (20):** This star-shaped structure extends well below the terrace level. Although a docking bay on a lower floor opens on the adjacent inlet, most members and working staff rely on private teleporters to reach this illustrious place. Aside from the Great Hall itself, the council also houses a good number of private meeting rooms, offices, and a Chamber of Records storing thousands of scrolls pertaining to votes, motions, and declarations going back as far as [1228 CE](#).

**House of Unearthed Arcana (21):** This great hall houses upper class receptions, weddings, conclaves, and other conferences. It is available for the celebrations of all wizardly events of great importance. A yearly spell component tradeshow takes place here, featuring arcane ingredients demonstrated and sold. Though popular with some visitors, the presence of scantily-clad hostesses has sparked widespread condemnation from witches and sorceresses, prompting the age-old institution to include equally-attired male hosts with long white beards. The heated controversy goes on.

**New Temple of Naghilas (22):** The upper part of the temple is adjacent to the [Grand Prioress's](#) private residence (23). The "old" temple sits on a low mound near the skyport (see CC1, page 93). Sorcerers and titled wizards are welcome to attend services. A part of the donations is paid back to the Great Library and the College of [Grand Wizardry](#).



# City of Arcanial Cross Section





# Sky City of Arcanial

**Foresight:** The last quarter is dedicated to knowledge, education, and research. The most notorious resident is the Distinguished Magister [Beb'zarah](#) who lives at the College of Grand Wizardry. There is no Ministry of Education in Caldwen, since the magiocracy itself embodies academia.

**Great Observatory (24):** It is one of the largest structures on the Upper District's surface. The top cupola can rotate up to 90 degrees in either direction; curved panels on the dome slide open to reveal the telescope. Tours are occasionally offered to college students, both from the province and the capital city. The observatory has done quiet work for the Ministry of War, especially the [Proctors of the Halls](#). Normally used to watch distant objects in the Great Vault, the telescope is capable of seeing parts of Caldwen that lie in a direct line of sight from the observatory. With clear weather, one could read headlines on a copy of the *Arcanial Tribune* as far away as the Spellstorm Islands.

**Outer Planar Advisory Society (25):** This establishment is an association of wizards with a common interest in exploring the outer planes. Their facilities include a repository of outer planar artifacts, records of civilizations and creatures encountered there, documentation on languages and other forms of communication, and a number of protected gates enabling travel to and from these planes. The association works closely with the Great Library and the Ministry of Magic.

**Great Library (26):** This ancient institution occupies several floors beneath the terraces. Its outer walls hold a number of enchantments to prevent interference and other unlawful tampering from residents occupying adjacent dwellings. A good number of chambers are hidden behind secret doors, concealed by means of dimensional trickery within the thickness of walls. Demons bound to the various departments hide in the shadows, keeping a watchful (if somewhat malicious) eye on visitors and precious tomes. The Great Library also houses the city archives.

**College of Grand Wizardry (27):** Perhaps the [fanciest building](#) in Caldwen (see page 75), the college's upper structure stands on a terrace alongside the *Magi's Promenade*. This sprawling establishment occupies many lower floors, including countless classrooms, study crypts, spellcasting training chambers, laboratory workshops, amphitheaters, offices, sport facilities, choir and grand organ chamber, private student bedchambers, staff residences, proctor's common quarters, refectory, kitchens, indoor docking bay, flying mounts stables, etc. Its majestic dome serves as a regal entrance where the names of alumni, chancellors, and illustrious instructors are inscribed on marble plaques, statues, and floor tiles.

**Teleporters:** Pragmatic to a fault, Upper and Middle District residents often rely on magical means to move about their capital city. Teleporters are a common method. Ostensibly positioned in wall recesses or in booths, public teleporters enable the name of another floor to be spoken, sending the user up or down to an open space nearest another public device. Private enchantments, available for a monthly usage fee, require a specific command word for

each destination (another connected appliance, private or public). More common at the palace, some devices are concealed among wall decorations; they work like private teleporters. Other than the [Lord High Vardalas](#), few people at the palace know of all these hidden enchantments, much less the command words activating them.

## Middle District

Some 840' across and 340' tall, the Middle District is built like a massive arena. *Caldwa's Terraces* with the gold-roofed buildings (1) are highest. Those with red roofs (2. *Chimera Terraces*) lie 60' lower; the next lowest levels feature blue roofs (3. *Elemental Terraces*), then green (4. *Griffin Pools*), with the brown roofs near the center being the lowest. Water cascading from the Upper District pours into and between six pools (4) just above the brown roofs, before draining out into the Lower District. The pools are 8' deep. Massive chains anchor together the Middle District and four armed redoubts (7), as described earlier. The entire assemblage completes a full counter-clockwise rotation in about 45mn, for game purposes at approximately MV 10' per combat action at the outer perimeter.

## Streets and Avenues

Though buildings stand on the terraces, another 30 floors lie beneath (see cross-section, opposite). Floors and avenues in the Middle District are named after 10 flying monsters. Each name refers to three contiguous floors—upper, middle, and lower—in alphabetical order: *Banshee* (the top three), *Chimera* (the next three, etc.), *Dragon*, *Elemental*, *Faerie*, *Griffin*, *Hippogriff*, *Phoenix*, *Sphinx*, and *Wyvern* (the bottom three), for a total of 30 floors. Unlike the Upper District's outer quarters, there is only one circular avenue in addition to 24 or more transversal streets on each floor. The largest avenues (20' wide by 20' high) are located on "middle" floors. Stairs or public teleporters often connect "upper" streets intersecting with "middle" avenues below. Magical portals allow seamless passage across 12 intervening inlets. Transversal streets are named according to alchemical terms, and address numbers run as described earlier. An address might be expressed as *No 1 Banshee Avenue*, or *No 2 Arsenic St. on the Lower Banshee*, which in both cases implies Middle District addresses. The location of the street beginning the name sequence was chosen arbitrarily. There are four more streets in the Middle District than in the higher quarters; the following four names are added to the list of alchemical names: *Lime*, *Plumbago*, *Tin*, and *Zinc*. The image on page 111 shows how streets are laid out on the *Wyvern* (each floor differs).

This crowded, busy, if not stifling environment prompts residents to enjoy a stroll out on the terraces or across the *Golden Gardens* (6a-6f). Wooden bridges (5), about 20' long and 12' wide, arch over intervening inlets. Stairs and the bridges connect the terraces in an



# City of Arcanial

## Middle District



**Golden Gardens**  
 6a. Mirzov Garden  
 6b. Bahadar Garden  
 6c. Faradun Garden  
 6d. Estera Garden  
 6e. Elaal Garden  
 6f. Vardalas Garden

Scale: 1 square  
 equals 20ft.



# Sky City of Arcanial

arrangement puzzling to outsiders, who forget about the avenues and magical portals on the floors below.

The Middle District's 24 inlets and courts are named after common magical items, as shown on the top view map (page 109). Names are given to inlets in alphabetical order, clockwise from the Lower Chamber of the Sorcerers (8). Locals often refer to their inlets as "alleys," leading some of them to sound far more colorful than they really are, such as *Dagger Alley*. Six of them are split into two short segments (*Artifact*, *Candle*, *Gauntlet*, *Potion*, *Scarab*, and *Talisman*), which then receive "inner" or "outer" prefixes. Circular inlets take the names of the two transversal passages connecting them—for example: *Amulet* and *Bag Alleys* continue past their two corners right up to the intersection with *Inner* and *Outer Artifact Alleys*.

One might wonder why *Socks* figure among the district's inlets. These clothing items are quite popular in Caldwen, and are as valued as boots, cloaks, or hats. The only trouble with them is that some have an annoying habit of getting misplaced, which led to the creation of the Office of Misplaced Socks & Other Lost Valuables to help address the nagging issue of wayward hosiery.

## Above & Below the Terraces

Though more affordable than Upper District dwellings, space on the middle levels comes at a premium. Many middle-class Caldweners struggle to find suitable lodgings here, often ending up on a waiting list. Residences on the upper floors are more expensive than those near the bottom. Businesses fare little better, competing mercilessly with residents for space to expand. Private dwellings include one or more chambers. Public facilities, such as the Lower Chamber of the Sorcerers (8), the Great Emporium (9), temples, indoor docking bays, and so on, are the largest features.

**Cleaning Crew:** In the dead of the night, huge lumps of living jelly *unmeld* from the walls and floors to sweep avenues and streets clean. One such creature dwells on each floor in every city block, some 420 of them in total, except on the *Lower Wyvern*. They are bound to meld back into the stonework before dawn with their ingested trash hauls. They digest what can be during the rest of the day, and the remainder stays within their transparent innards until city workers remove it telekinetically at week's end. These creatures have all been made to ingest flashing amber spheres to alert residents of their presence. Anyone living there knows not to mess with the so-called *jolly rangers*; in fact, many locals dump garbage out their front doors sometime before midnight.

**"Jolly Rangers" (420):** AR 10, Monster LF 11, MV 60' (20'), TA 1 gelatinous limb, DR 2VL + paralysis, DC as warrior LF 6; Size L (10' tall lump)—Int 0, MR 100, PH n/a.

**Abilities:** Mostly invisible save for the flashing amber light; paralysis lasts 2d4 x 10 minutes (Defense Check negates the effect); melds into walls at daybreak, *unmelds* at midnight.

## 8. Lower Chamber of the Sorcerers: №1 Caldwa's Terraces.

Nearly 120' long by 40' wide and with an ornate ceiling arching 30' high, the Great Hall accommodates sorcerer officials from all parts of the magiocracy. Seen from the inside, the ceiling appears more cathedral-like, as if it reached 90' high, the result of a spatial distortion. The chamber's internal dimensions and seating arrangement can grow to accommodate the number of people entering. The front door is purely decorative: it is in fact a wooden carving with no moving parts. An enchantment enables only members and chamber officials to pass through this ceremonial gate. Wooden statues of illustrious sorcerers long ago departed look down upon the Great Hall. They animate and attack anyone interfering with parliamentary sessions.

The facilities extend several floors lower, offering meeting rooms, private cabinet chambers, sitting rooms, an indoor docking bay, offices, and the Chamber's archives. Parliamentary guards, known as *Bee-Feeders* (they collected honey from bee hives to help impoverished sorcerers long before Arcanial was sent aloft), keep a careful watch on all who come and go. Lesser individuals in the Chamber's employ, messengers, and other visitors enter through a doorway at *Banshee & Bismuth*. The transversal street on this floor is walled off past the avenue. There is a guard post at the entrance and the indoor docking bay facing Outer Artifact Alley. Private stairs connect the lower floors to the Great Hall.

**Parliament Statues (12):** AR 35, Monster LF 17, MV 120' (40') or jump (see below), TA 1 breath or 2 claws, DR claws Lo/Lo, DC as monster; Size M (6'tall)—Str 67, Agt 89, Dex 44, Sta n/a, Int 50, Wis 44, Per n/a, MR 100, PH ♥\*/♠\*/♣\*

**Abilities:** These wooden statues may jump as far as 20' away from their positions above the Great Hall, or as much as 15' horizontally and 10' vertically when on the floor, and still perform their melee attacks. Once per combat encounter, they can breathe a cloud of razor-sharp wooden shards in a 20' long, 60° cone, inflicting 4Lo damage upon all who fail their Defense Checks. These statues suffer double damage from fire attacks and axe-like weapons. They are immune to blunt weapons and cold-based magic.

**Bee-Feeder Guards (up to 20):** AR 35, Warrior LF 8, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 halberd, DR Hi+2, DC as warrior; Size M—Str 89, Agt 67, Dex 50, Sta 83, Int 61, Wis 61, Per 61, MR 83, PH ♥\*/♠+4/♣\*

**Abilities:** In keeping with tradition, a few hives are maintained in wall recesses under the roof. Once during a combat encounter, a group of 6 or more guards can summon a swarm within 1d4 combat actions. Swarm: 30' radius, MV 120' (40'), inflicts 2Lo damage to all within area of effect; the swarm lasts 2d4+2 combat actions after which it dissipates; waving torches at the bees halves the swarm's duration; area of effect magic (fire, cold, electricity, etc.) will likely kill off the bees. Swarms do not attack the keepers.

## 9. Great Emporium: №2 Caldwa's Terraces.

This multi-level, high-end store sells all manner of luxury items of interest to magic-users, from practical but jazzed-up everyday tools of the trade to the weirdest doodads, all at extravagant prices but with a solid warranty and excellent return policy. Empty grimoires, smooth scrolls, rare



## Middle District Street Layout

Upper Terraces Limits

1. Palace Circus & Cascades

2. Magical Portals

Wall

Inside Door

Outside Door & Boarding Quay

Window & Sill

Stained Glass Window

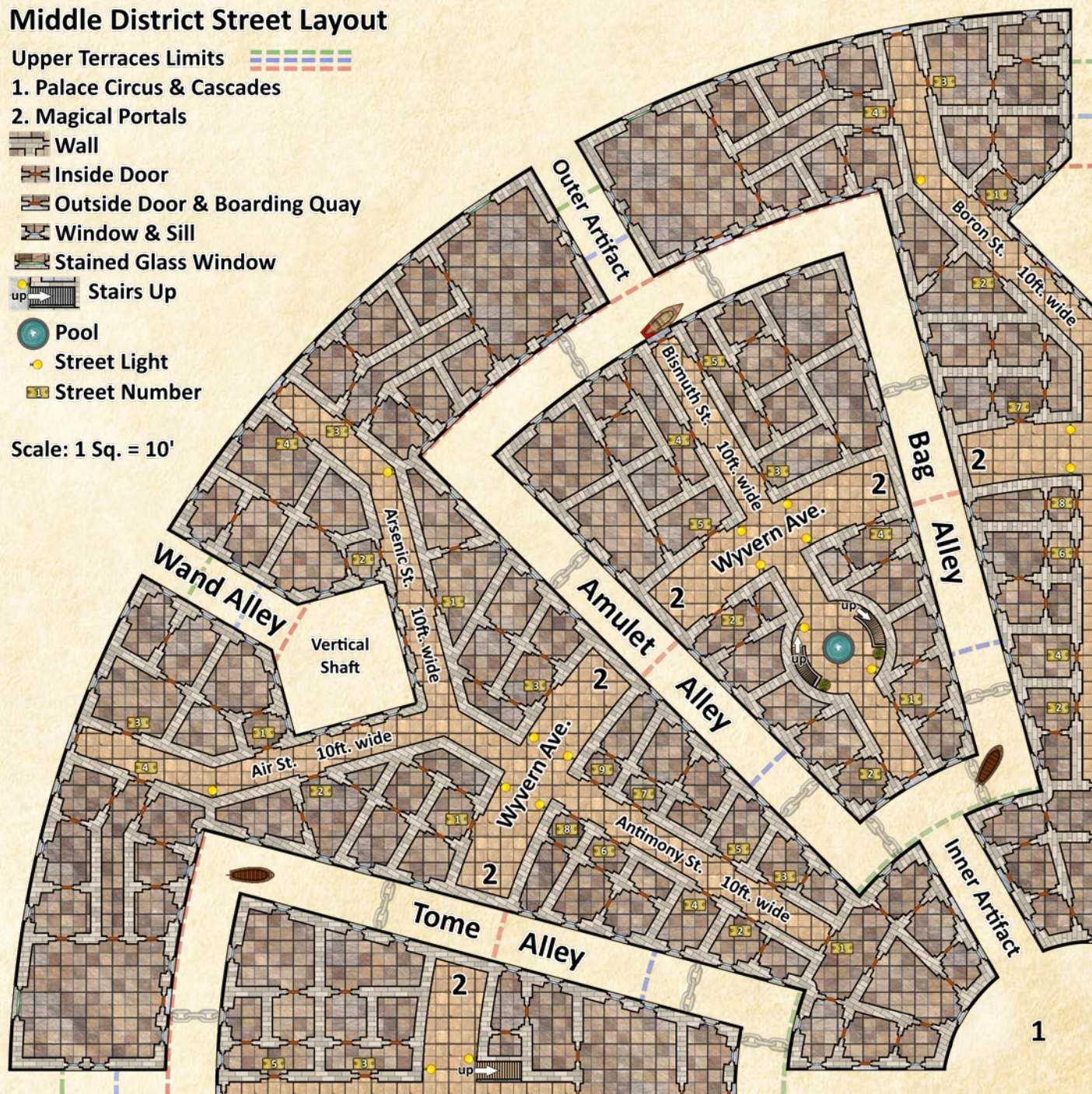
Stairs Up

Pool

Street Light

Street Number

Scale: 1 Sq. = 10'



inks, fine wand wood, spell components, ornamental stones, gems, pearls, rings, pointy shoes, hats, robes, cloaks, feathers, fancy masks, carpets, furniture, laboratory equipment, flasks, trick chests, decorative sarcophagi, wax dolls, scented candles, lamps, Lao-Kweian incense, Munaani myrrh, Kumoshiman chopsticks, singing fish trophies, and reams of magic items (locked in glass cases—*please ask for help for the latter*) are some of the goods available if the gold is right. An entire aisle is devoted to wizardly socks—sober, garish, or merely elegant, anything from mundane hosiery to exotic weaves can be found.

The entire edifice is enchanted to prevent not-so-honest clients from walking away with unpaid for articles, causing the latter to be returned to their shelves and the former to a holding cell down on

the Wyvern. Two dozen watchful faeries sporting the emporium's green and silver livery provide discreet but efficient customer service. Two large gorilla-shaped golems sternly stand by the exit, next to the cashiers in case of trouble there. If needed, the store's faeries can awake them and lead them to a shoplifter.

The business owner, one Gabbie Glittamax, previously known as Maddie Magpie before she moved to Arcanial, owns the distinguished establishment. This crafty gnome started her business with a small shop in the Lower District, and gained notoriety during the past decade as being particularly skillful at getting what her clients were looking for. Nearly anything can be obtained if the price is right. Gabbie handles private negotiations and special orders



# Sky City of Arcanial

from her office on the sub-terrace floor. Warehouses, workshops, and break room reach as far down as the *Banshee*.

**Gorilla Golems (2):** AR 20, Monster LF 28, MV 180' (60'), TA 2 fists, DR 2M/2M, DC as monster; Size L (7'tall)—Str 106, Agt 89, Dex 50, Sta n/a, Int 50, Wis 44, Per n/a, MR 100, PH ♥\*/♣\*/♠\*/♦\*

**Abilities:** These golems are made of flesh and bone. They can easily climb walls and detect invisibility. They are immune to non-magical weapons; electrical attacks heal combat damage. After first suffering a wound, they thump their chests; their next two attacks receive a +3 bonus to hit. With two successful punches, gorilla golems can slam shoplifters to the floor, stunning them for 2d6+2 combat actions, drag them to the store supervisors, and pin them down until the city militia can intervene.

**Faeries (up to 24):** AR 25, Monster LF 3, MV 120' (40')/240' (80') flying, TA 1 dagger or spell, DR 1 VL or by spell, DC as monster; Size S (3' tall)—Str 33, Agt 83, Dex 89, Sta n/a, Int 78, Wis 56, Per n/a, MR 75, PH ♥+2/♣-2/♠+2/♦+2

**Abilities:** Can turn invisible at will and detect invisible; create fog (10' large cloud around the creature); four of the faeries are department supervisors who can cast spells as LF 22 magic-users.

**Gabbie, Gnomish Sorceress-Rogue:** AR 35, LF 25, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 dagger +2, DR VL, Size S—Str 44, Agt 78, Dex 94, Sta 67, Int 83, Wis 56, Per 72, MR 75, PH ♥+3/♣-4/♠+5. **Faith:** *Zarghadin*, casual. **Credentials:** [Bachelor of Illusion](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Osriel.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting as an LF 25 magic-user; thieving skills are those of an LF 25 rogue.

**10. Temple of Barthazu:** №3 *Caldwa's Terraces*. The building's internal structure is somewhat comparable to the Lower Chamber of the Sorcerers, a large nave with a high arch (seen from the inside) and a series of other chambers below terrace level. Similarities end here, as decorations bear a definitely more spiritual character. Also known as the *Prince of Wands*, Barthazu is the ancient Gandarian god of crafters and blacksmiths (see CC1, page 98). An elaborate altar sits on a dais facing the main entrance at the temple's mid-section. Two wings, to the right and left, hold pews facing the altar. On it lies an item. As the faithful pray, the altar collects their spiritual mana and imbues it over months or years of worship into the object. The nature of the enchantment thus purveyed depends on a prior's invocations, canticles, homilies, and rituals, but also the number of worshipers and the strength of their faiths. When the item is complete, a ceremony most likely follows during which it disintegrates while its magic is offered to Barthazu. On occasion, the enchanted item may be retained for other temple purposes, and it is considered most sacred. The altar is a gate for a dog-like demon bound to protect from thieves whatever is placed on the ornate stone slab, and to recover it if it is indeed stolen.

**Bha'arkas The Grym (fiend):** AR 60 (unarmored), Monster LF 44+16, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite + poison or spell, DR bite 3Hi+4, DC as monster; Size L (8' tall)—Str 106, Agt 78, Dex n/a, Sta n/a, Int 61, Wis 67, Per n/a, MR 83, PH ♥-5/♣+5/♠-3/♦-3

**Abilities:** Magical empathy; possession: 1 individual in presence of the demon (DC with -3 penalty negates); *call other* 0% (blocked); innate spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x2; can bark once per combat encounter, which stuns all who fail their Defense Checks within a 60' cone; it may howl once per day just after sunset, which reveals to *The Grym* the stolen object's location; its bite is poisonous (no DC), inflicting 2M unhealable damage per hour until the poison is neutralized or the victim dies. Bha'arkas has dog-like senses and tracking abilities.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 35%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**11. Office of Demon Warrants:** №4 *Caldwa's Terraces*. [This service](#) actually is part of the Ministry of [Homeland's](#) Monstrous Regulations Dept. (Area 14 in the Upper District.) This branch was established in the Middle District to prevent the constant parade of more-or-less pacified demons in the ultra-select neighborhood. As one might guess, city militia and bounty hunters are far more common in this neighborhood than most others in the Middle District. The building includes a main lobby, waiting rooms, a guard post, offices, archives, examination rooms, and quarantine facilities reaching a few floors down. The entire establishment radiates an enchantment preventing any sort of teleportation in or out, and exerts a 75% anti-magic field affecting outer-planar creatures. Officers of the Warrants, recognizable by their red armor and cloaks, are armed with stun sticks and restraining nets for demons brought in becoming unexpectedly disagreeable with mandatory warrant procedures.

**Officers of the Warrants (up to 12):** AR 50 (armored), Warrior LF 14, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 stun stick & restraining net, DR VL+2 + stupefy, DC as warrior; Size M—Str 89, Agt 67, Dex 50, Sta 83, Int 61, Wis 72, Per 50, MR 83, PH ♥\*/♣+2/♠-2/♦-2

**Abilities:** Stun sticks are +2 magical weapons. When inflicting damage, they require a Defense Check to prevent stupefaction (the victim moves at half speed, always loses initiative, and can only make a single attack with a -2 penalty every other combat action); this effect lasts 1d6+2 combat actions for *wretches*, or 1d4+1 for *rascals*. A successful net attack immobilizes its victim; the net counts as a magical weapon and requires physical strength above what these demons can summon to break through. Officers of the Warrants wear plate armor and full-face helmets covered with alchemically treated lead preventing mind-affecting attacks. This coating requires regular applications to retain its effect.

**12. Firabiloo's Bath House:** №5 *Caldwa's Terraces*. Another wildly successful private enterprise, this spa became all the rage when Firabiloo became a member of the [Alchemists' Cabal](#) and began treating the waters and steams of his business to better please his guests. The establishment offers a number of private cool or hot pools, drinking fountains, and steam baths to heal various conditions, soothe, or simply gratify and relax patrons. Facilities include a lobby, locker rooms, showers, privies, a smoking lounge, a boiler room, an employees' breakroom, Firabiloo's office, and a service



# Sky City of Arcanial

entrance hidden on a lower level. A few shatim natives of [Garamial](#) practice their talents in the reputable [massage parlor](#), quite popular with sorcerers and wizards alike. Phantasmal effects mask their true identities, as these workers ran from [crime lords](#) who resent competition with their own businesses in Garamial.

**13. Berrywater & Offspring:** *Nº6 Caldwa's Terraces.* The Berrywaters are a fellfolk family originating from Belledor. Their great-grandfather began a money-changing occupation in Seahollow. During the following decades, Peerpoint Sr., the cantankerous ancestor, grew the family enterprise into a formal lending business, until a quarrel led his grandson, Astore, to cash in his shares and open a new commerce in Arcanial. His skill enabled him to move from Port Arcana's slums to the Lower District, and from there to the windswept heights of Caldwa's Terraces. Now the father of two sons and three daughters all in the family enterprise, "B&O" competes with the [Shebbai knights'](#) own [lending business](#). The fellfolk specialize in small loans to untitled sorcerers, while the [Shebbai](#) favor the aristocracy and the magiocracy's government. The Berrywater facilities include a lobby, cashiers, offices, a meeting room, a vault chamber below terrace level, and private strongboxes. There are no entrances from the lower floors. All stonework is reinforced and fitted with enchanted mouths reacting to diverse conditions. Part of the building is used for the private residences of the Berrywater family. Astore relies on [bounty hunters](#) to deal with thieves and grifters, or to pressure owners of overdue accounts.

**14. Obscura's Apothecary:** *Nº1 Arsenic St. on the Banshee.* This establishment includes the shop itself, with shelves and display cases crowded with glass vials, leather-clad flasks, multicolored jars, clay pots, metal urns, wooden boxes, ivory tubes, and other containers of any imaginable shape and material. A back room serves as the apothecary's workshop. Obscura the Younger is an alumna of the [Apothecaries' Cabal](#). She discreetly purveys poisons to adepts of [Haddan](#) that her late mother, Obscura the Elder, dealt with during the past decade, after which she informs her contact among the [Proctors](#) about the transaction. This risky arrangement enables her to avoid the gallows.

**15. Wadzo's Dazzling Wigs:** *Nº2 Magnesium St. on the Lower Banshee.* This shop offers a vast array of hairy headgear, from mundane woven manes to garish magical phantasms that will amaze the most blasé of courtiers at the lord high's palace. The more lurid pieces include enchanted designs that change color and hairstyle according to the owners' moods, others with curls lashing out like whips during combat, and various symbiotic creatures with magical abilities of their own to cure one's baldness forever. Haunted toupees pilfered from sorcerers who'd met sudden and untimely demises are not to be missed, though they may be vulnerable to a prior repelling the undead, and flee. Singing perukes are sold here as well, along with hair pieces concealing extradimensional spaces for storage. Wadzo's follies feature fabulous feathers and dandruff-free follicles, from human-like sources to monstrous origins.

**16. The Arcanial Tribune:** *Nº11 Lower Chimera Ave.* This gazette isn't by any means the only periodical seeing print in the magiocracy. Local papers may exist in the provinces, as well as at least one other rival publication in the capital city. The *Tribune* relies on a magical printing press called a lexmic, capable of producing animated images, a few with audial components when gazed at. For those, contributors such as [Latira Enizer](#) use devices known as *immortalizers*, which can retain images and sounds when operated correctly. They come in the form of an eye-like, grapefruit-sized stone ball fitted with two brass ear-trumpets curving forward.

Though it looks like a mechanical device, the large lexmic is in reality a shape-changing creature. It retains the notoriously snappish temperament common to its lesser footlocker-like cousins. It stands on four stumpy legs and possesses a huge mouth with inky, multicolored drool. Two *immortalizers* can be placed on the creature's head in what look like eye sockets, enabling the lexmic to memorize their contents. Its keeper forms a bond with the beast, teaching it to shape letters and images rather than teeth, following a careful dictation. It is fortunate that a certain empathy links the beast and its keeper as regards layout and presentation. Using its tongue to slather the organic printing blocks with its inky saliva, the creature then bites hard on anything placed between its jaws (like a sheet of paper). Perhaps not so conveniently, the lexmic loves vellum and parchment: it will occasionally crumple a sheet, turn it into jam, and maliciously swallow it—a deed inevitably followed by colorful curses from its keeper. On the other hand, paper jams can be scraped off the printing blocks and preserved in jars for future use.

The *Tribune's* owner and keeper of the lexmic, affectionally known as Big T'ed, dreams of expanding his business to purvey, in exchange for monthly rental fees, crystal balls enchanted to receive recordings from teams of *immortalizers* in order to proffer news, juicy gossip, and other forms of entertainment throughout the capital. A number of local businesses have privately stated interest in the enterprise, including Berrywater & Offspring, who are intent on eventually owning the operation. How to diffuse recordings to remote crystal balls has yet to be resolved. Big T'ed also is a secret member of [Odin's Ravens](#) and a friend of [Svartgaldur](#).

**Immortalizer:** 1 Lb., d4+4 charges (1 charge per encounter, rechargeable), MV 30' (10') levitating, uses empathy to move, focus, and record as its owner wishes, cost: 300 gold including carrying case. [Proctors](#) are known to use such devices with additional effects (invisibility, detect invisible, telescopic focus, night vision, X-Ray, infravision, and/or contingent self-destruct), worth several times the basic apparatus cost.

**Lexmic (1):** AR 25, Monster LF 33, MV 60' (20'), TA 1 bite or 1+ tongue, DR 4Lo+2 or paralysis, DC as monster; Size L—Str 100 (the tongue itself), Agt 44, Dex n/a, Sta n/a, Int 72, Wis 50, Per n/a, MR 58, PH ♥\*/☠ -2/♣\*

**Abilities:** The lexmic can use its gooey tongue as a projectile with a 30' range. Though it does not cause damage, it requires a DC to avoid paralysis, and a Strength Check to pull free of its adhesive properties; victims are otherwise dragged into





# Sky City of Arcanial

the mouth by the end of the following combat action, wherein they suffer maximum bite damage and some hard-to-wash-off printing gobbledygook. The lexmic's tongue is immune to all but axe-like weapons. It can be chopped off when inflicting damage exceeding 1/10<sup>th</sup> the creature's total life points, and if so, two more grow at the beginning of the next combat action.

**Big Ted:** AR 30, sorcerer LF 31, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +2, DR Lo, Size M—Str 50, Agt 56, Dex 61, Sta 67, Int 94, Wis 44, Per 78, MR 58, PH ♥\*/♣ -2/♠ +4. **Faith:** *Barthazu*, casual. **Credentials:** Master of Enchantment. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Norse.

**17. The Monty Haul:** №5 *Silver St. on the Chimera*. This gambling parlor accommodates card and dice games, as well as betting on weekly skyship races that take place around the city of Arcanial. Although betting is legal in Caldwen and, in most cases, legitimate in this establishment, occasional fraud occurs, especially if stakes exceed what the house wishes to cover. Tricksters using magic to gain an advantage at the expense of *The Monty Haul* will most likely meet muscular bouncers who promptly expel troublemakers. Up to four watchers posing as players keep an eye out for interlopers. Watchers use a proprietary detection spell that identifies visitors primarily interested in matters other than gambling. The establishment pays taxes (or protection money, depending on one's point of view) to the city of Arcanial, which often tempts officials to overlook irregularities. The gambling parlor is affiliated with the Spell Hackers' Cabal. Facilities on this floor include a hallway, three game rooms, a secure chamber (without windows), and rooms in the two contiguous floors (*Upper and Lower Chimera*).

**Detect Interloper:** Spell Potency II; lasts as long as concentration can be maintained; allows casual gaming, small talk, and half move—any other activity ends the spell; range: 20' within direct line of sight (does not reveal invisible targets); effect: exposes visitors with purposes other than legitimate gambling at *The Monty Haul*; a successful Defense Check enables one to evade detection; this divination spell bears DRM protection.

**Bouncers (up to 6):** AR 15 (leather armor), Warriors or Rogues LF 11, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 various, DR VL + special, DC as warrior or rogue; Size M—Str & Agt 89 or 83, Dex 50, Sta 83, Int 61, Wis 56, Per 44, MR 75, PH ♥\*/♣ -2/♠ \*

**Abilities:** These shady-looking characters use various weapons such as darts coated with sleeping poison, whips of entrapment, bolas, blackjacks, or, if matters turn sour, daggers. They prefer non-lethal combat to avoid trouble with the city's militia. Beating the living daylight out of troublemakers to find out what magic they used to deceive the house is fair game.

**18. Fresh Market:** №5 *Phosphorus & Dragon*. From first light until noon, this intersection features a fresh market. Stalls fill much of the fairway, offering foreign fruits and vegetables, unusually fascinating livestock, formidable feta, fantastic infusions, fabulous fabrics, fancy fleeces, frowzy furs, floral fixtures, fiery fudge,

fairy fiddle-faddle, and even a few feathered frogs to tempt finicky wizards and fiendish sorcerers. *Phosphorus St.* was widened from the intersection to the nearby fountain hall to ease foot traffic. Though there are no beggars in this part of town, street performers, grifters, and pickpockets are innumerable.

**Feathered Frogs (a few):** AR 20, Monster LF 6+1, MV 60' (20') on foot [120' (40') swimming or 90' leaps], TA 1 bite or breath, DR VL + paralysis or 4Lo frost damage, DC as monster; Size S—Str n/a, Agt 72, Dex n/a, Sta n/a, Int 44, Wis 67, Per n/a, MR 50, PH ♥+2/♣ \*/♠ \*

**Abilities:** A successful Defense Check negates the paralyzing effect of the creature's bite. Its breath weapon inflicts frost damage within a 10' cube (half damage with a successful DC). It can use it up to three times per combat encounter. If the creature fails a Morale Check, it uses 1d4 leaps to flee. Silvery white feathers enable this arctic batrachian to glide like a flying squirrel, hide in snowfields (75% chance of success up to 60' from an inquisitive observer, 95% chance if farther out), or swim somewhat like penguins. Warm-blooded, carnivorous, and about a foot large, feathered frogs come from the region between the *Hammer* and the *Anvil of Frost*, in Belledor's far north. They feed mostly on fish and small arctic pests. During mating season, males grow a colorful plumage on their backs and heads. Females attract suitors with a beguiling croak, and nest beneath large snow drifts or in ice caves. These odd amphibians are sometimes used as familiars.

**19. Curiozzini's Antiques:** №29 *Lower Dragon Ave*. This business offers two rooms filled with ancient odds and ends piled up nearly to the ceilings in rickety heaps. Thick curtains and stacks of wares mask the windows (glass panes have been blackened with soot or boarded up), leaving the sallow, flickering light from a few glowing disks embedded in the walls. Curiozzini's purveys furniture of unknown origins, decorative items of dubious artistic merit, puppets and dolls smiling enigmatically, lampshades of suspicious leathery make, mirrors adorned with impish faces, coffins, chests, somber-looking bronzes, moth-eaten tapestries and carpets, chandeliers, bizarre silverware, dirt-encrusted porcelain tableware, chipped decanters, creepy-looking knick-knacks, dusty old tomes, foo lions with cracked and peeling gold paint, and so on. No attempt at repairing anything can be surmised.

As old and mysterious as his hoard, the owner keeps a desk and cash box near the front door. Slow moving and frail, he wears smoked lenses. If asked, he claims light hurts his eyes (they long ago dried up, leaving empty holes in his face). A sign on the desk reads: "All sales final. No returns allowed." The shop owner may purchase for fair value antiques brought to the store. If questioned, any number of people in the neighborhood will attest to these transactions. They may allude to the store's general creepiness, but then such isn't uncommon at all among sorcerers.

The store is the lair of a poltergeist-like undead entity. Detection/divination spells cast inside the store or directed at the store from the outside do not reveal anything suspicious. The entity possesses the shop



# Sky City of Arcanial

owner who died some years ago but still gives the appearance of being alive. Every single item in the store is cursed. Purchasing or taking *anything* from the store for any reason results in the visitor being jinxed as well, although consequences aren't immediately evident. A cursed visitor becomes the next in line to take the shop owner's place, should he be eliminated. A jinx can be removed with the appropriate spell. If it isn't removed, succeeding a Defense Check temporarily negates the entity's call, in which case whomever is next in line is summoned instead.

A scroll lies in the cash box, Curiozzini's legal will and testament bequeathing ownership of the store to the present shopkeeper. The wording on the scroll changes each time a shopkeeper is killed, showing the name of the next victim. If destroyed, the scroll reappears some time later, in the cash box (or anywhere else in the store where it might be easily found). The present line of succession is hundreds long if not thousands, as Curiozzini's original business is as old as the city, and many of its items have been resold, stolen, or inherited by others. Most cursed recipients in Arcanial's history passed away naturally without ever having been called to the store or realizing they'd been jinxed. A victim summoned to take the previous shop owner's place, however, falls under the entity's possession. This effect remains until the jinx is removed or the controlling undead is permanently destroyed. The poltergeist feeds on the shop owner's Life Force, draining a small amount each day.

**Referee Notes:** The poltergeist is clever enough to leave clues in the path of characters looking for something, luring them to the store. The undead then makes sure the object of interest (or something like it) is found at the store, at an attractive low price. *Play it up:* even though divination spells do not work there, give smart aleck characters what they want to see when they attempt to locate treasures magically, or to appraise an item's value. Perhaps one of the old, dusty tomes has a strange spell in it. There is no trick dirty enough to which this poltergeist will not stoop. The undead remains invisible and does not interfere with visitors unless the shop's wares are being damaged. If so, the front door slams shut and stays locked until the entity is repelled or destroyed, or the attackers are killed and hidden away.

**Shopkeeper (one of many):** AR 10 (unarmored), monster LF 6, MV 90' (30'), TA 1claw, DR M, DC as monster; Size M—Str 50, Agt 44, Dex 44, Sta n/a, Int 83, Wis 50, Per 44, MR 100, PH ♥\*/♣\*/♠\*

**Abilities:** Like all undead creatures, it is immune to magical slumber, beguiling, and all other mind-affecting attacks. Moves silently (100% odds). Slow—always loses initiative during combat. Blind—sees through the controlling undead's own senses.

**Undead Entity (1):** AR 55, Monster LF 33, MV 60' (20'), TA 2 projectiles + ectoplasmic aura, DR 3Lo + aging, DC as monster; Size L—Int 83, Wis 50, Per n/a, MR 83, PH ♥-5/♣-5/♠\*

**Abilities:** Invisible. Immunities as the shopkeeper; also immune to weapons less than +2 magic and to all spells except those specifically affecting malevolent beings. If repelled as a fiend by a prior (see CC1, page 212), it hides temporarily on the Ethereal Plane. Using a telekinetic ability, the creature can throw two furniture-sized objects at its foes per combat action, up to 30' away. Its 10' radius ectoplasmic

aura takes three combat actions to manifest itself; it moves with the undead; anyone caught inside this aura must succeed a Defense Check or age +10-40 years and be pulled into the ethereal plane. The entity can pass through walls as if they do not exist.

**20. Pavane Palace:** №3-5 *Earth St. on the Elemental*. Pavane Palace is a dance hall large enough to occupy all the rooms that would be used for these two street addresses, or roughly 50'x50'. It is actually larger due to a dimensional enchantment, measuring instead 100'x100', with a vault arching 30' overhead. A fine parquet adorns the floor, while mirrors cover the walls and ceiling. Levitating stars shining golden light and silvery garlands add to the festive atmosphere. Part of the surface accommodates benches padded in red velvet, tables, and chairs, as well as a cloak room and privies. Heavenly music plays according to the prevailing mood in the room. Beverages materialize on the tables, as long as the right amount of coins is deposited there when speaking one's order. Empty glassware and whatever is left behind fades away when one leaves the establishment. As the guests enjoy themselves, phantasmal dancers twirl and leap across the floor or in the air, adding to the ambiance.

The savvy seeking social notoriety often come to this place to be seen—so does the *Arcanial Tribune*, ever on the lookout for anyone important and tantalizing gossip. This establishment is the creation of a sorcerer who was found murdered some years after reaping praise for his labor. A vacillating member of the *Fifth Column*, he was eliminated by his peers to ensure he would never reveal his secret. Pavane Palace was built as a way for *Fifth Column* members to pass messages along without raising suspicion. When a patron shows up unaccompanied, a phantasmal host soon approaches the lonesome visitor with an invitation to dance. While the two flounce merrily about, a code phrase may be whispered with a knowing smile into the dancer's ear: "I hear frog feathers are all the rage this year," to which the illusory partner responds with a flourish, "Fish fur is so much more ravishing." The visitor may then indicate the name of the intended recipient and a message. Whenever the recipient comes to the dancing hall, the phantasmal host will offer a dance, initiate the coded phrases, and relay the message. The illusions are just enchantments programmed to respond in certain ways while interacting with live guests. When facing an unexpected or hostile situation, they laugh it off and continue dancing. If attacked, they vanish and reappear later. The hall's mirrors are the phantasms' source.

**21. The Lion Rampant:** №6 *Plumbago St. on the Upper Elemental*. The Lion Rampant is an elegant guest house of good reputation. It occupies space directly below on the next few floors, down to *Lower Faerie*. The establishment's owner, one Mallion Ramallant, is a member of the *Maghia*. Traveling disciples occasionally come to this place because its owner will quietly warn them if he becomes aware of law enforcement or agents of *Proctors* showing up. Mallion wears a magical nail on his right index finger. When he touches a name in the guest book, enchanted lights in the assigned bedchamber dim, alerting the occupant that something is amiss. Disciples who wish to make themselves known to the owner pay their





# Sky City of Arcanial

rooms with Caldwen coins bearing a discreet mark: to profane eyes a mere scratch, to disciples a telltale signal marring the lord high's face on the coin. Rooms assigned to disciples include a secret passage out to Quills Alley, where recesses in the outside wall allow foot and handholds leading to the nearby Elemental Terrace (3). Any bars on the windows can easily be removed to get through. Some rooms have instead a secret passage to a small hollow in the wall in which to hide temporarily. A peephole enables a fugitive to see what happens in the room.

**Mallion:** AR 25, sorcerer LF 14, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +1, DR Lo, Size M—Str 50, Agt 56, Dex 61, Sta 67, Int 83, Wis 50, Per 67, MR 67, PH ♥\*/♣\*/♠+4. **Faith:** *Avraoth*, pious. **Credentials:** [Bachelor of Abjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Gandarian.

**Abilities:** Can turn into a fly once per day (see *Feyskins*, CC1, page 188).

**22. Abbey of Alzabbath:** *Tin St. on the Faerie.* The [Shebbai](#) knights own this street. A large copper-clad door separates *Tin Street's* outer end from *Faerie Ave.* The abbey includes all addresses there, up to N<sup>o</sup>9, as well as several more chambers on *Upper* and *Lower Faerie* accessible only from the main floor. Aside from monastic quarters and a fancy priory, the monastery is dedicated to a specific purpose: banking. To a certain degree, it competes with the [B&O](#) located on Caldwa's Terraces. This abbey often works with the [Treasurer of the Court](#) and the [Ministry of Wealth & Welfare](#) in the Upper District (12). Monks and knights escort the Lord Abbott who works and resides here. Most of them wear the colors of the Order: black and white with gold trim, bearing an upright sword before a coppery flame.

The abbey owns a good number of private dwellings and shop facilities in the Middle District generating monthly rents. His Eminence Essurion, the Abbot of Alzabbath, isn't as honest as he appears: he skims some of the revenues, which he keeps for himself. The abbot is a supporter of the aristocracy. He does on occasion accept "gifts" from the ruling class in exchange for which he backs their endeavors, openly or tacitly. His personal views depart diametrically from his [commander's](#) unspoken aspirations of furthering *Shebbai* hegemony in Caldwen.

**Essurion:** AR 55 (armored), mage-knight LF 50, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 chain whip +3, DR M+3, DC as warrior, Size M—Str 83, Agt 65, Dex 56, Sta 72, Int 89, Wis 78, Per 56, MR 75, PH ♥\*/♣\*/♠+3. **Faith:** *Naghilas*, zealot. **Credentials:** No college degree. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Gandarian.

**Abilities:** With a 1-2 roll on a d6, Essurion can sense the presence of a rogue demon within 30' radius. The abbot can tell if someone is possessed of gods or demons, and with a 1-2 on a d6, identify the possessing entity; also see [Shebbai Rituals & Abilities](#), page 99. Spellcasting (as a prior): SP I x4, SP II x4, SP III x3, SP IV x3, SP V x2, SP VI x1.

**23. Quests Are Us:** *N<sup>o</sup>2 Zinc St. on the Upper Faerie.* This shop's walls are covered with shelves and racks holding all that adventurers of any sort might need while on a quest. A slight

barn-like smell suffuses the atmosphere. Goods are of reasonably high quality. Prices are a little steep but not outrageously so, which does come as a relief in a place like Arcanial City. Few items are actually magical, and many in this category are basic potions or objects with simple enchantments. For anything fancier, the shopkeeper will suggest the [emporium](#) up on Caldwen's Terraces (9).

The shop includes three chambers (a. weapons and armor, b. tools of the trade, c. miscellaneous), and has additional facilities located down in Port Arcana, such as a repair workshop, a warehouse, and stables housing a variety of mounts and carriages. Hippogriffs "retired" from the army (perhaps stolen) can be purchased at the shop and claimed from the stable.

The shopkeeper, one Mare Clatterworthy, is a member of the [Wild Ones](#). Steeds are sold only under the written provision that they be used solely as the client's personal mount, and treated with care and affection. All mounts are properly trained and will accept a rider after a successful Per Check. Flying monsters are conditioned to return to the Clatterworthy stable if mistreated. The family includes a husband (Palfrey), two sons (Hoof and Hoss), and a daughter (Filly) working at the shop, at the Port Arcana facilities, or on errands to acquire goods for the family business.

**Mare Clatterworthy:** AR 25 (unarmored), hippus LF 19, MV 120' (40') as a biped or 270' (90') as a quadruped, TA 1 weapon or 2 hooves, DR by weapon or Lo/Lo, DC as monster, Size M or L—Str 83, Agt 65, Dex 50, Sta 94, Int 56, Wis 78, Per 56, MR 61, PH ♥+3/♣\*/♠\*. **Faith:** *Istra*, casual. **Credentials:** No college degree. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Mixed Talikai-Ellyrian.

**Abilities:** Hippus are shape-changing creatures that can adopt at will one of three forms—a human, a centaur, or a horse; hides and facial traits are specific to individuals. Hippus are immune to non-magical weapons other than silver. They can naturally converse with any horse-like creature. Once per day, they are able to summon 1d3 horse-like beings. They generally concern themselves with the wellbeing of equines, and will wean hippogriffs from eating pegasi and horseflesh. Hippus do have a sweet tooth for apples, carrots, and pastries. They hate wolves and werewolves, but will tolerate Caniseans. Related to Meruín elves, an aquatic species is interested in creatures like giant hippocampi and seahorses.

**24. The Prancing Griffin:** *N<sup>o</sup>3 Mercury St. on the Griffin.* Rowdy and unsophisticated, this inn is a front for the [Falconers' Guild](#). Facilities include a main dining room with a bar and a fireplace, a kitchen, stores, and several reasonably comfortable quarters, with one of the latter offering six bunkbeds for guests unable to secure a private bedchamber. Some of these rooms lie on the floors above and beneath the *Griffin* main; they can be reached from the dining room. A bulletin board hangs on the wall at the back of the eating area, where light is dimmest. Pinned on the wood, parchment bits and scrolls request help for a variety of tasks or identify wanted individuals (criminals on the run for the most part). The *Falconers' Guild* pays rewards for information leading to the arrest of fugitives, typically far less than what the city militia offers for their capture



# Sky City of Arcanial



(or their elimination). Patrons often use these wanted posters as targets when playing darts—whoever hits them between the eyes must chug a whole tankard of ale offered by the other players. Different parchment bits contain code words, odd marks, and what looks like graffiti identifying guild members and relaying messages between them. Experienced rogues might be able to decipher some of them, or at least find them awfully familiar. The owner, Dagħ Morran, also known as “Dagger,” usually works as barkeep.

**Dagħ Morran:** AR 20 (unarmored), half-elf falconer LF 22, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword or bow, DR M (sword) or Lo (bow), Size M—Str 72, Agt 83, Dex 50, Sta 78, Int 72, Wis 78, Per 61, MR 83, PH ♥\*/♣ +3/♠\*. **Faith:** *Delathien*, casual. **Credentials:** No college degree. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Mixed Osriel and Alfdáin.

**Abilities:** Falconers are similar to hunters in that they can track fugitives in the wilderness. They are also savvy enough to keep track of them in urban settings through investigation and intuition. They can sense the presence of non-magical camouflage and disguises with a score of 1-2 on a d6. Falconers often can surprise fugitives with a 3 or less on a d6, and be surprised with a 1 on a d6 at best. They train falcons to fly in certain patterns in order to betray the position of a fugitive or a possible ambush.

**25. Arcanial Fire Brigade:** №1-3 *Fire St. on the Lower Griffin*. Although a blaze in the flying city's stone- or brick-built districts isn't a huge concern (especially considering the number of spellcasters who could intervene) smoke inhalation and backdraft in such tall stone structures present a unique challenge. The Lower District, on the other hand, is a much bigger concern. Not only is it wood-built, but it also lies beneath the other two districts, its quarters are tightly-packed, and moving through them is a challenge.

The “brigade” counts several sorcerers equipped with spells and magical items intended to summon water and air elements in sufficient numbers to prevent a catastrophe. These sorcerers fly on



# Sky City of Arcanial

fire-resistant carpets that are fast, maneuverable, and large enough to carry several rescued residents. Largely immune to non-magical fire and smoke, several fracks also reside at the address, wearing leather padding with the brigade's colors—sable and gold stripes—and protective helms. Armed with axes, crowbars, chains, and grappling hooks, these demons are bound to rescue anyone trapped in an inferno. With some luck, visitors unaccustomed to demons might not be scared to death in the process.

Facilities include the sorcerers' residence at the №1 address, and the brigade itself with an indoor docking bay for the firefighting demons' flying barges. These vessels are fitted with water cannons and corvus-like boarding gangplanks.

**Firefighting Fracks:** AR 55 (armored), Monster LF 28+12, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others (claws & tail sting), DR bite 3M+4 or M+2 all others, DC as monster; Size L (8'tall)—Str 100, Agt 72, Dex 50, Sta n/a, Int 56, Wis 56, Per n/a, MR 67, PH ♥ -6/ ♠ +2/ ♣ -2

**Abilities:** Magical empathy; possession: 1 individual in presence of the demon (DC with -3 penalty negates); *call other* 0% (blocked); spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x1.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 20%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**26. So-Let-It-Be—Auction House:** №4 *Platinum St. on the Upper Hippogriff*. This illustrious establishment specializes in the sale of fine art, ancient objects, and rare magical artifacts. To be admitted to the premises, one must first contact the auction house by way of Arcanial's *Pixie Express* (27) located around the corner on *Salt Street* to set up a vetting appointment. The follow-up meeting is conducted nearby, at №4 *Plumbago St. on the Hippogriff*. A house official and several witnesses are present to ascertain that the applicant is of good repute and bears legitimate intentions. The "witnesses" use magic while the official questions the applicant to gain as much information as possible. The house requires a week to make a decision, which is delivered to the applicant by *Pixie Express*. Once cleared, new members may attend any auction they wish.

Facilities include offices, a storeroom, and an auction chamber at the end of a hallway running alongside *Hippogriff's* outer rim. All areas, windows, and doorways are subject to enchantments to help prevent break-ins and theft. A demon guards the storeroom, from which it can observe the vendue taking place in the adjacent chamber. Once an item has been claimed and paid for, the house will have it delivered to the new owner at the address on file. The house contracts pick-ups and deliveries with the *Factotum Fellowship*. While an item is in the so-called factotums' capable hands, it isn't the house's responsibility. Transport from a private seller's residence or to a new owner's involves an adequate escort.

Private sellers receive sales proceeds, minus the house's fees, within a few days of a successful auction. The house also insures its activities with the *B&O*, which holds its business account and handles large financial transactions through letters of credit.

Some of the vendues involve huge amounts of gold, depending on the nature of what was sold. Key figures of the magiocracy either attend personally or send trained agents to participate anonymously in the sales. Auctions are advertised in the *Arcanial Tribune*. All businesses involved will rely on the *Falconers' Guild* to resolve any foul play. The house occasionally hires adventurers to investigate rumors of long-forgotten artifacts, and to retrieve them so they may be auctioned off. Adventurers with the appropriate credentials may rely on the auction house to sell precious objects.

**Braguul of the Gold:** AR 60 (unarmored), Fiend LF 44+16, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others (claws & tail sting), DR bite 3Hi+4 or 2Lo+2 all others, DC as monster; Size L (9'tall)—Str 106, Agt 78, Dex 56, Sta n/a, Int 67, Wis 61, Per n/a, MR 67, PH ♥ -6/ ♠ +2/ ♣ -2

**Abilities:** Magical empathy; possession: 1 individual in presence of the demon (DC with -3 penalty negates); *call other* 0% (blocked); spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x2; Braguul can blend into any single object made of gold that's either a foot long or more, or that weighs at least 75 lbs. He can see, hear, perform possessions, and cast spells while within. Dispelling magic or an exorcism will force the beast out. A gold statuette of the elven winged goddess Arëatha remains in the storeroom for this purpose.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 35%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**27. Pixie Express:** №1 *Salt St. on the Lower Hippogriff*. Few places in Calidar recognize as much as Caldwen the benefits of hired pixie help. Though the little fellows can be utterly mischievous at times, their antics eventually calm down once their initial amusement fades. The prospect of earning magically-charged mead is generally motive enough to spend some time working at Caldwen's messaging business. An observant visitor might have noticed occasional bird houses hanging from the vaults above the main avenues. They have nothing to do with birds, but rather are relay stations for pixies carrying messages across the capital city. Of course, few people actually see them, since pixies are invisible most of the time. Their little wings only carry them so far, about 500' before the diminutive fairies need rest—thus the relay stations. The *Pixie Express* operates in the following manner: one fairy reaches a relay station and hands its tiny message to another waiting there, and so on. By the end of the day, all of them make it back to *Salt Street* and collect their daily miniature bottles. A teleporting device allows pixies and Kalyptra, the shop's owner and protector of pixies, a quick commute to and from the capital city and their native forests. Kalyptra uses her income to support the *Wild Ones*.

When letters and scroll tubes are handed over to the messaging service, they are placed before a tiny telescope. A delivery pixie then looks at it from the optical device's wrong end, which magically shrinks the item so that the little fellow can grab it, slip it into his jerkin or into her bodice, and swiftly depart toward the indicated address. Most places have a tiny slit in their front doors for pixies



# Sky City of Arcanial

to drop off their mail. Once they let go of them, messages return to their original sizes. Many businesses maintain contracts with the messaging service granting them their own drop boxes to send messages out. A little red flag appears outside their doors when a pickup is requested. The drop box, which is magically locked, contains a miniature spy-glass and a door large enough for a pixie to get in using a service key, and pick up the outgoing mail. These fellows are protected by a strict city ordinance, and tampering with them or what they carry is a punishable offense.

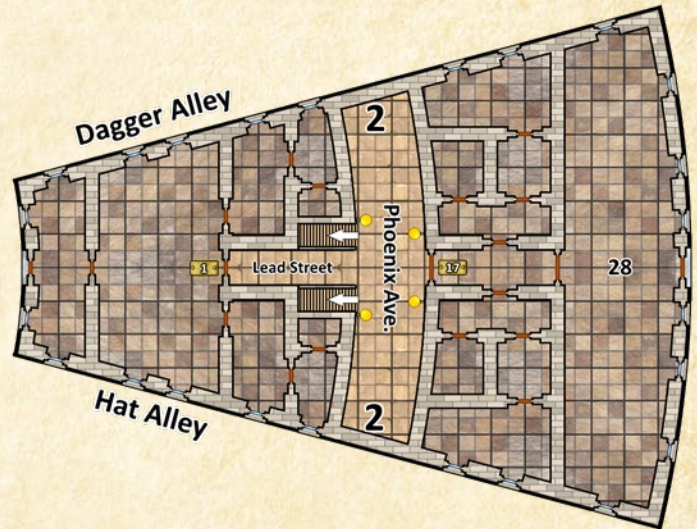
Like in all big cities, Caldwen's streets aren't necessarily the safest of places. Gangs of drunken pixies have gone rogue and will ambush their gainfully employed compatriots. Therefore, delivery pixies are armed, streetwise, and on the lookout for trouble. These alcohol-corrupted *punxies* are recognizable from certain features by those who can see them (tattoos, Mohawks, body piercings, bandanas, studded leather jerkins, etc.) Bad boys and bad girls of the fairy folk, they hijack private messages to blackmail senders and addressees. If they can break into a drop box, *punxies* will take its spy-glass to rob residences. Fences in the Lower District will gladly accept the fruits of pixie larceny. The little thieves then spend their ill-gotten gains in taverns somewhere nearby. Pixie graffiti might be spotted in the area. A part of Caldwen's municipal prison, known variously as the *Pixie Pokey*, *La Cage aux Fae*, *the Bug House*, *Punxatraz*, or *the Wormwood Aerie*, is designed to incarcerate convicted *punxies*.

**Kalyptra Kraspedodromos (the owner):** AR 10 (unarmored), druid LF 28, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 cudgel, DR Lo, Size M—Str 67, Agt 55, Dex 50, Sta 78, Int 61, Wis 89, Per 83, MR 75, PH ♥\*/♣\*/♠\*. **Faith:** *Alana-Lifebringer*, zealot. **Credentials:** No college degree. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Mixed Meryath and Ellyrian.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting as a druid—SP I x4, SP II x4, SP III x3, SP IV x2, SP V x1. She can correctly identify plants, animal types, and whether water is pure; as a druid, she can ignore non-magical tangles without MV penalty and without leaving clues of her passage; she also can change shape three times per day (once each into a mammal, a bird, and a reptile).

**28. Temple of Ashgaddon:** *Phoenix & Lead (№17)*. This religious shrine is one of several on this floor. Located at the intersection of *Lead Street* with *Phoenix Avenue*, the main entrance opens on an elegant 40' long colonnade leading to the sanctum. Another door leads outside, facing the *Outer Gauntlet*. Eight chambers used for meditation, private services, office work, vestry, storage, and acolytes' quarters straddle the colonnade. About 40' by 140', the sanctum enjoys a magnificent vault soaring nearly 70', reaching as high as the *Upper Griffin*. The temple's cross-section can be seen on Arcanial's side view diagram (page 107).

Clad in black marble, the sanctum's walls and floors give an impression of organic worm-like movement. Only stirred by the slow swing of a large bronze thurible, dimness veils the vault's upper reaches. Careful observation might reveal the presence of wraiths drifting in the darkness above, the lingering forms of disciples felled in the service of their god.



A statue of Ashgaddon stands in the sanctum's middle, facing the main entrance. At each of the chamber's two ends stands a 10' wide bronze vat with a few steps to reach its rim. Visiting faithful drip a few drops of blood into it, which turn into red maggots. By end of day a crawling, glistening mass fills the vat. After sunset, acolytes, priors, and visitors all leave, and the doors are carefully locked. Only when all falls as silent as a tomb do the wraiths descend upon the vats and gorge themselves with the Life Force so generously proffered. The cycle resumes at sunrise.

The cult's **grand prior** visits this temple when one of the wraiths grows powerful enough to serve Ashgaddon as a Celestial (see *Divine Servants*, CC1 page 211). The ritual sends the former wraith to *Naavut-Karkerath*, the god's outer-planar domain in Sadarya. The temple's head prior can summon the wraiths to defend the sanctum against defilers.

**Acolytes (8):** AR 15 (leather padding), novice priors LF 6, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 barbed spear, DR M, Size M—Str 67, Agt 50, Dex 56, Sta 78, Int 61, Wis 83, Per 61, MR 75, PH ♥-2/♣-2/♠-2. **Faith:** *Ashgaddon*, zealot.

**Abilities:** Repel undead; spellcasting—SP I x1. Barbed Spear—disarm opponent with a critical hit.

**29. Temple of Dagleeth:** *Phoenix and Zinc (№35 Phoenix Ave.)* The layout is similar to the Temple of Ashgaddon's (28), though appearances end here. The main doors are made of varnished crimson wood, and the sanctum's walls are covered with blue-glazed tiles embedded with the golden curves of ancient Gandarian script. Stylized and decorative, the lettering varies from a half-inch to more than a foot large for all to see. Over time, the text changes at the mysterious whims of Dagleeth's divine servants acting from their master's Sadaryan domain at *Neshnee-of-the-Red-Gate*. A statue of Dagleeth facing the main entrance holds an open book. Two more occupy the opposite ends, Lemmu and Dreez, scions of the cult devoted to poetry and calligraphy.

A strange feature of this temple causes faithful visitors to levitate so they may read its scriptures while in a state of contemplation. They rise as high as the strengths of their beliefs permit.



# Sky City of Arcanial

Casual worshipers and the less enlightened remain at floor level. Seen from below, it seems scores of floating readers move about in a sort of slow-motion ballet divinely choreographed. Indistinct whispers echoing across the chamber cause godless heathens and visitors of other faiths to feel confused and disoriented (–2 penalty to Agility and Intellect Checks, and significant penalties to sound-related abilities).

Disciples who dwell upon the scriptures earn a bonus to spell research reflecting how high they levitated. In fact, their minds are being read. Within a recess in Dagleeth's stone book lies another made of vellum and bound in green leather. It cannot be seen from the floor level, and those who levitate are far too captivated with their reading to notice. A force field protects this tome, so that only the temple's prior may remove it, following the correct ritual. Information the divine servants glean from the minds of the faithful is recorded in this tome about spells the latter are researching. The grand prioress of the cult visits this temple occasionally and conducts a ceremony to sacrifice its sacred codex's contents to Dagleeth, after which the pages are magically erased, and the process resumes.

**Grand Prioress Mashaka Alaziraath:** AR 30, sorceress-prioress LF 47, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 stiletto pen +2, DR M+2, Size M—Str 39, Agt 44, Dex 50, Sta 33, Int 89, Wis 94, Per 83, MR 75, PH ♥\*/ ♠ +5/ ♣ \*. **Faith:** *Dagleeth*, zealot. **Credentials:** [Master of Abjuration](#). **Apparent Age:** elderly. **Ancestry:** Gandarian. **Residence:** [Lamerith](#).

**Abilities:** Repel bookworms (rather than the undead) and spell-casting—SP I x6, SP II x6, SP III x5, SP IV x4, SP V x4, SP VI x3, SP VII x1. Her stiletto pen is a +2 magical weapon able to paralyze victims who fail a Defense Check; paralysis lasts 4+1d4 combat actions. Though she suffers from magically-incurable short-term amnesia, Her Grace Mashaka possesses an encyclopedic memory; she has a 44% chance to know any single fact related to Calidar that isn't actually a secret, or 22% if related to the outer worlds and the outer planes, though she most likely will forget she mentioned it 2d4 combat actions later. An eye tattooed on her forehead gives her the ability to locate any book in any library she visits.

## 30. The Sphinx Theater: №1 Magnesium St. on the Sphinx.

A lobby at the main entrance lies between adjacent privies on its right and left. The showroom past the lobby takes up the remainder of the structure between the *Inner Gauntlet* and *Inner Potion Alleys*. Decorative panels mask all windows and doors other than the exits to the lobby and privies. The showroom's ceiling arches above the floor on the *Upper Sphinx*. Opposite the exits, a silver screen covers the innermost wall.

Actors, musicians, props, and dressing rooms are actually located on the floor below. An enchantment broadcasts the artists' performances on the silver screen on the floor above.

Aside from conventional theatrical plays, the most popular shows



come from *immortalizers* (see 16. *The Arcanial Tribune*) used to record the tribulations of adventurers, with some judicious edits and the addition of evocative musical scores. Suspenseful dungeon crawls, sudden gory monster encounters, the unveiling of frightening secrets, heroic battles, hilarious missteps, and comical character banter are all the rage. A series of shows presented under the banner *Total Party Kill* (followed by a number) are most popular. Adventuring groups can be contracted to take with them a bard wielding an *immortalizer*. Others might be recorded surreptitiously through an invisible device.

## 31. Metropolitan Bestiarium: №1 Tin St. on the Sphinx.

This museum shows a collection of rare monsters, their pelts, their organs, and their bones. Intact creatures are stuffed or fine wax imitations enchanted to make them appear to be alive, often frightening classes of children on field trips. Other exhibits include glass cases and shelves or pedestals supporting large transparent jars of particular interest to the more intellectual visitors. Skeletons and flying creatures that roamed the skies long ago hang from the ceiling, including a mummified red dragon in the main exhibit. A chamber serves as a souvenir shop, across the lobby from a small lecture room where sages make presentations on the ecology of one monster or another. Background audial magic emits screeches, squawks, hisses, roars, and miscellaneous monstrous eructation, while walls and ceilings mimic wilderness and dungeon-like settings. The main exhibit's ceiling arches about 20' high, past the *Upper Sphinx*. Wooden stairs, catwalks, and balconies enable a better view of the dragon as it peers down at the visitors and blasts an illusory cone of fire. Another level on the *Lower Sphinx* houses workshops and storage areas.

The owner is a fierce opponent of the [Wild Ones](#), who have been accusing his museum of encouraging cruelty to monsters. Over-zealous supporters have been known for breaking in to vandalize exhibits and wreck the workshops, or ambush monster-hunting parties paid by the *bestiarium*. Others attempt to harass visitors until ordered to disperse by the city militia. A few rogues used the conflict as an opportunity to try to steal monster bits worth a pretty sum on the black market and frame the *Wild Ones* for the theft. Meanwhile, an urban legend circulates about a red dragon in human form planning to exact revenge for its fallen kin.

**Abaqaal Naramsu (Curator):** AR 10, sorcerer-warrior LF 19, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 chakram +2, DR Lo (first attack) VL (ricochet), Size M—Str 56, Agt 50, Dex 83, Sta 61, Int 89, Wis 67, Per 72, MR 75, PH ♥\*/ ♠ \*/ ♣ +3. **Faith:** unrepentant heathen. **Credentials:** [Master of Enchantment](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Narwani.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x2, SP III x2, SP IV x1.

**Chakram:** Abaqaal used multiple skill slots to master his favored weapon. One slot enables melee and ranged attacks (range: 20'/40'/60'). With the second slot, the weapon returns to its owner after a ranged attack. With the third, each successful hit enables another attack on the next closest target within 10' of the previous one (if any); the attacker picks which target is attacked if more than one exists. Though the initial hit roll applies to all subsequent attacks, each incurs a cumulative –1 penalty to hit. Critical hits do not carry



# Sky City of Arcanial

over to ricochet attacks. The chakram cannot exceed its full range (60') as a result of multiple attacks; if the next possible target lies more than 60' from the attacker, the chakram returns to its owner. Ricochet attacks sustain the same range penalty as the one applied to the initial roll. Weight: 4Lbs (2 Kg). *This description supersedes an earlier one* (CC1, page 59).

**32. City Gaol:** №7 *Antimony St. on the Wyvern*. This unassuming address hides more than one might guess. The facilities' four chambers house a front desk, a "sorting" chamber, a break room, and the governor's office. An iron arch stands in the middle of the sorting chamber, which causes those made to walk through it to shrink to about 2½" tall. A guard then picks up the diminutive inmates and places them in cubby holes dotting the chamber's walls. Tin tags bearing the inmates' names then appear on small hooks beneath the miniature cells. Inmates to be released are simply tossed back through the iron arch, reverting them to their previous sizes.

Though Arcanial's jail receives frequent visits from the city militia, the sorting chamber retains a permanent guardian, *Sadaadea-of-the-Iron-Gate*, a demoness who remains invisible in most cases. Two rather brawny prison guards take care of handling inmates going or coming through the iron arch. They use butterfly nets to scoop up miniature inmates. While incarcerated, inmates suffer at least once the ignominy of the demoness's possession. She delights in tormenting her special guests, taking the opportunity to fish information from their minds when they fail their Defense Checks, which she later discloses to the *Proctors of the Halls* and the prison's governor, Agon Belamma. The latter reserves the right to decide whether an inmate should be transferred to the more secure facilities at *Carcer Island*. Most inmates awaiting trial otherwise remain at the city jail.

**Sadaadea-of-the-Iron-Gate:** AR 60 (unarmored), Fiend LF 44+16, MV 120' (40') or flying 180' (60'), TA 1 bite or spell + 3 others (claws & horns), DR bite 3Hi+4 or 2Lo+2 all others, DC as monster; Size L (9'tall)—Str 106, Agt 78, Dex 56, Sta n/a, Int 67, Wis 61, Per n/a, MR 67, PH ♥-6/ ♠\*/ ♣+2

**Abilities:** Magical empathy; possession: 1 individual in presence of the demon (DC with -3 penalty negates); *call other* 0% (blocked); spellcasting: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x2; Sadaadea leaves an invisible mark on those she once possessed; the mark enables her to locate her victims within 30 miles (50 Km), a mile below ground, or up to Calidar's atmosphere limit. The mark lasts a week minus the bearer's LF rating (stated as a percentage), plus one day.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 35%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**Agon Belamma (Governor):** AR 25 (leather armor), sorcerer-rogue LF 28, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 sword +2, DR M, Size M—Str 61, Agt 83, Dex 78, Sta 44, Int 89, Wis 50, Per 56, MR 75, PH ♥\*/ ♠-3/ ♣-3. **Faith:** *Avraoth*, pious follower. **Credentials:** *Master* of *Alteration*. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Shatim of Gandarian ancestry.

**Abilities:** As a rogue; spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x3, SP IV x2, SP V x1.

**City Militia Patrol (up to 12):** AR 30, warrior LF 6, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 halberd, DR Hi+2, DC as warrior; Size M—Str 89, Agt 72, Dex 61, Sta 83, Int 61, Wis 50, Per 56, MR 83, PH ♥\*/ ♠+2/ ♣\*

**Militia Patrol Leader (1):** AR 35, sorcerer-warrior LF 11, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 sword +1 or wand, DR M+1 or paralysis, DC as sorcerer or warrior; Size M—Str 78, Agt 67, Dex 50, Sta 72, Int 83, Wis 56, Per 61, MR 83, PH ♥\*/ ♠+2/ ♣\*. **Random names—***Sgt. Agammis, Acezer, Nabuma, Azzaphal, Enlit, Zaroth, Nidur, Artetul.*

**Abilities:** spellcasting—SP I x2, SP II x2. Carries a wand of paralysis with three charges.

**33. Lower Courthouse:** №1 *Antimony St. on the Wyvern*. Eight chambers house a lobby, courtroom, magistrate's office, holding cells, meeting chamber, and two waiting rooms. It is the counterpart to the High Court located in the Upper District (17). Most judgments are rendered here for the city of Arcanial and immediate surroundings. The list of cases is long, and defendants deemed dangerous to society or at risk of fleeing are detained at the nearby city gaol (32). Several magistrates adjudicate the cases—each with individual attributes (roll 1d6):

<b>Harshest:</b>	PH ♥-3/ ♠+2/ ♣*, former governor at <i>Carcer Island</i>
<b>Severe:</b>	PH ♥*/ ♠+6/ ♣-3, <i>Maghia</i> sympathizer
<b>Fair:</b>	PH ♥-2/ ♠*/ ♣+3, past <i>Falconers' Guild</i> bounty-hunter
<b>Fair:</b>	PH ♥*/ ♠*/ ♣*, <i>Shebbai</i> sympathizer
<b>Lenient:</b>	PH ♥+1/ ♠+4/ ♣-3, member of the <i>Habrith</i>
<b>Most Lenient:</b>	PH ♥+3/ ♠*/ ♣+3, <i>Wild Ones</i> sympathizer

**Magistrate (1 of 6) :** AR 10, sorcerer LF 22, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 staff +2, DR Lo+2, DC as sorcerer; Size M—Str 50, Agt 56, Dex 61, Sta 44, Int 94, Wis 89, Per 83, MR 58. **Faiths:** various (casual to pious). **Credentials:** *Master* of *Divination*. **Apparent Ages:** middle aged to elderly. **Ancestry:** various. **Random names—**1. *Iqbeel Zalik*, 2. *Kirial Osmandine*, 3. *Sapha Orphellian*, 4. *Arios Kalatamis*, 5. *Azeel Ayn-Azazeel*, 6. *Beorthe Cutwartha*.

**Abilities:** spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x2, SP IV x2.

**34. Thorfinn's Flying Carpets:** №3 *Fire St. on the Wyvern*. The owner of this shop is a former Nordheim raider, now retired, selling off the fruits of his past expeditions into Narwani lands. A great deal of gold was collected besides a haul of carpets, oil lamps, and other baubles. The most junior raider on the crew, Thorfinn was awarded the carpets and a big lot of Narwani trinkets deemed of little worth in Nordheim. How wrong they were. Most of these goods were part of a Narwani wizard's trove, and quite well enchanted for that matter. When Thorfinn found out (given that several of the fancy rugs owned personality and communication means sufficient enough to exhibit their unusual nature), the young raider packed up and opened shop in Arcanial. Part fence and part entrepreneur,





## Middle District Design Template

### Upper Terraces Limits

1. Palace Circus & Cascades

2. Magical Portals

Wall

Inside Door

Outside Door & Boarding Quay

Window & Sill

Stained Glass Window

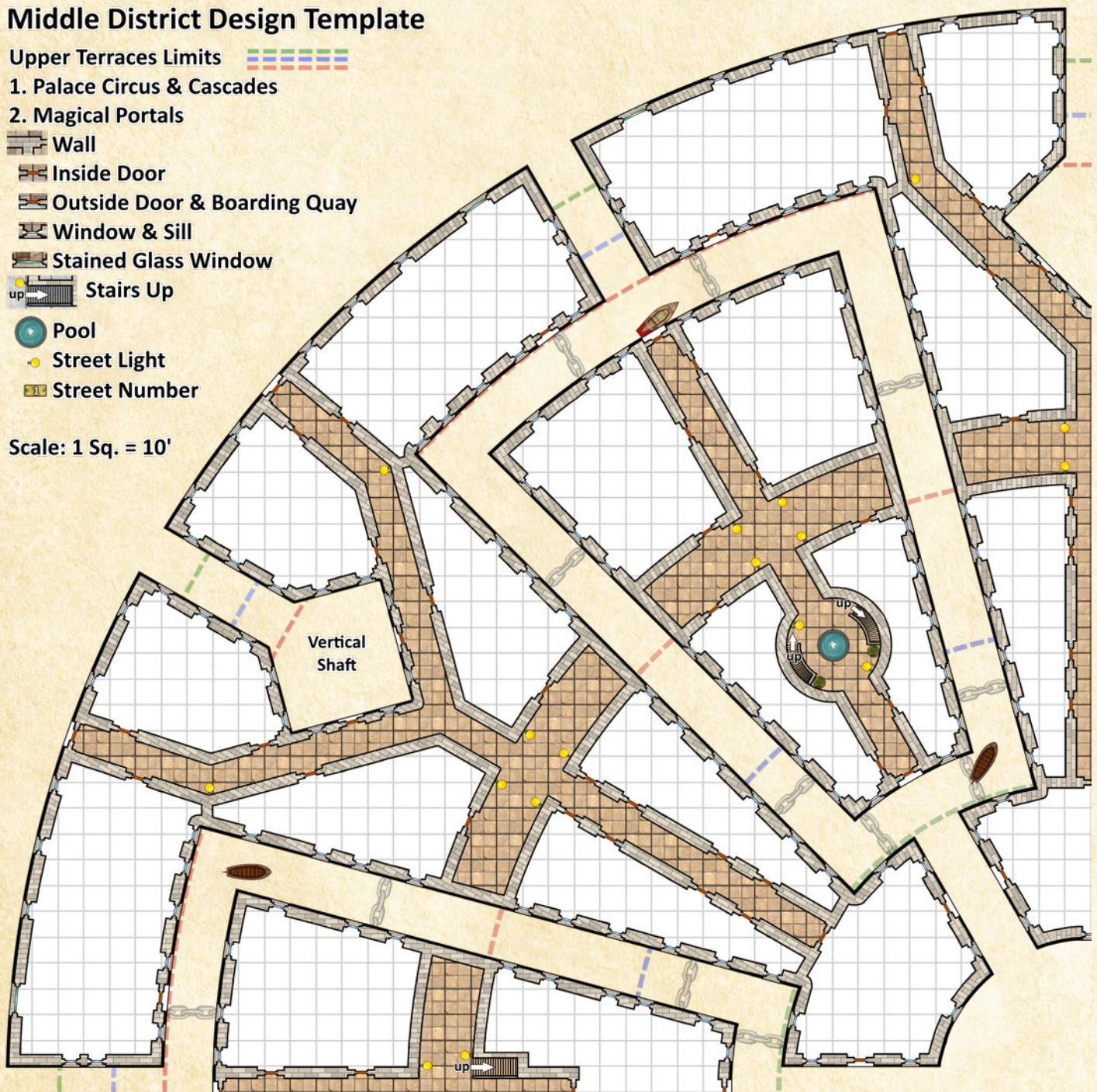
Stairs Up

Pool

Street Light

Street Number

Scale: 1 Sq. = 10'



he later established links with desert thieves and other Narwani wizards whose woven wonders he now sells.

**Thorfinn (1)**: AR 35, warrior LF 25, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 battle axe +2, DR M+2, DC as warrior; Size M—Str 94, Agt 78, Dex 56, Sta 89, Int 67, Wis 72, Per 83, MR 83, PH ♥+4/ ♠-4/ ♣+3. **Faith**: Thor, pious. **Credentials**: an axe & determination. **Apparent Age**: young adult. **Ancestry**: Norse.

**Abilities**: *bloodlust*—if bloodied in battle, fights to the death with a +3 bonus to hit and damage, 50% of all sustained combat damage is delayed until the end of the battle; during a berserk rage, immune to mind-affecting magic, and MR rated at 100%. *Odin's Ravens* sympathizer.

**35. City Catacombs**: *On the Lower Wyvern*. The lowest floor in the Middle District was intended to be backfilled, but during the years after the city in the sky was proven stable, galleries and crypts were carved out of the levitium, along with drainage pipes. Entrances from the level above consist as sewer-like grates and require a rope or a ladder. Debris and refuse tend to drop from streets and avenues above occasionally cluttering the galleries. Residents who cannot afford burial at the [Mausoleum of Keth](#) and who dislike the cemetery outside Port Arcana often lay their dead to rest in the city catacombs, usually sealing their tombs magically. A bronze plaque identifies the occupant and relatives.



# Sky City of Arcanial

The *Necromancers' Congress* occasionally meets in one of the other crypts, for which a few eminent members hold the keys. They come together when they feel that one of their own is facing a grave injustice in their view, or is under threat. They also secretly bring the remains of their most-hated foes to be turned into undead bound to serve them. Those remain in the city catacombs to protect the tombs but also to prevent their masters from being followed before and after their secret gatherings. The congress relies on rituals to awake the undead, anything from ghouls to spectres as befits the fallen foes.

## Blank Template

The template provided (on the left) outlines the outside walls, streets, and the circular avenue. It represents the *Wyvern* level. Referees can reprint this template and fill in inside walls to support their adventures as they see fit. Dotted lines in red, blue, and green show the limits of the terraces located on the upper floors, and therefore where the outside walls should stand.

## Lower District

Some 800' across and 380' tall, the Lower District forms the bottom of the flying city. This part of town remains in the shadow of the Middle District. The sun rarely shines within its center. Structures nearest the perimeter are highest, gradually getting lower near the middle. Water cascading from the Middle District pours into six pools (1) located at the center, before draining out into Port Arcana's retaining pond. The pools are 8' deep. Sturdy hemp lines and rope bridges tether the Lower District's many wooden structures together. Chains anchor three armed redoubts (2) to the whole assemblage, as described earlier. Built entirely of wood, creaks and groans are a permanent feature of this neighborhood as its tethers strain at the whims of the winds. Slowly bobbing and swaying, it completes a full clockwise rotation in about 40mn, for game purposes at approximately MV 10' per combat action at the outer perimeter. Newcomers may have to overcome insidious but persistent air sickness for the first day aboard (a Stamina Check is required; failure results in combat penalties to hit and Defense Checks proportionate to the failure).

Maze-like and narrower, air inlets do not reflect the symmetrical designs of the two higher districts. Called broadways, the widest inlets provide 20' clearance, while the smaller alleys leave only a 10'-wide passage. A jumble of tethers, rope bridges, clothes lines, and gangplanks haphazardly crossing the inlets present a challenge to navigation—only the smaller flying gondolas and barges venture into alleys. Aside the open decks at the top, rickety balconies enable entry into the tall and narrow buildings. Teleporters are rare; structures feature instead narrow corridors, tight-fitting spiral stairways, and ladders, as well as foot- and handholds on the outside walls. Locals

are used to these perilous conditions, which may well trigger fear of heights among outsiders.

The top view illustration above shows a section of the Lower District (Scale: 1 sq. = 20'). 1. Deck, 2. Rooftop, 3. Rope Bridge (at deck level), 4. Rope Bridge (on a lower level, shown in gray), 5. Rope Tether, 6. Street Lamp (aligned with inlets), 7. Ground Below, 8. Gangplank.



**Fear of Heights:** Most player characters aren't initially designed to account for fear of heights. Rogues, career skyship crew, residents of places like Arcanial's Lower District, flying creatures, gods, most animals, and monsters in general are immune. Other beings, however, may be susceptible at the referee's discretion. Roll an initial Wisdom Check for each player character; the level of failure indicates whether a character is predisposed to fear of heights, and the severity of the condition.

If a character is susceptible to fear of heights and faces a situation

Predisposition to Fear of Heights (Wis Check)	
Critical Success	Immune
Below Score	Check when more than 360' high
Exact Score	Check when more than 180' high
Above Score	Check when more than 90' high
Critical Failure	Terrified of heights more than 30'

that could trigger its effects, such as approaching a cliff's edge, looking over a skyship's railing, climbing a mast, crossing a rope bridge or a gangplank (etc.), a Wisdom Check should be required. Characters *terrified of heights* receive a -2 penalty to these checks. Results remain in effect until the end of the encounter or until fear is dispelled.

Fear of Heights Effects (Wis Check)	
Above Score	Negligible
Exact Score	-1 penalty to Strength and Charisma
Below Score	-2 penalty to Strength, Agility, Charisma, attack rolls, and Defense Checks
Critical Failure	Paralysis for 1d4 combat actions, otherwise as above plus -50% MV penalty



# Sky City of Arcanial

## Above & Below the Decks

Though much of the Lower District houses private dwellings and tenements, many small shops can be found as well. Artisan workshops of all sorts co-exist with warehouses and other utilities, including a red-lantern neighborhood unthinkable in the higher districts. Three docking areas are listed as “Ports” (see top view image, opposite). Mornings and evenings, throngs of workers struggle to reach the Middle District or Port Arcana. They hurry as best they can across the rope bridges and gangplanks to reach a Broadway (Bdwy.) where the chances of catching a flying gondola are greatest. Despite the frantic chaos, vessels packed with workers travel up or down, while others still looking to fill all seats meander along the inlets, alert for an arm raised or an imperious whistle. City militia patrol the wards on flying barges (a helmsman, six militia guards, and a spellcasting leader), fitted with a deck weapon, typically a scorpion (a high-powered heavy crossbow inflicting at least double damage at double the normal range) and a wide, swivel-mounted mirror enchanted with a light beam effective during night watches.

**3. Docking Facilities:** Three dock facilities jut out at various levels from the district’s outer rim. Each features a hangar-like chamber through which merchandise from Port Arcana transits. Sturdy davits enable goods to be dispatched through the floors to the appropriate storage, up to upper deck warehouses or several floors beneath the docking installations. Transport barges moor at the piers long enough to disembark goods and passengers. Traffic ends at sundown and resumes at dawn, weather permitting. On the lookout for anything unusual, a city militia detachment remains posted at each location, day and night. A permit is required to dock; private vessels visiting the area must report to Port Arcana to purchase a docking authorization. Authorized barges may unload at other warehouse locations in the Lower District.

Though not all workers in these facilities qualify as riff-raff, some definitely belong to the *Spell Hackers’ Cabal* (page 52). The city militia has been unable to root them out. On the other hand, someone else has been playing a game of cat and mouse with the scoundrels. A demon once in the service of a Felisean sorceress turned rogue after a powerful were-rat assassinated her. Of a feline nature itself, the beast began hunting all were-rats in the vicinity, and once the killer and its kind were exterminated, its hunger for vengeance grew to include those once associated with the vermin.

Though an outlaw, the demon benefits from the city militia’s tacit support, since it seems to be doing part of their job. They pretend not to be able to catch the rogue demon when anyone complains. They remove evidence whenever possible, look deliberately in the wrong places, and mislead demon-hunters. They might even spoil attempts by gangs to ambush their stalker. Meanwhile, the demonic ratter devours its victims’ spirits and grows more powerful (see *Warehouses*, next). There is no telling whom it will hunt next. Most in the city militia sense the growing peril they protect. They assume that they will transfer or receive promotions to other posts as a reward for keeping the docks under their control, and thus the inevitable will become someone else’s problem.

**4. Warehouses:** Many storage facilities dot the neighborhood’s various decks. Those away from the three main docking facilities are less practical because of busy inlet traffic during work hours. Shopkeepers are responsible for finding suitable transportation for their goods. Professional porters can be hired to carry luggage or merchandise across decks, gangplanks, and rope bridges, squeezing past stairs and ladders along the way. Fellfolk who are fast, strong, and sure-footed often earn a good living. True professionals are amazingly skilled at finding any address in the Lower District’s maze of inlets and the shortest way to get there. Most decks feature one or more davits to help winch down large items to an adjacent lower deck or to windows on lower floors. Since the city militia only visits sporadically those warehouses away from the main docking facilities, the presence of scoundrels is greater here.

**Tabbistopheles Crimson Whiskers:** AR 45 (unarmored), Frack LF 28+12, MV 120’ (40’) or flying 180’ (60’), TA 1 bite or spell + 4-6 claws, DR bite 3M+4 or claws M+1, DC as monster; Size L (8’tall)—Str 94, Agt 106, Dex 89, Sta n/a, Int 56, Wis 50, Per n/a, MR 75, PH ♥-4/ ♠+4/ ♣\*.

**Abilities:** Magical empathy; possession: 1 individual in presence of the demon (DC with -3 penalty negates); *call other* 20% (a *tabbyssinian* cat, see next); spellcasting requires a hiss: SP I x2, SP II x2, SP III x1; Tabbistopheles possesses the senses of a normal cat and the ability to move silently unless a critical failure is rolled (5%). If two of the four front claw attacks succeed, roll another two for the rear claws with a +2 attack bonus.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 20%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**Tabbyssinian Cat:** AR 30 (unarmored), monster LF 17+8, MV 90’ (30’) or flying 150’ (50’), TA 1 bite + 2-4 claws, DR bite 2Hi or claws VL+1, DC as monster; Size M (panther-like)—Str 89, Agt 100, Dex 83, Sta n/a, Int 50, Wis 44, Per n/a, MR 58, PH ♥-4/ ♠+4/ ♣\*.

**Abilities:** Magical empathy up to 90’; invisible in the presence of any light, otherwise wraith-like with glowing red eyes; possesses the senses and abilities of a normal cat. If two (front) claw attacks succeed, roll another two for the rear claws with a +2 attack bonus. When left to its own devices, a *tabbyssinian* may spontaneously serve someone with a similar philosophy.

**Immunities:** Magic resistance 5%; fear, sleep, beguiling, possession, non-magical weapons, disease, poison, paralysis, energy drain, and most necromantic magic.

**5. Workshops:** Small workshops of 2-6 artisans and helpers can be found in most places in the Lower District. Similar businesses tend to cluster in some areas, so for example more than one pottery may be located in a vicinity, often giving their names to the closest inlets. They are usually family businesses. The head of the household’s residence may be adjacent or on the next floor above or below. A sliding door may open directly onto a deck or an inlet, allowing a small barge to moor alongside. Colorful tents often hang above the entrances so they can easily be seen from a distance. Common businesses



# City of Arcanial

## Lower District





# Sky City of Arcanial



include: **5a.** Potteries, **5b.** Mirror Makers, **5c.** Cabinetmakers, **5d.** Weavers, **5e.** Fulling Houses, **5f.** Dyeing Houses, **5g.** Tanneries, **5h.** Leatherworkers, **5i.** Fripperies, **5j.** Carpenters, etc. Random personalities are listed in the table below (roll a d10).

**Shopkeeper/Artisan:** AR 5, LF 8, MV 120' (40') or less, TA 1 tool of the trade, DR VL, DC as appropriate; Size S/M—Str 67, Agt 50, Dex 61, Sta 50, Int 72, Wis 50, Per 56, MR 58. **Faiths:** any. **Credentials:** none. **Ages:** young adult or older. **Random Aliases:** **1.** Bane Addergaze, **2.** Tra Nafazzu, **3.** Vadagan the Brown, **4.** Calbe Ardedu the Elder, **5.** Archiel Palomyr, **6.** Bini Babada, **7.** Pyrarch the Undimmed, **8.** Rashim Ulukashka, **9.** Varatilis the Cloven, **10.** Gnott Calaphim.

d10	Philosophy	Background	Early Career	Ancestry	Race
1	PH ♥-3/ ♠ -3/ ♣ *	Informer for the <a href="#">Spell Hackers</a>	Rogue	Gandarian	Human
2	PH ♥-4/ ♠ */ ♣ +3	Former <a href="#">Falconer</a> wanted for murder	Warrior	Alfdaín	Human
3	PH ♥-5/ ♠ +3/ ♣ -2	Moonlights as a <a href="#">Haddanim</a>	Magic-User	Ellyrian	Elf or ½ Elf
4	PH ♥*/ ♠ */ ♣ +2	Member of the <a href="#">Fifth Column</a>	Prior	Meryath	Shatim
5	PH ♥*/ ♠ */ ♣ *	Disgraced monk in exile	Mystic	Kumoshiman	Canisean
6	PH ♥*/ ♠ +4/ ♣ -2	<a href="#">Maghia</a> sympathizer	Rogue	Osrielite	Fellfolk
7	PH ♥*/ ♠ -4/ ♣ +5	Drunkard, army deserter	Warrior	Norse	Gnome
8	PH ♥+5/ ♠ -3/ ♣ +2	Old sky pirate with treasure map	Magic-User	Narwani	Felisean
9	PH ♥+4/ ♠ */ ♣ *	Clueless good Samaritan	Prior	Belledoran	Were-rat
10	PH ♥+3/ ♠ +3/ ♣ -3	On the run from <a href="#">Carcer Island</a>	Rogue	Phrydian	Doppelganger

**6. Hrogar's Hangar:** The purple-roofed building straddles the lower middle deck and the adjacent lower deck, extending a few floors down. It is one of the places where small flying vessels may be stored for a night or longer. Though some owners take a chance mooring their vessels in front of their residences, odds are they could be stolen, therefore the desire to secure them under lock and key for a fee. Stolen vessels are not uncommon, often repainted and modified in some way to evade all but a careful, close-up examination. The majority of vessels stored are small city gondolas, fitting 6-10 passengers, stacked up on sturdy racks. Larger vessels hang from chains attached to the rafters. The place is busiest just before dawn and after sunset. The main entrance faces the central pool area; it includes a large sliding door that remains magically locked after business hours.

The owner, one Hrogar Himinnvindur, also runs a sedan chair service. A small bag of beans can be purchased at his office; eating one summons a levitating sedan chair in 5-15 minutes, depending on the client's location. Speaking an address while sitting inside will send the device floating to the destination within any of the city's three districts, at a 150' (50') MV rate. It does not stop or deviate until it reaches its intended destination, after which it waits for a minute before returning to its hangar.



# Sky City of Arcanial

Each trip requires a bean. Each bean costs 3 silver (13 beans are in each bag, a baker's dozen).

Hrogar is an alias. The owner's real name is Qadim Al Jinn, a former skyship enchanter with a Narwani bounty on his head following a romantic liaison with the emir of Jhufar's daughter. Being of distant djinni ancestry did not help. In exchange for their protection, he informs the [Proctors](#) about his clients' destinations (which he monitors with a crystal ball and logs into a grimoire).

**Hrogar:** AR 25, sorcerer LF 25, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 chain-sickle +2, DR VL +2, Size M—Str 50, Agt 67, Dex 78, Sta 89, Int 94, Wis 56, Per 83, MR 75, PH ♥ +2/ ♠ +4/ ♣ +6. **Faith:** unrepentant heathen (pretends to honor Odin). **Credentials:** none. **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Narwani.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x3, SP IV x2, SP V x1. Requires a magical weapon to hit; can adopt a gaseous form once per day; his familiar is a small, blue-haired, winged monkey.

**Chain-Sickle:** A successful attack roll involves two stages. The first takes place at the beginning of a melee action, during which the weighted chain entangles the opponent's weapon-bearing arm (blocking the opponent's attack for the current action). At the end of the melee action, the second stage consists of a sickle slash. If not used to entangle, the weighted end of the chain can strike up to 10' away.

**7. Zarghadin's Haven:** In a world where magic imbues most things, occurrences where its nature is corrupted prove a sad reality. It isn't rare when imprudent spellcasting, catastrophic experiment failures, or powerful curses result in physical or mental damage that common sorcery or powers of the faith cannot heal. Shunned by society, victims abandoned to their own devices die off or wander away into the wilderness. A few find solace in Zarghadin's Haven, an asylum caring for the mentally destitute and the criminally insane. Over time, patients may regain their senses, but they always retain the stigma of their residence in what most townsfolk see as a sinister and frightening place. No one quite knows what happens inside, and most people tend to keep their distance from former patients. Released inmates sometimes possess unique powers related to their past conditions or the treatments they received.

Facilities include a shrine to the patron god, cells, and utility areas reaching several floors down. Though most cells face *Zarghadin* and *Grimspell Alleys*, the main entrance stands on the opposite side, on the Upper Middle Deck. Outside walls, windows, and portals are enchanted to prevent unwanted passage in or out. The institution's overseer, Master Zemaal, also is the healing chaplain faithfully determined to ease his patients' lives and hopefully reinsert them into society. His assistant, Mistress Hamana, bears darker motives, as she secretly endeavors to plant into the minds of certain inmates the seeds of personal control, slowly building a network of fanatical disciples. Hamana is a senior member of the [Fifth Column](#).

**Zemaal Nath:** AR 30, sorcerer-prior LF 22, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 staff +2, DR Lo +2, Size M—Str 61, Agt 56, Dex 50, Sta 44, Int 89, Wis 94, Per 83, MR 67, PH ♥ +4/ ♠ \* / ♣ -3. **Faith:** *Zarghadin*,

zealot. **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Alteration](#). **Apparent Age:** elderly. **Ancestry:** Gandarian.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting as a sorcerer—SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x2, SP IV x2; as a prior of Zarghadin: SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x2, SP IV x1. The staff is enchanted and can dispel the magic imbuing an object or cursed creature on contact (bears 13 charges).

**Hamana Quell:** AR 15, sorceress LF 19, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 Dagger +1, DR VL +1, Size M—Str 61, Agt 50, Dex 44, Sta 67, Int 89, Wis 61, Per 56, MR 67, PH ♥ \* / ♠ +2/ ♣ \*. **Faith:** officially none (actually a casual faithful of Urthaala-the-Unquenched). **Credentials:** [Master](#) of [Divination](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Phrydian, half-elf.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x2, SP III x2, SP IV x1.

**Ring of Madness Domination:** It enables its owner to dominate a cursed or insane being. Its power manifests itself after the victim fails 3 Defense Checks in a row (not more than one per week). Though the ring can only gain control over a single new individual at a time, there isn't a limit to the total number of accumulated victims in the long run. All established bonds are permanently dispelled when the ring is destroyed (or its owner killed). The ring enjoys an Intellect rating of 83 and a PH ♥ -4/ ♠ +2/ ♣ \*. It can dominate and inflict madness to an owner with a lower Int rating. It also maintains an empathic link with its owner up to 90', and confers to the latter the same with all accumulated victims.

**8. Temple of Nekathal:** Perched on the upper deck, the small temple occupies three adjoining floors, most of which house the nave. A huge magical lotus levitates in midair at the center, providing a soft, peaceful light. A mezzanine runs in the dimness along the perimeter. Worshipers kneeling on large cushions on the floor below and all along the mezzanine face the lotus. Prayers of the faithful cause a dew to drop from the lotus into a sacred font below. During ceremonies, temple diviners peer into the liquid to sense clues about courses of action to best serve their goddess and promote their temple's interests.

Priors of Nekathal are determined foes of the [Haddanim](#). Thanks to the magical lotus, they often outsmart the sect of assassins as well as worshipers of Ashgaddon and Avraoth opposing Nekathal. Her priors are generally aware of plots against the temple, at least partly. They use their divine insight to bring mischief to their enemies.

**Adepts of Nekathal (up to 12):** AR 20 (unarmored), monk or mystic LF 11, MV 150' (50'), TA fist or cudgel, DR Lo+1, DC as monk or mystic; Size M—Str 61, Agt 78, Dex 72, Sta 67, Int 61, Wis 83, Per 56, MR 92, PH ♥ +4/ ♠ +4/ ♣ \* **Random names**—*Zakiti, Hassunu, Nar-Belith, Sargindu, Ku-Aya, Arwia, Kuruzu, Baanashi, Arka-Shuu, Zarduk, Nin-Ridu, Ismelek-Shar, Bob*.

**Abilities:** climb walls, detect traps, hide in shadows, and move silently as rogues with the same Life Force; minimal odds of being surprised; may cure Lo damage to self once per day.

**Prior of Nekathal (1) :** AR 10/50 (unarmored—see abilities), prior LF 22, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 razor silk +1 or 1 spell, DR





# Sky City of Arcanial

M+1 or by spell, DC as prior; Size M—Str 78, Agt 83, Dex 78, Sta 50, Int 72, Wis 94, Per 89, MR 92, PH ♥ +5/ ♠ +5/ ♣ \*

**Abilities:** spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x2, SP IV x1. Repel undead.

**Razor Silk:** A robe with enchanted sleeves that grow longer during combat and can be waved and spun all around the prior; attackers must succeed a DC to avoid confusion when fighting the prior. Confusion confers the prior an AR of 50 against all affected attackers, and a +3 bonus to Defense Checks against spells from all affected spellcasters. The silken curls can reach as far as 15' away to inflict melee damage. If not performing a melee attack, the prior can cast a spell instead, while maintaining the confusing swirls. The silk is immune to non-magical damage; any single successful attack on the silk itself causes a slight tear (after 10 tears, the curls vanish and the robe must be mended to function again).

**9. Slaughterhouse:** A slaughterhouse processes some of the cattle supplying the city. Livestock is delivered on the upper deck, stunned, and dropped down a chute to the floor below where the remainder of the process takes place. A magically cooled chamber beneath the slaughterhouse connects with an out-going dock.

This business is a front for a slightly-mad sorcerer researching the matter of minotaur golems. With an ample supply of chilled parts, Master Balzaram's work has been proceeding apace. He resides across the inlet from the slaughterhouse, in the building with the purple roof. Several of his creations guard his laboratory, while others are either quietly sold off or spirited away at night, and dumped illegally some miles outside the city.

**Balzaram Hornbringer:** AR 20 (unarmored), sorcerer LF 25, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 dagger +1 or spell, DR VL+1 + special or by spell, Size M—Str 67, Agt 61, Dex 56, Sta 67, Int 94, Wis 50, Per 44, MR 67, PH ♥ -3/ ♠ \*/ ♣ \*/ ♣ \*. **Faith:** *Astafeth*, casual. **Credentials:** Master of [Alteration](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged. **Ancestry:** Gandarian.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting—SP I x3, SP II x3, SP III x3, SP IV x2, SP V x1.

**Dagger of Displacement:** With a successful attack, the victim is instantly displaced in a random direction *within sight* up to 4d6+6 feet away; with a critical hit, the dagger cannot displace a victim beyond walls or portals. Roll for direction (1d4): **1.** Away from attacker; **2.** 90° to the right; **3.** 90° to the left; **4.** Upward.

**Minotaur Golem (1-4):** AR 20 (unarmored), monster LF 22, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 gore + 2 fists or 1 weapon, DR Lo each or weapon 3M+2, DC as monster; Size L—Int 28, MR 100, PH ♥ \*/ ♠ \*/ ♣ \*

**Abilities:** Never gets lost in mazes; 1% cumulative chance of going berserk for each combat action, gaining a +2 bonus to attack rolls; electrical attacks heal combat wounds.

**Immunities:** Fear, sleep, beguiling, gases, and non-magical weapons; cold-based spells slow the beast, causing it to move at half speed and take 2 combat actions to perform its fist-fist-gore attack routine (or one attack with a weapon every other combat action).

**10. Shebbai Hospital:** [The order](#) maintains a small hospital, not so much to treat *mana sickness*, but to help commoners

in the city, look for recruits with potential as knights, and earn the population's goodwill despite its connection with the aristocracy. The establishment honors primarily Nekathal. It remains in close contact with the nearby temple (8) and the *Shebbai monastery* in the Middle District (22). One may come to help the other if needed. The hospital's knights are also required to reinforce the nearby fortification (2) if called upon.

**Shebbai Knights (8-10):** AR 40 (armored), mage-knights LF 11, MV 90' (30'), TA 1 weapon or spell, DR M+1 or by spell, DC as warrior; Size M—Int 72, MR 92, PH ♥ +1/ ♠ +4/ ♣ \*. **Random Names**—roll 1d10: **1.** *Sig-Kuta*, **2.** *Ghilu Khepa*, **3.** *Nenatta-Shu*, **4.** *Nashon-Dar*, **5.** *Huran-vat-Alev*, **6.** *Hazor-Ha*, **7.** *Neph Netu*, **8.** *Irze Bubalial*, **9.** *Esbtu-vat-Ziaa*, **10.** *Parsha Nirulamma*.

**Abilities:** See *Rituals and Abilities*, page 99, especially +2 bonus to Defense and Morale Checks as well as attack rolls when fighting to kill demons. Spellcasting (either as sorcerers or as priors): SP I x2, SP II x1.

**11. Temple of Avraoth:** It is a very odd place, even by Caldwen's own standards. Located on the lower deck under a pale gray roof, the temple's freestanding structure features dozens of individual consecrated garderobes in which the faithful pray to their divine patron while relieving themselves. Aside from conventional psalms, praying involves confessing to a lie proffered since one's last visit, preferably the most callous and insidious to please the god of lies. Meanwhile, the fruits of the worshipers' labor drops into a chamber on the floor below, where millions of flies are bred to honor the god of flies. By some fortunate magic, the effluvia of it all as well as any unseemly seepage remain confined to this *Holy Dipterium*. Priors and acolytes, with no other protection but the power of their faiths fending off the buzzing clouds, enter the chamber to capture oversized specimens and place them in consecrated receptacles. During weekly ceremonies performed on top of the square tower facing *Baelith* and *Dabuloth Broadways*, these receptacles are opened and their residents freed to wander the world and carry forth the ways of Avraoth.

Two fat, worm-like creatures with large mouths and three spoon-shaped, serrated tentacles dwell within the *Holy Dipterium*. They feed on the worshipers' generous offerings, preventing the chamber from overflowing. Called dung maws, these repugnant beasts are hard to distinguish at first, and may surprise imprudent visitors with a 1-3 on a d4.

**Servants of Avraoth (12):** AR 10 (unarmored), prior LF 8, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 weapon or spell, DR Lo or by spell, DC as prior; Size M—Int 67, MR 67, PH ♥ -3/ ♠ -3/ ♣ -3. **Random Names**—roll 1d8: **1.** *Aram the Elder*, **2.** *Bahamed*, **3.** *Akhivan the Blue-Haired*, **4.** *Sharmatu*, **5.** *Shimta-Urr*, **6.** *Nav-Ninorta*, **7.** *Zashiramman*, **8.** *Ninu Phlaârmata*.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting (either as sorcerers or as priors): SP I x2, SP II x1. Immune to clouds of flying insects, summoned or natural. A servant may wear a *ring of fly control*, enabling a swarm attack inflicting continual and automatic VL damage within an area 20'x20'x20' until dispelled. The swarm does not extend past walls and ceilings unless an opening lies within the area of effect. The



# Sky City of Arcanial

ring enables the swarm to follow an individual up to 90' from the ring. Combat damage sustained during an encounter with a swarm requires a successful DC to avoid contracting a disease.

**Dung Maws (2):** AR 35 (unarmored), monster LF 17-22, MV 60' (20'), TA 1 bite + 3 tentacles, DR M bite + VL+1 each tentacle + disease, DC as monster; Size M-L—Int 39, MR 75, PH ♥\*/ ♠\*/ ♣\*.

**Abilities:** Natural empathy; surprise visitors with a 1-3 on a d4; disease includes infected wounds—curative magic always heals the minimum amount of damage until the disease is treated.

**12. Gaiety Alley:** This is where one goes for guilty pleasures frowned upon by the well-meaning gentry. Houses of ill-repute, squalid smoking lounges, sleazy gambling dens, and places of depraved magic belie the alley's name. Many a sorcerer in Arcanial's history succumbed to *Gaiety Alley's* perfidious promises. Though one with the right connections could hide there, this neighborhood remains in the eyes of most a vile warren of filth and wickedness.

As some might surmise, a gang runs the *Gaiety Alley* neighborhood like a fief inside a realm. Linked with the *Spell Hackers' Cabal* and the *Haddanim*, its various "businesses" often are fronts for other illicit activities. Using mostly blackmail or win-win pacts with some of Arcanial's key figures, the *Black Orchid* always manages to evade city militia crackdowns. Bearing the same name, the gang's boss is no weakling, hiding his identity well enough to elude the lord high's keen gaze. His own powers suggest that a serious confrontation could prove costly to the city. They also discourage any other street gang from encroaching on his turf. The tacit understanding between the *Black Orchid* and the lord high is that the gang does not operate outside *Gaiety Alley's* seedy neighborhood. What goes on herein is sufficiently profitable that the gang does not need to grow. The *Black Orchid* does what is needful to protect its business, something that has occasionally benefitted the lord high's own schemes.

**The Black Orchid:** AR 60 (unarmored), entropic dragon LF 39, MV 150' (50')/360' (120') flying, TA 1 bite (breath or spell) + 2 claws + 2 wings + 1 tail whip, DR 2Hi+8 (bite) + M+3 (all others), Size VL—Str 111, Agt 67, Dex 44, Sta n/a, Int 94, Wis 56, Per 78 (in elven form), MR 83, DC as warrior LF 100, PH ♥-6/ ♠-2/ ♣\*. **Faith:** *Astafeth*, pious. **Credentials:** none. **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Ancestry:** Draconic (usually appears to be an elven sorcerer of Phrydian origins).

**Abilities:** Spellcasting as a sorcerer—SP I x4, SP II x3, SP III x3, SP IV x3, SP V x2, SP VI x1. Breath weapon—either acid spit (a 120' x 5' strip inflicting as many life points of damage as the dragon currently possesses) or a cone of *entropic darkness* (90' x 40'); everything caught in the cone must succeed a Defense Check or suffer the following: living creatures permanently age +50% (or +25% with a successful DC); ferrous metals rust (magical items get a substantial bonus to DC), organic materials rot/spoil (including leather goods, wooden objects, clothes, scrolls, spellbooks, potions, food, etc.). All spell effects end at once aside from the cone's own impenetrable darkness (no DC). The *Black Orchid* can also switch at will between his dragon and elven appearances; he can also move silently and hide in shadows like a rogue LF 39.

**Ring of Secrecy:** The ring protects its owner from crystal balls and all mind-reading attempts.

**13. Little Kumoshima:** Expats from Miyuki Island, attracted by the wonders of Caldwen magic, set up shop in this enclave. Alongside modest taverns, local families run small businesses, mostly producing artistic wares of all sorts. Most folks living here are at least *Jiyū-kai* sympathizers. They despise nearby *Gaiety Alley* and have so far managed to keep Kumoshiman yakuza out of *Little Kumoshima*.

Hikaru, a humble cobbler, is in fact the neighborhood's protector. He'd fallen in love with a fine Kumoshiman maiden who was later abducted to *Gaiety Alley*. Despite his efforts, he failed to rescue his lover. Her fate is unknown and most assume her to be dead. He offered his soul to a demon in exchange for her freedom. The demon was in reality an avatar of the Phrydian god Thaëldar (see CC1 *Beyond the Skies*, page 172). Rather than grant the cobbler his wish, the King of the Skies changed Hikaru into a powerful *yokai*, a shapechanging animal spirit related to snake eagles, and tasked him with seeking his own justice. During the night, Hikaru now acts as a masked avenger, protecting *Little Kumoshima* from criminals and dispatching villains in *Gaiety Alley* while he searches for his loved one. He adopted "Sacred Light" as his avenger's identity (Seimitsu 聖光).

**Hikaru Washibashi:** AR 20 (unarmored), warrior LF 31, MV 120' (40')/480' (160') flying, TA 1 beak + 2 talons or 1 weapon, DR Lo (beak and talons) or by weapon, Size M—Str 89, Agt 94, Dex 57, Sta 61, Int 72, Wis 78, Per 56 (in human form), MR 83, DC as warrior LF 31, PH ♥+4/ ♠+4/ ♣+2. **Faith:** *Thaëldar*, pious. **Credentials:** none. **Apparent Age:** young adult. **Ancestry:** Kumoshiman.

**Abilities:** Can change at will between three forms—human (specifically Hikaru), a large snake eagle, or a bipedal being with the head, wings, and talons of the animal form. The *yokai's* nature is not detectable by magic or otherwise. Immune to all reptilian magic (including Nāgá and dragon magic); against these foes, Hikaru's AR is 40 and DC scores improve 10% (or a +2 bonus on a scale of 1-20).

**Serpent Slayer:** Hikaru's weapon is a magical katana +1/+3 versus reptilian creatures; if a critical hit is rolled against a reptilian foe, its head may be sliced off altogether. If the opponent's LF is less than half Hikaru's, the foe is beheaded outright. If its LF is higher but still less than Hikaru's, a second attack roll is needed immediately; the foe is beheaded if the attack rolls with all its bonuses is enough to hit. If its LF is equal or higher than Hikaru's, a second critical hit is needed to remove its head.

**14. Funeral Quarter:** This part of town, beneath the green roof and on several floors below, houses several families whose profession is to cater for the recently departed among the city's lower classes. They prepare the dead before taking them to the cemetery outside Port Arcana. Few families can afford a grave in the Middle District's catacombs (35).

Not all that happens here is what most people suspect. One of these businesses is connected with the *Falconers*. It hides a secret chamber where the bodies of the recently departed are switched for those of falconers seeking a new identity (see page 48). It is one





# Sky City of Arcanial



of the few places in Caldwen where this sort of bodysnatching takes place. Another family quietly sells body parts or entire cadavers to certain sorcerers involved in necromancy, placing sand bags in the caskets to make up for what is missing. A third household harbors zealots of Ashgaddon on the lookout for the remains of fallen followers of Teos-Soltan. The head of the family will sacrifice these corpses' hearts to the god of death, hoping to earn some Divine Favor (see CC1 [Beyond the Skies](#), page 187).

**Mortician:** AR 10 (unarmored), necromancer LF 11, MV 120' (40'), TA 1 dagger, DR VL or by spell, DC as sorcerer; Size M—Int 89, MR 58, PH ♥ -3/ ♠ +3/ ♣ -3. **Random Names**—*Nabobelu, Parsheen the Bony, Bastartus, Hammon Hornbeard*. **Faith:** Ashgaddon or other death cult, pious to zealot. **Credentials:** [Spellcraft Licenses](#) in [Necromancy](#) and [Divination](#). **Apparent Age:** middle aged to old. **Ancestry:** Gandarian.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting as sorcerers: SP I x2, SP II x2. Likely a member of the [Cabal of Necromancy](#)—can determine the name, faith, and date of death of a recent cadaver; also see [necrologist's abilities](#), page 90.

**15. Flea Market:** The flea market is split among several upper and upper middle decks. It is a good place to hunt for miscellaneous odds and ends, or clues heroes might be looking for. Fences occasionally try to get rid of stolen goods of innocuous nature and little apparent value. Resellers compete to acquire unclaimed personal effects of the deceased from nearby morticians at rock-bottom prices, or those relatives might want to get rid of.

The section circumscribed within *Flea Market* and *Rummage Alleys* has been infected with mind-controlling, insect-like creatures. Flea market people look normal, if somewhat unfocused and slow to answer questions; a parasite dwells within each, providing a connection to the brood's hive mind. Insect-like denizens built their lair several levels below. The only entrances are hidden trap doors in the floor under some of the tents, and secret panels in the outside walls. Windows are caked with opaque grime. Broodlings hunt spellcasters, whose spells they crave. When flea market hosts sell something, it is likely coated with pheromones that may cause victims to fall in a deep sleep after sunset. Their bodies are abducted to the lair and devoured, making spells, memories, and useful

skills available to broodlings and hosts. Broodlings wear long robes and cloaks to hide their appearance when outside their hive. They can unfold their wings through a slit in the back.

**Broodling (12-20):** AR 20 (unarmored), monster LF 6+1, MV 120' (40'')/360' (120') flying, TA 1 bite + 2 claws or 1 weapon, DR Lo or by weapon, Size M—Int 89, MR 100, DC as warrior LF 33, PH ♥ \*/ ♠ \*/ ♣ \*.

**Abilities:** Spellcasting (secular only), memories, and skills of victims devoured within the past 3 days. Once a broodling casts an "acquired" spell, it is no longer available to the hive mind. "Acquired" skills and memories last no more than 3 days or until the brood feasts upon another victim. Healing magic will kill a host's parasite. Broodlings and hosts are telepathically linked at all times. Broodlings use pheromones to mark objects before they are sold in the flea market (so they can track them later by smell). They can otherwise beguile or put to sleep victims who fail a Defense Check. Each broodling can only produce pheromones once a day. They receive substantial penalties to Defense Checks versus fire and electrical damage, and are immune to mind-control effects.





Road of Geas by the Weir

Melchias Lane

Nesoch Lane

Merchants Bazaar

Farmers Bazaar

Road of Geas by the Sigmar

Estera Tower

Old Temple of Naghilas

Upper City Weir

Canal Road

Road of Geas by Hornsmeet

Faradun Tower

Skyport Road

Port Arcana

Scale: 1 square equals 40ft.

©2018 Bruce A. Heard. All Rights Reserved.

City Canal Embankment

Mirzov Tower

City Canal Embankment

Bahadar Tower

Arcanal Skyport









