



Preview Game

game by D. Brad Talton Jr.
art by Katrina Lin
maps by Devin Night
layout by Dave Mattingly



Introduction

“For a thousand years I’ve watched the mist ebb away the foundations of Empyrean. You are not the first with hubris enough to believe he could undo the mistakes of the past, and I do not imagine that you shall be the last.”

— *Kulbaht*, Keeper of Records

Mystic Empyrean is a world shattered by a great catastrophe. Long ago, Grand Cornerstone was the foundation of a vast, wondrous paradise. However, a great cataclysm shattered that foundation, and without its sustaining power the world has become enveloped by a mist called Aether, which gradually unravels and devours reality.

In order to stop the spread of Aether and rebuild the world, the heroes of Empyrean search for **Cornerstones**—fragments of the original Grand Cornerstone—which they can use to heal the cracks in their shattered world and push back the mist.

Cornerstones have an additional power—the one who uses a Cornerstone is able to reshape the world he uncovers according to his will. The new lands that are recovered from the mist by restoring a cornerstone will reflect the desires and dreams in the finder’s heart.

Will you reshape the world of Empyrean to your perfect vision? Will you create a paradisaal utopia, or a world of boundless danger and adventure? And will your new world be able to fight back the forces that destroyed the Empyrean of the past, when the time comes?

This Game

“I will play any game, should the stakes be sufficient.”

— *Shiele*, Dealer in Secrets

For this preview game, the only things you will need are this guide, the attached character sheets, and some 10-sided and 20-sided dice for resolution and random encounter generation. You can also use the online Mystic Empyrean Balance Tool at www.mysticempyrean.com. All the rules you will need to play are included in this document. It is assumed that you will be using the dice variant in this guide. However, if you wish to use the balance tool or balance cards, consult www.mysticempyrean.com for rules on how these work.



Player Characters

This preview game includes 5 pre-made characters for you to use.

Enciyo – An academic who is studying the old world and the reasons for its destruction. Enciyo is a natural gatherer of information and seeker of truth. Able to instinctively determine truth and lies, as well as to see the natures of other creatures, Enciyo makes an excellent tactician and explorer. Her goal is to create a world where science governs nature, rather than leaving it to the whims of Anima.



Fargan – An adaptable stoic who wishes to create a world of peace, Fargan is able to react to any situation. His powers to alter form and create tools from the world around him give him an edge in combat and puzzle encounters. He prefers to solve problems in unorthodox ways, using his ever-changing nature to become whatever he needs to be for the moment.

Lieselotte – An artist whose goal is to create a world of harmony and beauty, Lieselotte is herself a creature of image and sound, able to mask her form with any facade she desires. Her beauty and social grace make her an excellent spokeswoman for the party, and her ability to blend in, create resources, and make friends in almost any situation give her an edge in social and puzzle conflicts.



Lyons – A natural leader and military commander, Lyons stands head and shoulders over most Eidolons in his company. He is strong in combat, wielding powerful weapons and being nearly indestructible. His qualities of courage and defiance easily make him friends and enemies wherever he goes. Lyons is interested in rebuilding the world not in order to remake it, but to fight against the tide of Aether by any means possible.

Shiele – A snakelike creature of deception and darkness, Shiele is able to vanish into shadows and conceal all manner of weapons, tools, and treasures within his body. A wheeler and dealer by nature, he has the ability to read people and know exactly what they want. These traits make him excellent in social situations and espionage. His stated goal is not to create any particular world, but simply to survive and make a way for himself.



The characters in this preview game have a fixed list of traits they are able to develop. In the full game, any Eidolon is able to develop any of nearly a hundred different Persona Traits.



The World of Empyrean

*“You look out over the empty world,
and see only what has been lost.
When I look out over that world, I
see the opportunity for what might be
found.”*

— *Lamarck*, Treasure Hunter

Empyrean is a broken world, wreathed in a terrible, all-consuming mist that threatens to destroy it. A few islands of life still exist in this sea of emptiness. These places are called **Realms**. Each realm has its own culture, legends, treasures, and wonders to explore and experience. Within these realms, secreted away within ruins of the old world of Empyrean, are the hidden fragments of Grand Cornerstone, which can be used to restore the world to its former glory.

In the world of Empyrean, Eidolons are a common sight. They are immortal forces of nature, living in a world populated by other immortal forces of nature. Aside from Eidolons, the remaining population consists of **Nascent**—tribes of human-like creatures who reflect the elemental balance of their environment very closely. Nascent all have the potential to become Eidolons, should their personalities develop sufficient strength. The population ratio of most realms is about three hundred Nascent for every one Eidolon.

Eidolons are immortal, and those who live greater than half a millennium are known as Sages. Sages are extremely powerful Eidolons who have vast stores of knowledge, and often possess legendary skills and artifacts that give them even greater gravity and power.

Though each Eidolon looks different than the rest, they all have an aura which makes them distinct from wild creatures, monsters, or pure spirits. Unless an Eidolon is specifically trying to hide his nature, it is obvious to others what he is. Eidolons are generally accepted in

society regardless of their looks or traits—there are a few exceptions to this, though.

In the world of Empyrean, the spirits of nature, also known as the **Great Anima Spirits**, watch over the balance of the world and guide their servants towards rebuilding the lands and fighting back the forces of Aether. Though the spirits are always watching, they make contact with Eidolons only rarely, and their true motives and goals are always cast in secrecy. Despite having a common goal of rebuilding and sustaining the world, the Great Spirits are legendary for their infighting and disparate ideals, and often work against one another just as strongly as against the forces of Aether.

Eidolons

*“We are the heart of the world, the
root of creation. All this Empyrean is
our right to possess. It belongs to us,
Eidolons, the children of Anima!”*

— *Lord Gharl*, the Devourer

Our heroes are **Eidolons**, beings of power who wear their souls as a skin. Eidolons are much like humans, except that their emotions, personalities, virtues, and vices take root in their immortal hearts and grant them amazing powers. Every skill, spell, or ability an Eidolon possesses is tied to some Persona Trait that resides within his heart.

An Eidolon who allows himself to be controlled by anger will gain the power to channel his rage as a great fire. One who feels entitled to things he which has no right will gain the power to devour others and steal their hearts. An Eidolon who desires to impress and mystify others will gain the skill to paint illusions of light and sound. There are infinite possibilities for what an Eidolon might become, and will become, over the course of his adventures.



Persona Traits

“Tomorrow, I will look in this mirror, at a different man standing in my place. In that moment, I will remember the man I was yesterday, and rightfully call him a fool.”

— *Lyons, Who Slew Regret*

Persona Traits govern the development of Eidolons. Every personality or emotion—from Greed to Purity to a love of Music—has a linked Persona Trait. The Persona Trait grows in power as the linked personality takes hold within the heart of the Eidolon. When traits are still **Superficial**, they have little power. When a trait grows to **Deep** level, it is a staple of the Eidolon’s personality. If a trait develops even beyond this level, to become **All-Consuming**, then it grants the Eidolon incredible power—but at a heavy price.

In this preview game, each player character sheet has 5 traits, and the descriptions of these traits are listed on the sheet’s back. Not all of these traits have reached Superficial level yet. At the game’s start, only traits that have reached at least 7 points of emergence (Superficial Level) are active. Of course, you might develop some of these latent traits over the course of your adventure, if you are willing to become one thing or another...

* A list of some possible actions and their governing elements are attached to the back of this document, and should be used during gameplay as a reference. It is recommended that you take a glance at them now to get a feel for each element’s basic meaning.

Anima

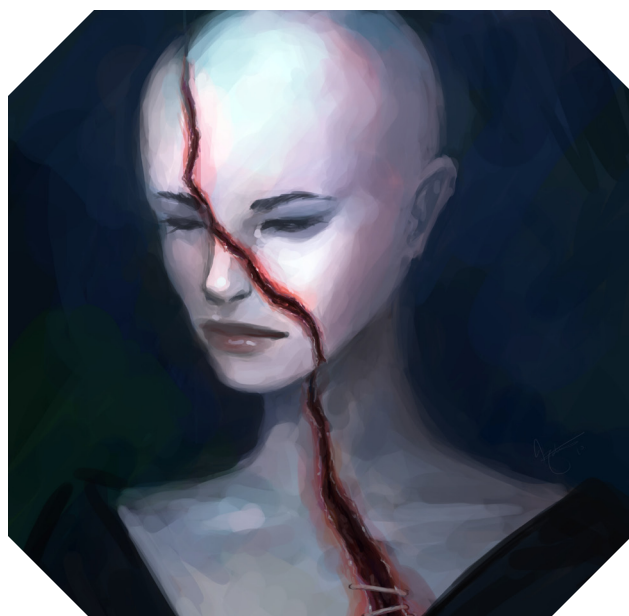
“Until you discover your heart, you will not find power in this world.”

— *Fargan, Seeker of Balance*

Anima is the power source of Empyrean, and it comes in seven flavors to match the seven governing elements: Fire, Water, Stone, Air, Light, Darkness, and Electricity.

Everything in Empyrean is composed of and governed by Anima. All power sources and energy can be traced back to one form of Anima or another. More importantly, **every action that an Eidolon commits is governed by the influence of one kind of Anima or another.**

The Balance is the concentration of Anima within the Eidolons and the World. A **Personal Balance** is an Eidolon’s own Anima level, and the **World Balance** is a record of the ambient Anima in the area. An Eidolon with a higher concentration of certain elements is more proficient in actions governed by those elements. A higher world balance gives everyone in the area a higher chances of success with certain actions.*





Gameplay

The course of the game will occur as a series of **encounters**. Each encounter is based around a main conflict, and is resolved by taking the following steps.

1. Introduction
2. Asking Establishing Questions
3. Group Resolution
4. Becoming
5. Closure

Materials

To play this demo game, you will need the entirety of this document, including the five player character sheets, a set of five 10-sided dice (hereafter referred to as d10's), and one 20-sided die.

Rotating Game Mastery

“Beauty is to move in harmony with the flow of the world.”

— *Lieselotte, Who Sees Beneath*

In Mystic Empyrean, there is no need for a “GM” or single player to control all entities in the world. Instead, “GM-ship” rotates around the table on a per-encounter basis. Each player should pick a character to play, including the one who is to be the primary storyteller.

The players are responsible for storytelling, but the Primary Storyteller has an added responsibility of knowing the game rules and answering questions about the world and setting.

If you wish to play Mystic Empyrean as a more traditional RPG, you can designate one player to be a dedicated storyteller, and not control a player character.



Introduction

In the Introduction Phase, one player reads the encounter's context to all players, establishing the actual conflict at hand. For example, in the first encounter of this game, the players are going to be turned away from the gates of Nitar because they do not possess entry papers. This basic context is the conflict that the rest of the encounter is based around resolving. Once all players understand the situation they are in, move on to the second step, establishing questions.

Establishing Questions

"If you cannot understand, then it is because you decided what to see before opening your eyes."

— *Enciyo*, Eye of the Librarium

The Establishing Questions phase is when the situation of the players is fleshed out in greater detail. In the order they are seated, each player asks a question about the current situation to the player on his left, moving left. These questions can be yes/no questions or simple questions that are facts or details the players would be able to know immediately. The player who is answering the question should make up an answer that he feels fits the situation. For example,

Fargan: What time of day is it?

Lieselotte: Night. That's probably why they're more suspicious of us. How many guards are on duty?

Lyons: Two. Probably easy to overpower. How high are the city walls?

Shiele: They tower up to the clouds. This is a big city. Do we see any other ways in?

Enciyo: There's a sewer system that probably gives access somewhere. Do the guards appear to be tired, drunk, or uneducated? Any chance of deceiving them?

Fargan: They're tired, but you have to try it and see if tricking them works. Do we have some basic tools for spelunking? Like a crowbar, rope, et cetera?

The answers given to the questions serve to build the scene and help others think about their options. Establishing questions can continue on until all players pass on asking a question. Once this occurs, group resolution begins.



Notes on Establishing Questions

* **Theoretical questions are not allowed.** In the example above, Enciyo asks "any chance of deceiving them?" this kind of theoretical question isn't allowed, since (as Fargan mentions) Enciyo wouldn't be able to know that for certain without trying it. Only things that the party can know from simple observation of the scene are allowable establishing questions.

* **Establishing questions can grant the party gear and resources.** *Do we have common tools? Are there any henchmen in our employ? Do we know the way back to the exit?* These are all allowed questions.

* **Establishing questions cannot grant the players new powers, magical gear, or character changes.** For example: *Are we elder gods bent on the destruction of the world? Do I possess a tactical nuclear weapon? Have I developed all my traits to their maximum level?* These would all be illegal establishing questions.

Group Resolution

“To put my fate in your hands would be to give you undue honor.”

— **Fargan**, Seeker of the Balance

Starting with a randomly chosen player, each player becomes the **Active Player** for a turn. The player sitting to the right of the first Active Player is considered the **Active GM**. The Active Player is responsible for performing some action to advance the party's goals, while the Active GM determines the results of that action and narrates the story.

Once the Active Player has finished resolving an attempt to solve or advance the encounter, then Active Player-ship passes to the left, and game play continues. Whenever the Active GM becomes the Active Player, he passes his Active GM status to the right. Thus, each GM player retains this position for a complete circle around the table. It can be useful to have a button, apple, conch shell, or some other token to denote who is Active Player and who is Active GM, and to pass these tokens around as the game goes on. The Active GM has the final authority in all situations, though other players are welcome and encouraged to advise both the Active GM and the Active Player as much as they like.

During a player's turn, the player should come up with a course of action that attempts to resolve the situation at hand. The Active GM then uses random resolution to determine the action's success or failure. In Mystic Empyrean, every action is governed by one of the seven elements. Darkness governs stealth and deception, and Fire governs crafting, so Enciyo's actions in the next example are aligned with Fire and Darkness.

Once the action's alignment is determined, dice are rolled.*

To continue with the example above:

Enciyo: I want to take a few blank sheets of paper from one of my notebooks. With my 'Words Within' ability, I can print things with a touch, so I'll print us some papers that grant entry.

GM (Lyons): Have you ever seen entry papers for Nitar?

Enciyo: Probably not, actually. But I'm familiar with what official papers look like.

GM (Lyons): So you're going to try to fake it based on what you know. Then try to pass off these fake documents as your own. That's two separate actions, one fire—for crafting—and one darkness—for deception.

For this resolution the two relevant stats are Enciyo's Fire and Darkness stats, and the Fire and Darkness stats of the current region, Nitar. The higher Enciyo's concentration of these levels, the better her chances of success. The higher the region's concentration of these levels, the easier success is.

Enciyo has a Fire level of 1, being a mostly peaceful creature by nature. She rolls 1 die per point of Fire she has. This means she will roll only 1d10 for her resolution. If she had three points of Fire, she would roll 3d10 instead.

Nitar has a Fire level of 4. This means that to succeed, at least one of Enciyo's die rolls, plus 4, must meet or exceed 11. So a roll of 1-6 will fail, and a roll of 7-10 will succeed. Enciyo needs to succeed once to forge the documents, and once more to convince the gate guards that they are genuine. So unless both rolls are a success, her attempt will fail.

With The Balance, special effects, twists of fate, and unexpected storytelling events can occur in the middle of resolution, adding increased depth to the story. Since demo gamers probably don't want to build or buy a balance, the dice variant included in the core book is used here. See the end of this guide for more information on The Balance

* Mystic Empyrean's primary resolution system, **The Balance**, uses a deck of specialized cards instead of dice.



Enciyo rolls an 8 on her d10. She narrates her own success or failure, since no one else is involved in the action.

Enciyo: *I forge some pretty official-looking documents, complete with the seal of the guild of law, which I've seen once before in an old book.*

GM (Lyons): *And you approach the gate with the papers?*

Enciyo rolls another single d10, this time with a result of 3. Since this is a Darkness roll, and Nitar has a darkness level of 3, Enciyo would need an 8 to succeed, instead of the 7 she needed before. Because she is attempting an action that interacts with other people in the world, the GM will narrate her ultimate success or failure.

Enciyo: *I hand them the documents, and stammer something about how it's good to be home. I'm not the greatest actor.*

GM (Lyons): *They seem to scrutinize the papers and look back to you, reading the nervousness off of your face. One of the guards whispers something to the other, and the small door at the base of the gate does not open. "Ma'am, I'm afraid we won't be able to grant you entry to the city at this time. Could you and your traveling party please step aside?"*

Difficulty Levels

Not all resolutions need to be attempted at full difficulty. If the circumstances are mitigated in such a way that a check would be easier than normal, such as the players executing an especially smart plan, or having situational advantages to their attempt, the GM may award a bonus of +1, +2, or +3 to the highest die roll in a check. This bonus should be awarded before dice are rolled.

To further modify difficulty level, break an action down into a longer series of checks. In the above example, Enciyo needed to make two checks to succeed. The GM could have decided that the entire attempt was one Darkness check, which would have made it easier to succeed. Alternatively, he could have added an extra Darkness check--for the second guard--to increase the difficulty.





Types of Action

*“Though we tread different roads,
our destinations will be the same,
through all time.”*

— *Ryhl*, the Dual Natured

Individual balances mean that each character is adept at doing things in certain ways. Their social actions, combat styles, and solutions to obstacles will all be tinged with the elements that govern their personal balances. Every Eidolon can accomplish the same things, but must go about them in different ways to have the highest chance of success.

For example, Lyons is primarily a fire-based Eidolon, while Fargan is a water-based Eidolon. In a social situation, Fargan is able to easily make friends, while Lyons is more adept at intimidation and browbeating. Fargan makes a better spokesperson if the group wants allies, while Lyons can often ensure greater concessions from NPCs at the cost of invoking their anger. If Lyons wanted to make friends with someone, he could still use fire based actions—perhaps by intimidating the NPC’s enemies or using his strength to remove some obstacle for them.

In battle, head-on attacks are Fire based, while using the environment and redirecting an enemy’s strength are Water based. Fargan and Lyons can both fight with an equal chance of success against enemies, but to take full advantage of his powers, Fargan must turn an enemy’s strengths against it, while Lyons can meet his foe with sheer brute force. Depending on the current World Balance, Fargan’s strategy may prove even more effective than Lyons’s strategy in combat!

Anima Surge

“If destroying myself is all it takes to see you meet your end, then I’ll do it without blinking.”

— *Niall*, the Flame of Wrath

In order to boost the chances of success, a player may use an **Anima Surge**. To do this, the player must have at least two points of Anima of the type that matches the current action. A surge can be used after a normal attempt has already failed, and succeeding the surge negates any negative effects of failing the normal attempt.

The powers associated with Superficial-level Persona Traits can only be used as part of an Anima Surge.

When a surge is used, one point of Anima of the corresponding type is spent. It leaves the player’s personal balance. The spent Anima is added to the world’s balance, lowering the difficulty of this and all future actions, but reducing the user’s own aptitude with the element in the future. For the single check where the surge is spent, the player is able to enjoy the benefit of having the point of Anima in both his personal balance and the world balance. (So he has the extra dice and a reduced target roll).

In the situation above, Enciyo has only one point of Darkness Anima. Thus, she cannot opt to use a surge. Another party member, however, can use a Surge to assist her.

Each character has one Wildcard Anima (listed simply as ‘Anima’ on their character sheet). This Anima can be used as any type the Eidolon wishes to activate an Anima Surge, but does not improve his dice rolls during normal checks.



Shiele: If I might jump in?

Enciyo: Any help would be appreciated.

Shiele: I'll spend a Darkness Anima to assist Enciyo.

GM (Lyons): What do you do?

Shiele: Gentlemen, issss there ssssome kind of problem at hand?

GM (Lyons): The guard responds, "Well sir, we had some questions about your papers."

Shiele: Yessss? They do not sssseem genuine?

GM (Lyons): Well, sir, s' just that we stand 'ere every day, and don't think we've ever seen the likes of you before.

Shiele: A fine point. The truth of the matter isss thisss. We have been outssside the ccccity for yearsss. Only now are we able to return from long travelsss. It isss undersstandable that you would not recognize the likesss of usss. My companion here, blesssss her, issss sssso moved by the sssight of the ccccity that she issss ssstunned.

Shiele rolls 4d10's, since he has 4 points of Darkness Anima. A 3, 6, 2, and 7. Since the point of Darkness Anima Shiele spent is added to the World's balance, the difficulty of the action has been reduced by 1, meaning the 7 is a success.

In the future, when Shiele rolls a Darkness check, he will now have only 3 dice. However, all allies can benefit from the increased level of Darkness in the world balance until the end of the current encounter.

After the encounter ends, the world balance will return to whatever it is normally for Nitar. Shiele's single point of Darkness Anima, however, remains spent until he rests and recovers it.

In the example above, Shiele could have waited until his turn to cut in and assist Enciyo, but by that time, the captain of the guards may have approached to question and detain her, or someone more skilled at detecting forgery might have examined the papers. Using the surge and assisting Enciyo spared her any repercussions from the failed attempt.



Wounds

“You would be surprised to see what an immortal force of nature can live through.”

— *Montekh Dar, the Straw Man*

Failing actions will often cause harmful repercussions or wounds. Each wound takes its toll on the body of an Eidolon. Generally, wounds that are suffered by the players are wholly at the discretion of the Active GM. Any failed combat attempt generally results in a wound of one kind or another, though this is not necessarily true, especially in social encounters.

Surface Wounds occur whenever physical damage is dealt to an Eidolon.* All physical injuries—from losing a leg to having one’s head cut off to being scraped from a fall—are surface wounds. **These wounds never kill an Eidolon.** Instead, the Eidolon may spend a full turn and one Anima of any type in order to regenerate fully from all surface wounds.

While an Eidolon is never killed from surface wounds, he may suffer so many wounds as to become completely incapable of fighting or acting. If an Eidolon has a power such as ‘Hand Cannon’ (which lets him fire bursts of elemental energy from his hand) and loses his hand to an attack, he also loses this power until he regenerates. Eidolons who lose their eyes cannot see, and those who lose legs cannot walk, run, or act in much capacity. Consider also that walking around town with open wounds is generally in bad taste, and may have social repercussions.

Eidolons have roughly human physical toughness, which means that a single sword strike is all it takes to lose a limb, and a simple fall can break bones. Without certain traits, they have human tolerance for pain, which means that breaking a finger will prevent an Eidolon from holding a weapon just as much as losing his entire hand will. All that to say, immortality is not a license to recklessness.

Recovering Anima

“I looked at my wounds, and realized there was a subtle beauty in the fleeting pain. It was a revelation for me, that the joy of living can be so closely tied to its burdens.”

— *Lieselotte, Who Sees Beneath*

Players recover one point of Anima after a full night of rest.

Whenever a player would recover Anima, he also recovers from any and all surface wounds he has suffered.

If a player acts in a way strongly aligned with a certain element, just for the sake of it, he can recover Anima of a certain type. For example:

Shiele: *As we step past the guards, I decide to lift one of their wallets.*

GM (Lyons): *(sighs) That’s Darkness again. Roll it.*

Shiele rolls 3d10, with a target of 7. With a result of 9, 8, and 1, he succeeds.

GM (Lyons): *You gain a measly few coins, and the guard has no idea what has happened. He goes home later that night, to be scolded by his wife and hungry child. You have perpetrated the ideals of deceit and sorrow in the world, and for that, Darkness grows stronger within your heart, and et cetera. Regain your point of Darkness Anima.*

Shiele: *With pleasure.*

* There are other kinds of wounds Eidolons can suffer, but you will not come across anything capable of inflicting them in this adventure.

Becoming

“I heard once that drinking the blood of my enemies would make me stronger. I don’t know if I ever believed it, but I developed a taste for blood all the same, on the off chance that it might be true.”

— *Alora, the Ashen Queen*

Becoming is the process by which new traits are gained and characters develop additional power. After an encounter ends, players undergo a Becoming. This is analogous to gaining experience in most other RPGs, except that in Mystic Empyrean, other players rate the traits that each player character roleplayed, and thus player characters develop indirectly based on the way their actions are perceived by their comrades, and not on the assignment of points or selection of classes.

First, determine the number of points of Emergence that are gained during a Becoming. Normally, this amount will be 1 point for each 30 minutes of gameplay that the encounter took. In fixed encounters, the emergence level is given for you, though players may agree to adjust this amount up or down if the encounter was especially short or especially long.

Secondly, each player passes his or her character sheet to the left. Each player then looks at the character sheet in front of him, and considers what personality traits were brought out by the actions of the player on the sheet. If the player acted deceitfully, then he might be considered duplicitous. If he acted with anger, then wrathful might be chosen. The player adds one point of emergence to the trait he chooses on the sheet in front of him, then passes the sheet to the left. This continues until a number of points have been added equal to the encounter’s point level.

Finally, each player takes his character sheet back. Each player gains 1 discretionary Emergence point, that he can spend on any trait he wants, regardless of how he roleplayed.

If a single trait reaches a new level of Emergence (at 7, 14, or 21 points), then the player immediately gains all benefits associated with the higher level of the trait.

At Superficial level, traits usually have lower power, and can only be used as part of an Anima Surge. At Deep level, they are at their fullest utility. All-Consuming Traits are extremely powerful, but each comes with a unique drawback that the Eidolon must endure in tandem with this power.

When a character gains a new trait or levels up an old trait, then he adds Anima to his individual balance. One point of Anima of the trait’s governing element is added to the Eidolon’s individual balance. No single element may have more than 5 points of Anima in it at a time. For example, if Lyons improves his *Hand Cannon* Trait to All-Consuming level, he gains an additional point of Fire in his personal balance.



Combat

“I am a teacher, not a warrior, but I will teach you regret it if you try my patience further.”

— **Enciyo**, Eye of the Librarium

Combat in Mystic Empyrean is freeform, just like puzzles and social encounters. Monsters do not have hit points or statistics. Instead, they possess abilities and powers just like players. A player's actions may wound a monster, which usually causes it to change behavior, or disables some of its powers. The GM's discretion determines what kinds of wounds a monster suffers from player actions, and when it finally does give up or die.

Lieselotte: I'm going slip through the monster's legs and around to its eyes, coming up right between its eyes and unleashing a blast of light and sound with my Illusionist ability.

GM (Enciyo): Why the legs?

Lieselotte: I want to make absolutely sure that I have its attention, since eye contact is necessary for the illusion to stick. Since I'm a construct of color and ink, that kind of maneuver should be fairly easy.

GM (Enciyo): Alright, you're standing behind the monster, who has Lyons in a corner, and rush in through the beast's legs. Make a Water check to dodge its tail.

Lieselotte rolls 3, 8, and 9 on her check, with a target of 9.

GM (Enciyo): You slide up in front of the creature and unleash a burst of light and sound that blinds and deafens it. The monster thrashes about madly, and gnashes its teeth at you, since you were the last thing it saw.

Lieselotte: Ugh.

GM (Enciyo): Don't tell me you didn't see that one coming.

Generally the rule of thumb is to keep fighting until the players come up with something really brilliant and climactic to end the battle, or until it just doesn't make sense for the monster to still be alive.

Empyrean's monsters are, for the most part, quite smart. The same kind of attack or assault never works against them twice. If Lyons fires his hand cannon in a burst of flame at an enemy, whether or not the attack succeeds, no subsequent direct attack with a burst of flame will succeed. **An action that is too similar to a previous action automatically fails.**

Whenever a player acts in combat, the monster that he is attacking will likely make some sort of counterattack. Consider the example below:

Lieselotte: I'm going to try to dodge around it. Since it's blinded, that shouldn't be too hard.

GM (Enciyo): Since you succeeded on the last attempt and it is stunned, I'll give you a +2 to this check, so water again.

Lieselotte rolls 4, 3, and 6, with a target of 9. Even with the +2 bonus, she is still going to fail.

GM (Enciyo): Alas, the monster's jaws clamp down over your arm, and crunch--

Lyons: I'm going to put up my spear to lock it's jaws open, then duck out of the corner with Lieselotte. That's a stone Anima surge, which I'll use my wild anima for.

Lyons marks the wildcard anima point off of his character sheet, and rolls 2d10 against a target of 6. His rolls are 5 and 8.

GM (Enciyo): Ok, so just as you feel the monster's breath on your flesh, there's a cracking sound, as its molars break against Lyon's spear. Grabbing his hand, the two of you swoop out through the creature's legs in a blur of color and rejoin with the rest of the group.



Preview Adventure



The Steam Vaults of Nitar



The Game

This preview game offers an abbreviated presentation of the realm of Nitar for you and your allies to adventure in. You don't need to read this section in advance of playing the game, so long as you understand the rules present in the first section of the book.

Scenario

At the start of the game, our heroes are just outside the city of Nitar, a bastion of civilization surrounded on three sides by the all-consuming Aether. According to a sage they have met in their travels, a cornerstone is hidden in the ruins deep beneath the city of Nitar—in the undercity upon which the current metropolis is built.

Nitar's World Balance

Above the City	
Fire	●●●●○○○
Water	●●○○○○○
Air	●●●●●○○
Stone	●●○○○○○
Light	●●●●○○○
Darkness	●●●○○○○
Electricity	●●●○○○○
Undercity	
Fire	●●●●●○○
Water	●●●●○○○
Air	●●○○○○○
Stone	●●●●○○○
Light	●●●○○○○
Darkness	●●●●○○○
Electricity	●●●●●○○

Nitar

Note: Enciyo is the group's walking encyclopedia. If you want to reveal information in-character, then have Enciyo read this section about the city, and brief the other party members on the city's history and conventions as necessary throughout the adventure.

Nitar is a vast metropolis that towers up into the sky, and reaches its roots deep into the earth, and into history. One of the last places to survive the cataclysm that tore the world asunder, Nitar has been continually built and rebuilt atop itself for hundreds of years.

The city's upper classes live in the high spires of the walled city, while the lower classes and riffraff inhabit the more terrestrial layers. Subhuman creatures, monstrosities, and other horrors are sealed away within the catacombs beneath the city, which are off limits to ordinary citizens.

- **Population:** Around 1.4 million
- **Area:** The city has 5 populated strata, the largest of which is around 12 square miles in area. The lower levels are of indeterminate size.
- **Technology:** Steam-tech in the upper layers, though the lower layers may have different, antiquated or lost technologies.
- **Government:** Representative. Guild leaders and politicians make laws, but the guild of laws and law enforcement has been increasing its power disproportionately as of late, causing worry for some.
- **Culture:** The varied strata of the city have vastly different cultures. Higher levels have amenities like libraries, museums, and hospitals. Lower levels are dotted with military outposts, arenas, and bazaars.



Life in Nitar

Nitar is powered by steam vents that are driven by huge boilers in the city's lower layers. The boilers are fed by coal that is mined from veins that run alongside the undercity of Nitar.

This network of boilers and plumbing provides steam power and heat to the citizens of Nitar, and gives energy to all of their most important machinery, such as elevators that traverse the strata, industrial production, and public transportation.

Nitar's citizens primarily work in industrial production, building machines, conveniences, and weapons which are traded within the city and with outsiders. Clothing, jewelry, and food are produced by individuals in their home workshops, or by farmers who cultivate the plains outside of the city's walls.



Nitari

The average citizens of the city are a tribe of Nascent called the Nitari. While Eidolons are very common in the city, the Nitari are by far the dominant populace. These beings appear as petite, rotund humans with tanned skin and milky white eyes. They generally have dark hair, and wear clothing adorned with all manner of jewelry and anything else that will shine.

The Nitari have a magpie-like love of jewels and gold, and adorn their structures with grand statues, gold leaf overlays, and beautiful ornaments. Though few of their goods, clothing, and tools have real value or practical use, all products developed within the city have an exquisite and expensive look.

The Nitari have sharp ears and eyes for detail, though they cannot see well at long distances, and many use glasses, binoculars, or spyglasses in daily life. They are an industrious lot, and value individual initiative and creativity. Most of the jewelry and clothing in Nitar is created by the Nitari themselves, working out of their homes and trading with their neighbors. Because of this, each district of the city has its own fashions and styles.

Important People

Nitar contains a vast array of NPCs which the players may encounter. From guild masters to hired muscle to politicians, everyone in Nitar has something they want, and something to offer in exchange for it.

Lord Gharl, the Devourer

Gharl is the leader of the Guild of Law within Nitar, and is a collector of cornerstones with ambitions to build his own world. As a collector, Gharl would happily sponsor any excursion to acquire a cornerstone, so long as the stone reaches his hands in the end.

Though sympathetic to the plights of the people of Nitar, Gharl's increased control over life in the city, even for the better, has drawn sharp criticism from political rivals.

Gharl's entire body is able to open like a trap, swallowing other Eidolons inside. While he has an Eidolon swallowed in this way, he has access to all of that being's powers.

Lady Belanya, Mistress of Blades

Belanya is the guildmaster of the Nitari guild of defense and security. Her soldiers are in charge of the yearly culling of dangerous creatures in the sewers, and for this event she commonly hires adventurers to head down into the depths of the undercity to deal with the creatures there when they grow too numerous.

Though well-liked by her soldiers, Belanya is viewed with disdain by the lower classes of Nitar, since her job also includes dispersing riots and enforcing order.

Belanya is bound with heavy chains, which are strung with hundreds of knives of every shape and description. She can wield these chains with deadly efficiency in combat, and her body is completely indestructible.

Lamarck, Treasure Hunter

An enterprising merchant with an eye for opportunity, Lamarck is well known within the mercantile districts of Nitar, and in the surrounding areas. He sees the possibility of more realms in the world as a business opportunity, and would gladly sponsor any effort which might increase the affluence of his city, family, and guild.

Lamarck can turn things that he touches to gold, and can create fireworks with a snap of his fingers. He loves to party, throws lavish festivals for no reason at all, and is well liked by just about everyone in Nitar, except political rivals who seek to curb his wealth and influence.





Creatures

The undercities of Nitar are dangerous, and filled with all manner of terrible creatures.

Prakk

These bone-thin mongrels have long talons which they use to climb through the walls and caverns of Nitar's depths with frightening ease. They pursue intruders within the caverns in packs, and fight with relentless intensity and group intelligence, using their talons in surprise strikes to puncture and eviscerate prey, then disappearing into the darkness while their victims bleed out. Single Prakk are known to have been tamed, but groups are difficult or impossible to control.

Gutslag

Hazardous waste from the factories above and the sorrows of the underprivileged working class coagulate together with abandoned thaumic technology of ancient Nitar to create Gutslags—horrificing elemental incarnations of rage and despair. The only existence of these oily masses of poison and living death is endless pain, and the kindest mercy is to show them a swift end. Their only instinct is to vent their anger upon any creature they encounter, which they do by spitting acidic venom and hurling their grotesque bodies of oil and dross towards enemies full force. Numerous gutslags in one area can merge together, forming horrificing monstrosities of epic scale.

Wonders and Treasures

Visitors to Nitar may discover all sorts of wondrous and powerful artifacts. A few are presented here:

Boomerang Gloves

These gloves form a bond with any object they touch. The bonded object forms an arc and returns to the glove when thrown, just like a boomerang would. This also means that anything picked up with the gloves cannot be dropped until the gloves are removed. Cursed variations of these gloves, which cannot be removed, are not uncommon. (Lieselotte can use 'Repurpose a Device' to remove a curse. Lyons can 'Destroy Something' to remove a cursed object. Shiele can do the same by 'Sabotaging Something')

Ancient Oil

An oil that causes instantaneous fossilization of any organic material it contacts. Can be bought in the markets of Nitar, and used as a weapon coating, or thrown in a vial to scatter a group of enemies.

Gilt Braid

This magic rope uncoils and floats upwards when music is played by its owner. The rope can support any amount of weight while hovering in the air like this, but falls to the ground immediately once the music stops being played.

MYSTIC EMPYREAN: TOWER OF NITAR

Fifth Tier (Administrative District)

The administrative bodies of Nitar occupy the lofty fifth tier of the city, where they govern the lives of the citizens below.

The guild assembly hall is here, along with the Burning Tower, Nitar's University.

Fourth Tier (Cultural District)

The fourth Tier of Nitar is primarily the estates of the wealthy and influential class. Those who live here enjoy amenities such as theaters, public baths, museums, and schools. Most of the culture and primary education in the city happens here.

Third Tier (Trade District)

The third tier is primarily devoted to commerce and regulation.

A Mint is responsible for regulating currency in Nitar and the surrounding realms, and the Nitari stock exchange coordinates the influx of resources needed to keep the city powered and fed.

Second Tier (Military District)

The second tier houses professional soldiers and workers that keep the city operating. The largest structure in this layer is Nigelline Citadel which trains new military recruits. The strata elevator hub, which is most easily accessed here, provides the most reliable means of transportation between the tiers.

First Tier (Industrial District)

Those who work in the city mines and in industry are guaranteed housing in the city's vast public housing system, called the Hives. The lower district is filled with factories and street markets.

Undercity

Nitar is built upon the ruins of old Nitar, and the sewers and catacombs of the upper city are the old streets and buildings of the lower city, which was buried in a sudden, violent catastrophe.

Mines

The mines are large and cavernous, having been dug primarily with steam-driven machines, and are worked at all hours of the day, to supply the boiler's insatiable demand for coal.

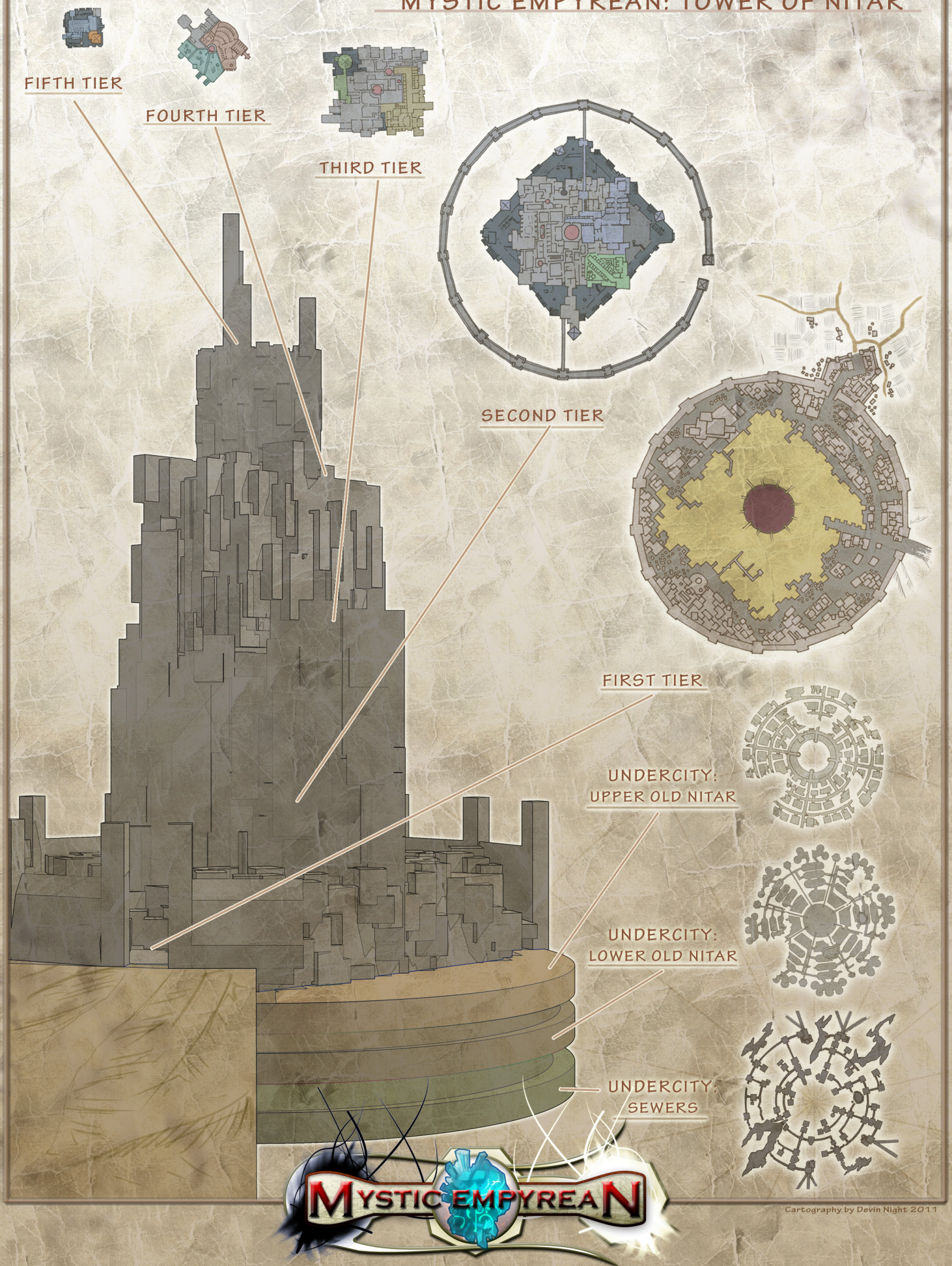
Caverns

Underground lakes and water-carved tunnels link the gaps between these colossal rocks, and provide homes to some of the more unsavory creatures that stalk the undercity.



MYSTIC EMPYREAN

MYSTIC EMPYREAN: TOWER OF NITAR



MYSTIC EMPYREAN: TOWER OF NITAR

FIRST TIER

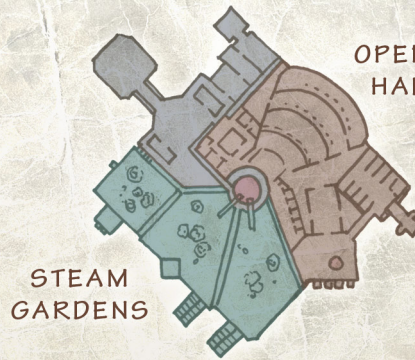


MYSTIC EMPYREAN: TOWER OF NITAR



THIRD TIER

STOCK EXCHANGE



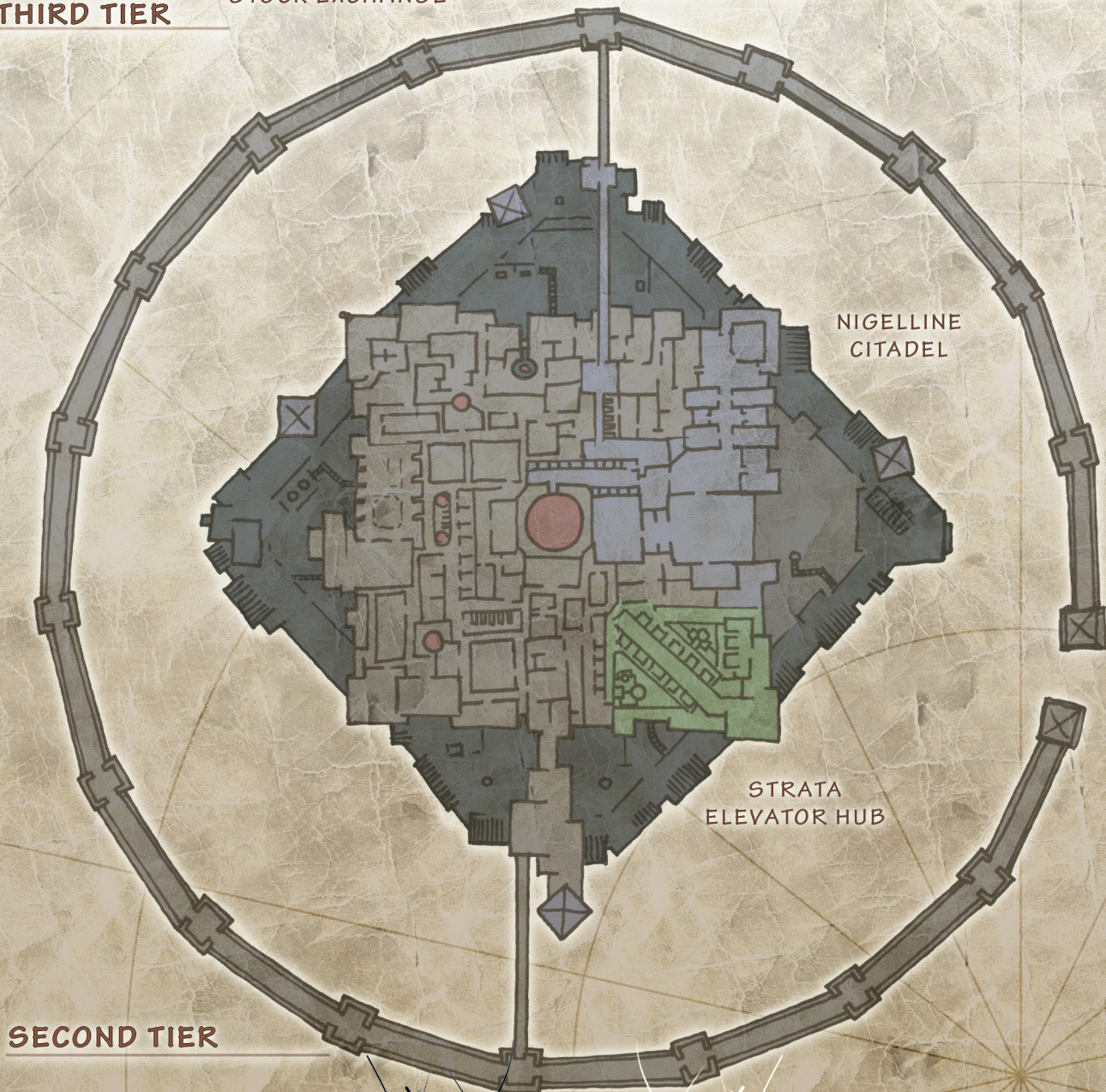
FOURTH TIER

GUILD ASSEMBLY HALL



BURNING TOWER

FIFTH TIER



SECOND TIER

STRATA
ELEVATOR HUB

NIGELLINE
CITADEL



MYSTIC EMPYREAN: TOWER OF NITAR

UNDERCITY: UPPER TIER



UNDERCITY: MIDDLE TIER



UNDERCITY: MINES & CAVERNS





Encounters in Nitar

Pregame: On the Road

Type: Social / Puzzle

Note: If you want to test out the mechanics of the game and explore your characters in an environment that will not affect the rest of the game, this encounter gives an opportunity to do so. If you want to jump straight into the adventure, this 'sandbox' encounter can be safely skipped.

Context: "Walking along the road to Nitar, you and your comrades spy a cart that is tipped over in the road. The cart's owner, a small man with a large mustache, is holding a rifle tightly and peering nervously around into the forest and woods. It is uncertain whether he is waiting for help, attempting to fend off bandits that might still be in the area, or simply a bit paranoid."

After this encounter ends, the party has an opportunity to rest and recover all spent Anima.

Suggested Emergence: 3

#1: At the City Gates

Type: Social / Puzzle

Context: "After a long night of travel, you find yourselves standing outside the gates of Nitar, the great city, which towers high up towards the sky. Massive iron walls seem to extend on forever in both directions, and the main gate before you is perhaps twenty stories tall.

A smaller gatehouse out front of the guard tower houses a few guards, who appear to be checking the credentials of everyone who enters the city.

Unfortunately, as wanderers, you have no official passports or documents that would grant you access to Nitar. As you draw closer to the front of the line of people waiting to enter the city, you have only limited time to think of some way to gain entry."

Suggested Emergence: 3





#2 In the City

Type: Social

Context: “Nitar is a colossal metropolis that covers many square miles and many stories. You have entered in one of the lower strata of the city—the domain of mercenaries, thieves, and poor workers.

You are trying to locate a cornerstone, but you know that you are not the only ones in the city who would like to have this treasure. It’s likely that the ruins the sage spoke to you of are well known to certain people within the city, such as guildmasters, workers, and city officials.

You must make contact with these kinds of people, and find what they know about accessing the ruins beneath the city. You must find some way to enter the undercity, as access is restricted for those not on official errands.”

Suggested Emergence: 3



#2b Optional Branch

Type: Various

If you finish encounters 1 and 2 too quickly, insert one or more optional encounters by rolling on the table below:

d10	Encounter Context
1	While looking for entrances to the undercity, you are arrested for trespassing in restricted areas.
2	A shady-looking merchant attempts to sell you a map of the undercity. You can’t be sure if the map is a fraud or not.
3	You are poking around a warehouse, looking for clues on how to enter the undercity, when you stumble upon a fresh corpse, and hear movement in the darkness.
4	A portion of the upper city collapses, trapping one of your friends in the rubble.
5	The guards who suspected you earlier at the gate have put out a warrant for your arrest, and everyone is looking for you.
6	The undercity entrances are controlled by a band of mercenaries, who demand heavy payment to grant you entry.
7	There is not a direct entrance to the undercity. Instead, you must break in somehow by cutting through the city’s foundations.
8	In order to reach the undercity, you will have to use a maintenance elevator located in the highest strata of Nitar. Unfortunately, access to this strata is granted only to nobles and city officials.
9	A child has gone missing and was seen near one of the entrances of the undercity. The child’s concerned mother begs you to help her by finding him.
10	An item in your possession is confiscated by a corrupt city guard.

#3: Beneath Nitar

Type: Puzzle

Context: “You have finally made it down into the depths of the undercity—the forgotten ruins upon which Nitar has built its foundations.

The undercity is a dilapidated and collapsing maze of worn granite and marble, with many potential hazards for unwary adventurers. Vast gothic arches and massive buildings loom over you, all sealed off from the world by the Great City’s foundation resting above. You must be cautious as you head down into its depths, avoiding traps and natural hazards which might bring you to an early demise.”

In this puzzle encounter, you will be presented with a series of small hazards, which you must use your wits and teamwork to solve. You should still make use of Establishing questions for these hazards, but their establishment and resolution can be fairly simple. Randomly select hazards from the table on the next page. Once you have overcome 5 to 7 different hazards, the encounter is completed. Feel free to create your own hazards, if you have an inspiring encounter hook in mind, or want to resolve any loose ends created in the previous encounters.

Suggested Emergence: 7





Encounters for #3: Beneath Nitar

d20 Encounter Context

- 1 A heavy stone door blocks your path, controlled by a strange machine with no obvious control panel.
- 2 A small tunnel in the wall seems to be the only way forward through a dead end. However, the tunnel is far too small for even a child to fit through.
- 3 A vast chasm, spanned only by a crumbling bridge of natural rock, stands before you.
- 4 A swarm of vampiric bats surround you, biting relentlessly at your exposed flesh. Hunger seems to have driven them to a kind of madness.
- 5 You find an old urn set upon a dais in the middle of one of the rooms of the undercity. It seems to be sealed shut. However, some kind of creature is clearly inside, and speaks to you, begging to be released.
- 6 You find a hall with hundreds of doors. Many of them seem to lead only to dead ends, or to nowhere at all. How will you proceed?
- 7 A collapsing support fixture cracks above you. You have only moments to take cover, or you will be crushed!
- 8 A boulder falls from above and begins rolling down the long, narrow hallway towards you.
- 9 You reach a wide hall with a dead end. You know there must be some kind of passageway or door here, but nothing obvious catches the eye.
- 10 You discover a key which obviously belongs to some kind of vault or reliquary by its design. If you were to search the area around here, perhaps you might find something of value...
- 11 As you cross a wide, empty room, the ground under your feet begins to give. Even the slightest move will send you all tumbling down into an unknown abyss.
- 12 You reach a sealed door covered in brightly glowing runes. The runes appear to contain some message or clue about how to open the door, but you have no idea how to read them.
- 13 A pack of diseased, doglike creatures leer out at you from the shadows and begin to move in, surrounding you.
- 14 You enter a room that is swarming with snakes. The creatures snap aggressively, and cover every inch of the floor.
- 15 You reach a subterranean chasm, probably a thousand meters across. A cable car system is evidently designed to cross this chasm, but it appears to be broken.
- 16 You encounter a dead-end room filled with skeletons and mummified corpses. There appears to be no indication of how to proceed from here, but maybe some clues are hidden within...
- 17 A deep pool of icy cold water is the only way forward from where you stand. A few minutes in this pool will freeze you solid, but you must dive deep beneath it to find the way forward.
- 18 A strange, elegant and eerie music floats up hauntingly from a corridor below. Could it be that someone is still living down here in the undercity? Perhaps this being could guide you in your search.
- 19 You enter a chamber with vaulted ceilings of shimmering, smooth white stone. There is no apparent exit—except for through the chamber's roof. No obvious way to climb the walls presents itself to you.
- 20 Before you stands a stone double door nearly five stories tall. It appears to be sealed by a great bar, which can be removed by turning a crank whose handle is itself two stories tall.

#4: Root of the World

Type: Combat

Context: “After hours of long traveling, you make it into the deepest part of the undercity—the heart of the vaults of the ancient Nitar. Here is held a piece of the root of the world—the source of power that has lain dormant beneath the city for a thousand years, and can push back the tide of Aether to reveal new wonders and adventures.

This circular chamber is a massive vault, easily fifty stories high and just as wide in diameter.



Before you in the vault, hovering about three feet from the ground in the room’s center is an iridescent, beautiful crystal of radiant color. Its light reflects in dimensions that cannot exist, and in every facet of the jewel are whole worlds, existing only for a moment in a flash of light, but fully populated and rendered to the smallest blade of grass.”

When the players take the stone, you may proceed with the encounter below. Alternatively, if the party has partnered with an NPC (such as Gharl or Belanya), or has given such a character reason to follow them, the NPC may appear instead with cohorts to undermine or betray the party. Otherwise, read on:

“You take the stone effortlessly from its place, and begin to head out, a slithering sound hisses through the darkness.

A huge creature, glowing with elemental radiance, slinks down from the ceiling and eyeballs you curiously. It appears to be a natural creature, but irradiated and infused with the stone’s power over what might have been centuries. Spines of crystal rise from its back, crackling with electricity, and its long, sticky tongue lashes out and back with incredible speed. Claws strong enough to cut through solid stone adorn its fingertips, and its body rapidly changes colors, shifting to become invisible as it moves.”

The creature attacks the party, focusing especially on whichever player has acquired the cornerstone. It will give chase if the players try to escape.

Once the players have defeated the monster, or made good on their escape, the encounter is ended, and the players have successfully completed their goal! The cornerstone acquired in this adventure can be returned to Grand Cornerstone in order to stabilize and expand the world even further.

NAME

Enciyo, Eye of the Librarium

PLAYER

PROFESSION / SKILL

Scholar

LIKES

Culture, History, Puzzles, Books

DISLIKES

Crowds, Anything in her way

PHYSIQUE

Lithe, Tall

ATTITUDE

Pragmatic, Direct

APPEARANCE

A well-dressed woman who is
constantly reading or scribbling notes
in her many books. Her skin crawls
with cryptic words and symbols.

CREED

PRIMARY TENET

Truth is sacred.

SECONDARY TENET

Knowledge is the most valuable treasure.

TERTIARY TENET

Those who seek deserve to find.



GEAR

Book of Visions - Once per game session, Enciyo can ask a single question to this book. The book reveals an answer to the question which is guaranteed true.

Seeker's Compass - This compass points in the direction of any item or person you desire to find. It requires 1 Light Anima to activate.

PERSONA TRAIT Words Within	LINKED PERSONALITY Academic	ELEMENT Light
PERSONA TRAIT Webweaver	LINKED PERSONALITY Brooding	ELEMENT Light
PERSONA TRAIT Crystalline	LINKED PERSONALITY Lucid	ELEMENT Electricity
PERSONA TRAIT Barrier	LINKED PERSONALITY Courteous	ELEMENT Darkness
PERSONA TRAIT Endless Eyes	LINKED PERSONALITY Faultfinding	ELEMENT Light

WORDS WITHIN (Academic)

"The words seemed to swirl about beneath her skin, revealing and obscuring and revealing again. Her knowledge, I knew, was a treasure which she guarded jealously."



LIGHT

Superficial: A skittering ink slithers beneath and upon the skin of the Eidolon, forming and unforming words. With milky white eyes, he can read any language and inherently understands the meaning behind forgotten and even iconographic languages.

Deep: The Eidolon's body is a living work of literature, filled with words. He bleeds ink and knowledge, and can eat books in order to recover from wounds.

All Consuming: Able to transform his body into a living construct of ink and knowledge, the Eidolon can take any shape and comprehend any riddle. However, his body is made of different stuff than most, and he is only able to heal from wounds by consuming books or knowledge.

WEBWEAVER (Brooding)

"Her spindly arms moved in a curious pattern as she talked and paced around. When our conversation had ended, I turned to leave, only to realize I was trapped in an invisible net of threads."



LIGHT

Superficial: The Eidolon can draw a near-indestructible thread of silk from the palms of her hands, and attach it to any solid surface with a touch. Her arms become longer and slimmer, adept at weaving and shaping the silk she creates.

Deep: The Eidolon can coat the threads of her silk with stinging, sticky, or flammable mucus. She can also attach webs by throwing them or 'shooting' them from her palms.

CRYSTALLINE (Lucid)

"His whole body was covered in crystals of perfect color and clarity, reflecting the light like a prism. A calming light seemed to wash over me when he smiled."



ELEC

Superficial: Crystals adorn the body of the Eidolon, and these can store and release light as needed. With sufficient charge, the Eidolon can release beams of intense, burning light, or radiate like a lantern.

Deep: The Eidolon's crystalline body is resistant to damage, but is brittle and shatters with sufficient force. By drawing in light from the sun or some other powerful source, the Eidolon can restore these crystals with only a few moments concentration.

BARRIER (Courteous)

"As the avalanche closed over us, she calmly raised her hand. The air shimmered above us, and the snow slid over us, cascading across an invisible barrier in the air."



DARK

Superficial: The Eidolon's face hardens to become much like a mask, though one that captures her features perfectly and beautifully. Her flesh is powdered pale, as though with makeup. With a flourish of the hand, she can create walls of force that will repel or redirect most assaults. The air shimmers with these forces, making them apparent to intelligent creatures, but confounding to monsters. It requires both hands to maintain these barriers, and the Eidolon cannot hold a barrier where she cannot see.

ENDLESS EYES (Faultfinding)

"Her whole body opened up at once, a thousand eyelids sliding open to gaze at me from every direction. Each one glared at me with venomous disdain."



LIGHT

Superficial: The Eidolon can open additional eyes anywhere on her body by spending Anima. These eyes can see directly through walls and people, into locked boxes, and through doors. This vision extends about fifteen feet in all directions from the Eidolon. Even with this supernatural vision, she still needs light in order to see.

NAME

Fargan, Seeker of Balance

PLAYER

PROFESSION / SKILL

Monk

LIKES

People, Exotic Places

DISLIKES

Fighting, arguments

PHYSIQUE

Average, Variable

ATTITUDE

Calm, Sagacious

APPEARANCE

A monk robed in flowing shadows and light, who carries a great wheel upon his back. He is always searching for alternatives and less-trodden paths.

CREED

PRIMARY TENET

Never take the obvious path.

SECONDARY TENET

Become what you are needed to be.

TERTIARY TENET

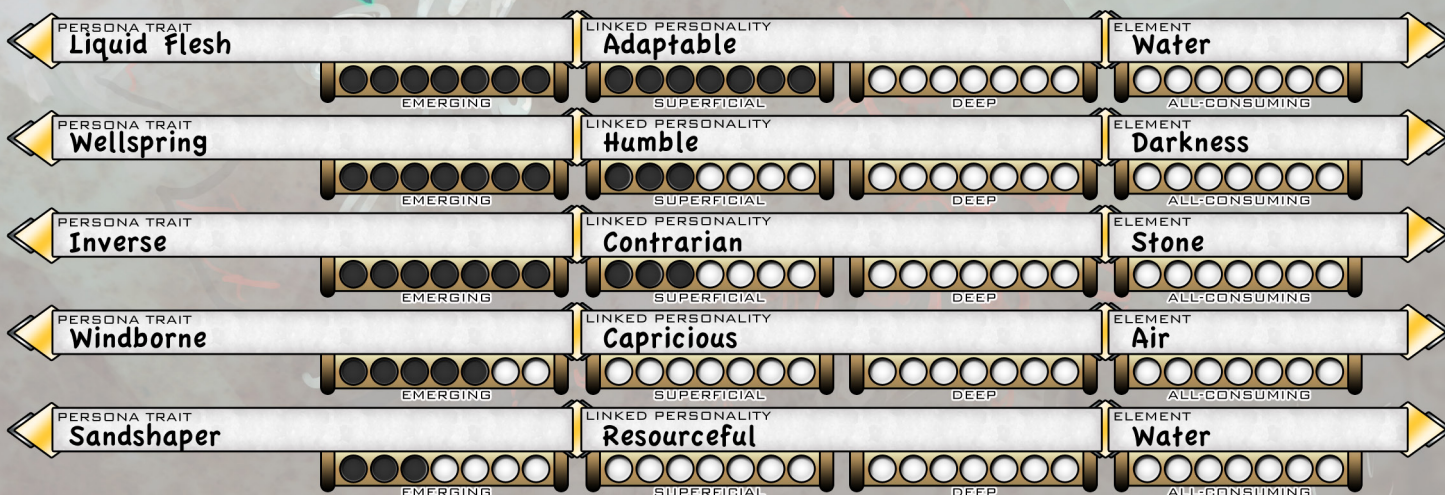
Confrontation is best avoided.



GEAR

Lotus Wheel - This metal ring is indestructible, and can project a shield of force by its wielder spending an Anima.

Glass Skeleton Key - This key opens any lock, but shatters after doing so.



LIQUID FLESH (Acrobatic)

"Her body twisted like a spout of water, slipping through the cracks in the walkway as I tried to approach. There was no hope of catching her."



Superficial: The Eidolon has a sea green twinge to her skin, and smells faintly of salt and brine. The Eidolon can deform and manipulate individual limbs to become any shape or size. She cannot disconnect them from the rest of her body, or deform more than a cubic foot of flesh at a time in this way.

Deep: With an even greater control over her contortions, the Eidolon is able to deform and reform her entire body at once. She cannot deform her heart, however, which always retains its original size.

All Consuming: The Eidolon's heart swims like a fish beneath her transparent skin. Any water that her heart is placed into immediately forms a brand new body. Additionally, she can break up her limbs into liquid that moves separately from her body. Naturally, she suffers and shrinks whenever the humidity is low, or whenever there is a shortage of water.

WELLSPRING (Humble)

"He offered me a hand, as water seemed to seep from his sleeves and from between his fingers, running down his arms as though his heart was an endless fountain."



Superficial: Water flows constantly from the Eidolon's heart, seeping off of his body at a rate of about a gallon per minute. The Eidolon can reduce to stop this flow as he wishes. With concentration, he can control any water that links with the flow springing from his heart. He cannot manipulate more water than his body's volume.

Deep: The Eidolon's eyes, ears, and mouth run with water, though he can breathe perfectly both water and air. He can manipulate up to five times his body's volume in water.

INVERSE (Contrarian)

"He walked casually along the wall, traversing the bottomless well as though there were no danger of falling. Bound as we were by our own gravity, there was nothing we could do to chase him down into that abyss."



Superficial: Affected by a unique gravity all his own, the Eidolon can choose to orient himself on a different surface than the ground. Using this power, he can treat walls, ceilings, or even specific objects as 'down', and gravity will affect him as such.

Deep: The Eidolon is able to transfer his unique sense of direction to any other person or object with a touch. The time they continue to be affected by this power depends on how long they are in contact with the Eidolon and how long he wishes.

WINDBORNE (Capricious)

"The breeze began to pick up, then lifted her into the air by the billow of her robe. As I watched in wonder, she sailed off into the night on the summer breeze, never to be seen again."



Superficial: Surrounded by his own personal wind current, the Eidolon is able to control and redirect winds. She can unleash a burst of wind to throw herself high into the air, or to knock down an unsuspecting foe, or accomplish anything else that sudden gusts of wind are good for.

SANDSHAPER (Resourceful)

"At his command, the ground grew and formed for us a bridge. 'Quickly!' he called, for even as we watched, the sand began to drain from it."



Superficial: Within his immediate sphere of influence—about three feet from his body—the Eidolon can manipulate and reshape sand as will. The structures he creates with this power break down quickly once they leave his sphere of influence, but while within this range, they are as strong as iron.

NAME

Lieselotte, Who Sees Beneath

PLAYER

PROFESSION / SKILL

Artist

LIKES

Fashion, Gossip, Society

DISLIKES

Bureaucracy, Censorship

PHYSIQUE

Petite, Acrobatic

ATTITUDE

Excitable, Personable

APPEARANCE

An artist wreathed in color and light,
Lieselotte is a living work of art who
aspires to infuse everything around her
with that same beauty.

CREED

PRIMARY TENET

Beauty is the highest good.

SECONDARY TENET

Beauty is to be loved by others.

TERTIARY TENET

Live in harmony with the world.



GEAR

Terelt's Claw - A paintbrush made from bone. By spending a point of Anima, anything painted with this brush becomes real for a few minutes.

Vermillion Shroud - The wearer can cause another to become infatuated with him/her for a half hour. This effect can only be used once.



PERSONA TRAIT

Art Cast Living

LINKED PERSONALITY

Artistic

ELEMENT

Electricity

EMERGING

SUPERFICIAL

DEEP

ALL-CONSUMING

PERSONA TRAIT

Illusionist

LINKED PERSONALITY

Exhibitionist

ELEMENT

Darkness

EMERGING

SUPERFICIAL

DEEP

ALL-CONSUMING

PERSONA TRAIT

Blissful Gaze

LINKED PERSONALITY

Optimistic

ELEMENT

Air

EMERGING

SUPERFICIAL

DEEP

ALL-CONSUMING

PERSONA TRAIT

Cosmopolitan

LINKED PERSONALITY

Fashionable

ELEMENT

Air

EMERGING

SUPERFICIAL

DEEP

ALL-CONSUMING

PERSONA TRAIT

Graven Eye

LINKED PERSONALITY

Scornful

ELEMENT

Stone

EMERGING

SUPERFICIAL

DEEP

ALL-CONSUMING

ART CAST LIVING (Artistic)

"She existed as color and sound, painting herself into the air with each action or word. She appeared as a blur of color, like she had been painted into a scene with oil or watercolor."



ELEC

Superficial: The Eidolon can flow and move as though a liquid. When standing still, she retains her ordinary shape and look, but when moving, she can dart effortlessly through the arms or legs of clumsier foes without a thought. Climbing and acrobatics are also unnaturally easy for an Eidolon with this ability.

Deep: While standing still, the Eidolon's dimensions vanish, and she appears to become a painting on a wall or a part of the scenery. She can alter her exterior colors to match those of her surroundings, becoming invisible with an ever-shifting camouflage.

All Consuming: The Eidolon can freely change her appearance to anything she wishes, though she must be careful to suppress her body of flowing colors and sounds if she is to be passable as another being. While these Eidolons can easily frighten, inspire, and seduce others, they are more fragile, and flake away at a touch just like an oil painting.

ILLUSIONIST (Exhibitionist)

"Her beautiful form moved towards me with subtle grace, meeting my eyes and holding all of my senses rapt. When I reached out to touch her, there was nothing but smoke, and a man with his sword at my throat."



DARK

Superficial: The Eidolon possesses a third eye that, when opened, projects illusions. Anyone who meets the gaze of this third eye can be made to see anything the Eidolon wishes. Looking away from the gaze of the Eidolon's eye breaks the spell, and reveals the falsehood of these illusions.

Deep: The Eidolon's spell of illusion lasts for several seconds after he breaks his gaze with a victim. After this point, the Eidolon no longer controls the illusions—they play themselves out in whatever actions they were carrying out when the Illusionist's gaze broke.

BLISSFUL GAZE (Optimistic)

"She looked at me with a serene smile, and all my worries and anger melted. My head was clouded with a giddy excitement, and I was unable to think for the beautiful calm in my mind."



AIR

Superficial: One or both of the Eidolon's eyes glow with a soft white light. With direct eye contact and an expenditure of Anima, the Eidolon can cause an artificial happiness to well up within another who is not extremely agitated or distracted. This sensation causes the Eidolon to behave much like he is intoxicated, saying or doing things that he would not otherwise, and becoming rather susceptible to suggestion. After a single dose of this, creatures develop a lifelong immunity to it.

Deep: The Eidolon can turn her calming gaze to create a rush of excitement and optimism-fueled adrenaline as well. This inspires an ally to temporarily forget his wounds and act with full proficiency. Allies do not become immune to this boost of energy, if they willfully accept it.

COSMOPOLITAN (Fashionable)

"Before I even saw her, I knew. This is someone that I wanted to be around. Someone worth listening to. Someone worth supporting. All semblance of doubt fled from my mind. I wanted to be beside her, and hear her."



AIR

Superficial: The Eidolon possesses a jewel that looks similar to jewelry of one kind or another, but built into her body. By 'turning on the charm,' the Eidolon makes everyone who gazes upon the light of this jewel consider her as a friend, even if they have never before met. This effect doesn't work on enemies or those who have renounced the Eidolon.

GRAVEN EYE (Scornful)

"She looked at me with such derision and scorn as I had never seen—her stony eyes glinting with terrifying malice. And then, as my eyes met hers, everything was suddenly dark."



STONE

Superficial: For as long as the Eidolon's stone eyes meet those of another, that victim is turned to solid stone, and he is unable to move or act.

NAME

Lyons, Who Slew Regret

PLAYER

PROFESSION / SKILL

Soldier

LIKES

Challenges, Excitement

DISLIKES

Puzzles, Riddles, Establishment

PHYSIQUE

Strong, Imposing

ATTITUDE

Stoic, Just

APPEARANCE

A towering, solidly-built man with golden hair and brown eyes. Lyons is adorned with medals of valor, and carries a spear with a flag attached.

CREED

PRIMARY TENET

Those who fight beside me are allies.

SECONDARY TENET

Choose a living ally over a dead enemy.

TERTIARY TENET

Only the future matters.



GEAR

Fatalistic Grey - Lyons' Spear. This weapon is unbreakable, and returns to Lyons on command.

Fireblood Potion - This terrible-tasting potion wreathes the body of one who imbibes it in flames that he can control.



PERSONA TRAIT Hand Cannon	LINKED PERSONALITY Headstrong	ELEMENT Fire
PERSONA TRAIT Banneret	LINKED PERSONALITY Bravery	ELEMENT Fire
PERSONA TRAIT Towering	LINKED PERSONALITY Boisterous	ELEMENT Air
PERSONA TRAIT Simulacrum	LINKED PERSONALITY Reputed	ELEMENT Light
PERSONA TRAIT Living Weapon	LINKED PERSONALITY Bloodthirsty	ELEMENT Fire

HAND CANNON (Headstrong)

"He raised his hand, unleashing a barrage of molten energy that splashed through our best-laid defenses."



FIRE

Superficial: The Eidolon's palms open up into veins that connect to his heart and open into the air. With a thought, the Eidolon can send a surge of Anima through these veins, which manifests as a powerful burst of elemental energy.

Deep: With increased power, the Eidolon's Hand cannon can form its destructive energy into grappling hooks, ropes, acid blasts, grapeshot, and any other material object that can be reasonably shot.

All Consuming: The destructive power of the Eidolon's Hand Cannon increases, such that he can hurl explosive bursts of energy that spread over a wide area. He can also maintain a continuous short stream of energy that projects in a cone before him. The Eidolon finds himself unable to wield any weapon in his hands, and they blister and burn at the touch of metal.

BANNERET (Brave)

"Flags and banners and sigils of valor adorned his form. When he leapt forward to meet the battle, my heart swelled with courage, and I could not resist joining him."



FIRE

Superficial: Flags and banners are a part of the Eidolon's body. When he joins a battle or endeavor, he can let out a rallying cry that, by spending an Anima, inspires all those around him who might flee in fear to turn and join the battle. Allies within sight of his banner can fight with slightly more proficiency.

Deep: The sigils and medals of valor that cover the Eidolon's body reflect his power and strength. Just as he inspires allies to courage, he can inspire enemies to fear with his charge. Though this power is weaker against Eidolons and strong minded individuals, those who are wavering on the possibility of joining the battle on an enemy's side will inevitably turn and flee at the sight of him.

TOWERING (Boisterous)

"He stood vast and tall above us, looking down and across the field. 'Who will challenge me?' he asked."



AIR

Though we waited and waited none stepped forward to meet him in battle."

Superficial: The Eidolon grows to a great size, being half again as large as any ordinary person. This increased size comes with additional strength, mass, and weight as well.

Deep: Growing in boastfulness and strength, the Eidolon is twice as large as any ordinary person, and has all the mass, strength, and weight that come with this increased size.

SIMULACRUM (Reputed)

"He stood alone on the field of battle, against all of our armies and weapons. We laughed at first when we saw the lone soldier, but blinked and suddenly saw more. There were thousands upon thousands."



LIGHT

Superficial: The Eidolon is able to create simulacra, or hollow duplicates of himself. These beings have the same strength and mass as his true self, but shatter into nothing when struck. The simulacra cannot speak or be reasoned with—their lips are fused together, and their eyes have an eerie, glassy look to them that belies no intelligence. The Eidolon may create up to three simulacra at a time, and must arm them as necessary for any tasks they are to carry out. Simulacra shatter and vanish if they move more than a hundred yards from their creator.

LIVING WEAPON (Bloodthirsty)

"Armor and weapons were fused to her being—a living incarnation of war and bloodshed. She walked across the battlefield like a shadow of death itself, drinking in the horrors of the war like a fine wine."



FIRE

Superficial: The Eidolon possesses natural armor and weapons formed from nearly unbreakable metal. These weapons can be wielded with expert proficiency, but she can never disarm them or share them with others. Her armor, similarly, is fused to her body and can never be removed.

NAME

Shiele, Dealer in Secrets

PLAYER

PROFESSION / SKILL

Merchant

LIKES

Treasures, Personal Space

DISLIKES

Wilderness, Danger

PHYSIQUE

Short, Strong, Lizardlike

ATTITUDE

Wheeling, Duplicitous

APPEARANCE

The serpentine Shiele wears a cloak of rags and shadows, and prefers the cover of darkness to light. His eyes glow a bright blue beneath his hood.

CREED

PRIMARY TENET

No one is more important than me.

SECONDARY TENET

A thing's value is its usefulness.

TERTIARY TENET

Every deal is worth considering.



GEAR

Orelk's Heart - The wearer has 1 additional point of Darkness Anima. (This point has already been added to Shiele's individual balance).

Silverlite - Any flesh cut by this dagger bleeds silver, which forms into coins as it touches the ground.



DUSKWALKER (Furtive)

"I wasn't sure at first if it was a man or a shadow that approached me. He seemed to be both there and not. He gave me his name, and showed me his face, but in my memories there are only shadows of our conversation."



DARK

Superficial: The darkness seems to shift and clamor about the Eidolon's feet like a robe. The Eidolon's features and words become muddled and vague when recalled, and he blends away to near invisibility in crowds or dark corners.

Deep: The Eidolon can become a shadow himself, and physical forces pass through him as though he were made only of smoke. As a shadow, however, he is unable to come into direct contact with glowing objects, bright lights, or fire without being harmed. These objects are always solid to him.

TREASURE BOX (Secretive)

"He crossed his chest with a finger and to my amazement it opened as though on a hinge. Within his body were hidden all manner of treasures and wonders. When he heard my gasp and realized he was being watched, he quickly shut this compartment away."



STONE

Superficial: A hidden compartment within the Eidolon's body can contain any amount of hidden treasures and wonders. Anything placed into the compartment takes up less space than it would normally. An Eidolon can easily carry up to five times his own body weight and bulk in this compartment. He cannot store living things or artifacts within himself. If the Eidolon dies or loses this ability, everything stored within his body is disgorged in a torrent of debris.

Deep: The Eidolon's secret compartment can contain an unlimited number of items, so long as no single item is larger than his own body. He may store artifacts within his body, but not living things.

FORKED TONGUE (Duplicious)

"I didn't want to believe, but his words had that grim quality of truth to them. They were the kind of words you hope are a lie, but know deep down they aren't."



DARK

Superficial: With a snakelike tongue, the Eidolon finds it uncannily easy to weave tales and lies that will goad others into doing his bidding. Non-Eidolons will believe the speaker without fail, and Eidolons are hard pressed to ignore his words.

Deep: Even Eidolons believe the speaker's words without fail, as long as they are not presented with evidence to the contrary.

DRAGONLIKE (Pride)

"His skin was covered in scales, and he seemed to slither as he crossed the floor. Little jets of smoke escaped his mouth, and I knew on some base, instinctive level that I was being considered for a potential meal just as I was being considered for an ally."



LIGHT

Superficial: Scales and neck frills adorn the Eidolon's flesh, making him tougher and more resilient to the elements. He is taller and stronger than average, and may also develop claws and a tail.

Deep: The Eidolon can contort his body like a lizard, and slither up walls and across floors easily. He develops the ability to breathe fire, as well as to eat raw meat without fear of disease. With effort, he can grow slightly larger and shift shape to the size and form of a small land dragon.

TOUCH OF DUST (Cruel)

"I froze in horror as she advanced upon me, cruel malice gleaming in her eyes. Before my eyes, she touched my friend's forehead with a finger, and his body fell into a heap of dust."



STONE

Superficial: The Eidolon possesses a withered, gnarled limb or finger that radiates malevolent power. Any organic substance he touches with this limb turns to dust within a few seconds. Living creatures may lose only a small part of their bodies, but the effect increases the longer contact is maintained.

ELEMENTAL ACTIONS

COMBAT

Head-on Attack
Test of Strength
Penetrate Defenses

PUZZLE

Move Object with Force
Destroy Something
Forge or Cast Something

SOCIAL

Intimidate Another
Coerce Another
Make Enemies

FIRE

Discover a Hidden Enemy
Observe an Enemy
Distract an Enemy
Detect a Trap
Spot Weakness

Find Something
Read Something
Observe Accurately
Shoot a Distant Target

Sense Another's Motives
Sense Another's Intentions
Detect Lies

LIGHT

Confuse or Daze an Enemy
Surprise Attack
Frighten an Enemy
Build a Trap
Withdraw from Combat

Repurpose a Device
Operate Something
Drive or Pilot Something

Confuse Another
Change the Subject
Create Dramatic Impact

LIGHTNING

Dodge an Attack
Pacify an Enemy
Utilize Surroundings
Capture an Enemy
Redirect an Enemy's Strike

Mix or Concoct Something
Adapt or Rearrange Something
Dodge a Hazard
Slip through a Narrow Space
Improvise Something

Pacify Another
Make Friends
Seduce or Charm Another

WATER

Defend against an Attack
Stand Fast Without Falling
Protect Another
Create a Fortification

Hold Something Closed
Lift Something
Build Something from Scratch

Ignore Another
Resist Influence
Restrain Another

STONE

Set and Conceal a Trap
Lie in Wait
Sneak Attack
Disable an Enemy

Hide Oneself
Sabotage Something
Disable a Device

Lie to Another
Disguise Oneself
Conceal Motives

DARKNESS

Coordinate a Group
Command Hired Troops
Goad an Enemy to Act

Train or Tame an Animal
Order Allies or Hired Help
Leap, Climb, or Swim
Move Something Precisely

Boast or Build Reputation
Trade with Another
Argue One's Opinion

AIR

The Balance

Though the dice variant for Mystic Empyrean is included in this preview game, dice are not used in the full game of Mystic Empyrean. Instead, a system called **the Balance** is used for resolution and event generation. The Balance allows the nature of an area to become manifest in random event generation, by skewing the results in a way that reflects the Anima balance in that place. It lets players change their own destinies by infusing Anima from their Personal Balances into the world, controlling event generation and making certain actions more likely to succeed.

Though the rules and charts for Balance-based resolution are not included in this guide, you can find these rules, plus instructions on how to create your own balance resolution tool on the Mystic Empyrean website, www.mysticempyrean.com. An official card-based Balance can be purchased in our online store, and comes complete with rules for its use.



Afterword

I hope you've enjoyed this brief look at Mystic Empyrean! This preview has been designed to showcase some of the most exciting aspects of the game—most notably the ability of player characters to evolve and grow based on roleplaying alone. By playing this game, you have created a version of your characters and of Nitar that is wholly unique to you and your comrades. Your actions have shaped the world and taken you on an adventure that belongs entirely to you.

The complete game book contains information on how to build growing personal backstories, construct new realms of your own, use the Balance to dynamically generate random encounters, and develop a dazzling array of nearly a hundred Persona Traits. Not only do players create their world, but they define what rules it operates under as well. The complete game of Mystic Empyrean invites players to customize their world with conventions like summoning, alchemy, pets, and more to create the exact gaming experience they desire. If you've found this small taste of Empyrean entrancing, then expect to be thoroughly awed by the possibilities of the full game!

Thank you for playing this preview of Mystic Empyrean, and I hope you're looking forward to the complete game's debut in Summer 2011!

— D. Brad Talton Jr.



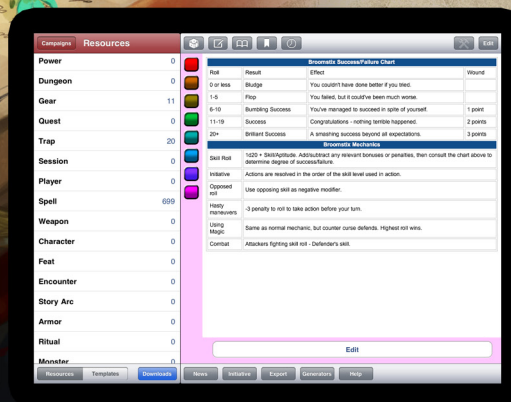
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