

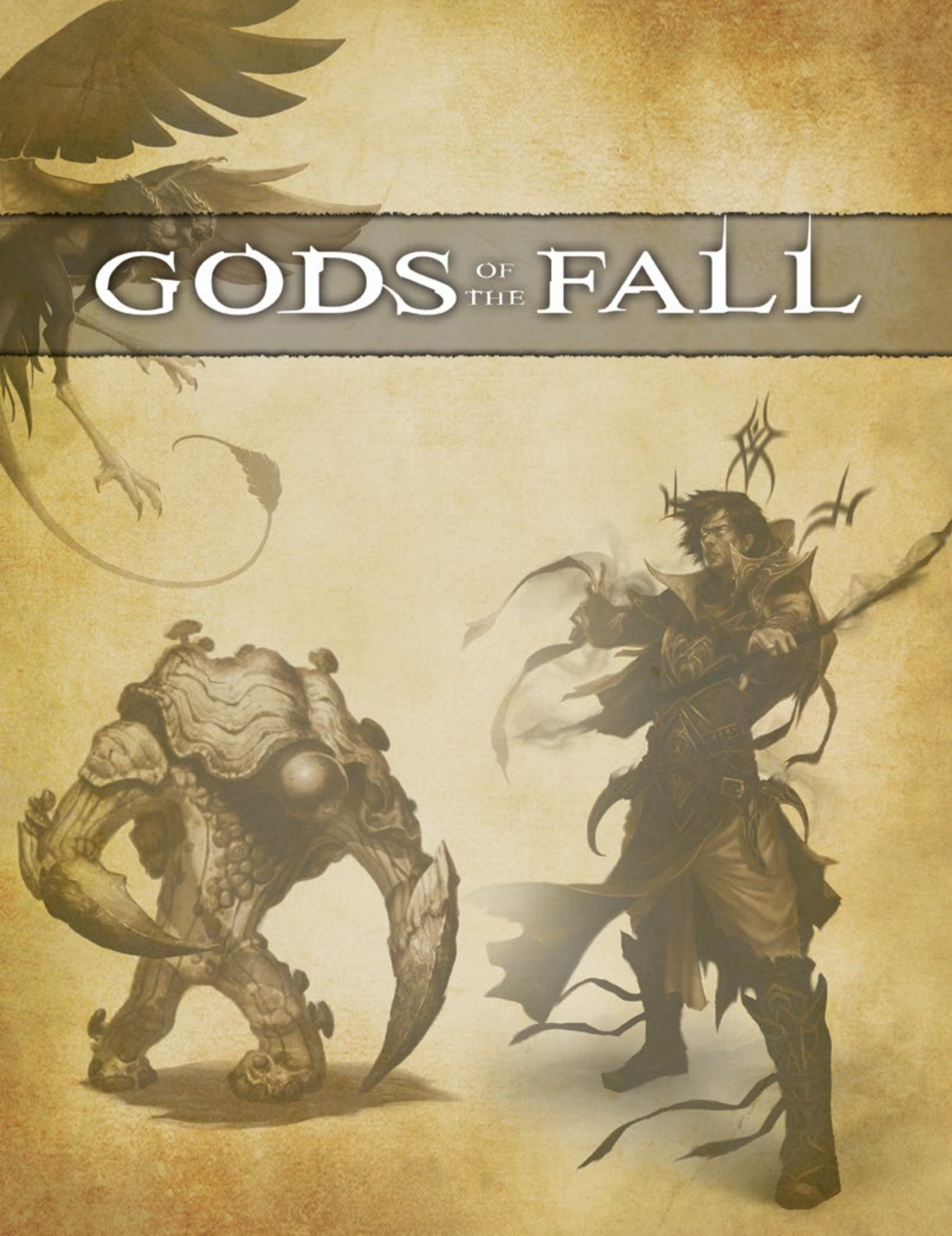
GODS OF THE FALL

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL



CYPHER
SYSTEM™

GODS OF THE FALL



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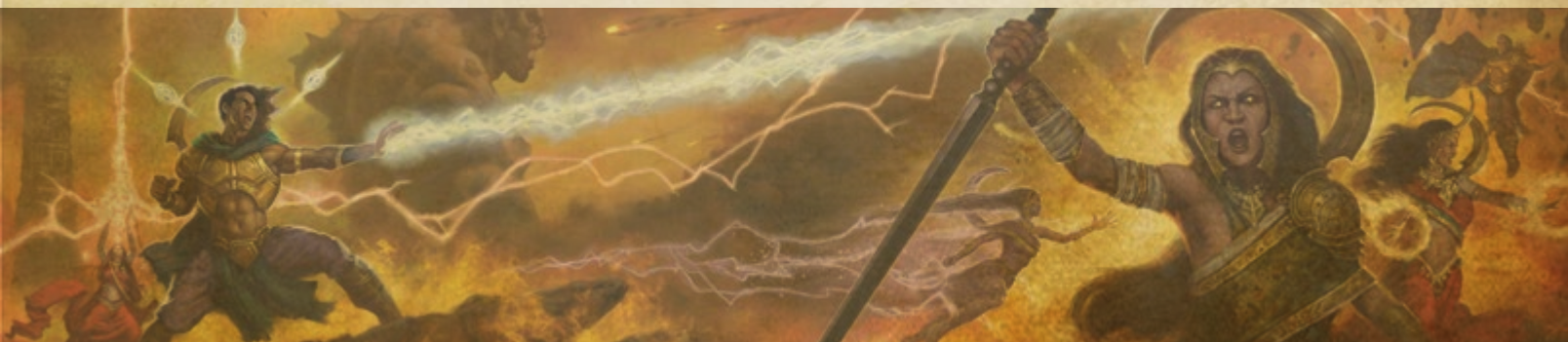
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INTRODUCTION

A dominion is a sphere of divine influence. For example, Fire is a dominion, as is War.

If you've ever wanted to play a god, this book is for you. *Gods of the Fall* is a fantasy roleplaying game where player characters (PCs) are more than simple adventurers, heroes, or even villains. In this new setting, they achieve far more: they awaken a divine spark. They claim a dominion and call themselves gods of War, gods of the Hunt, of Winter, of Fire, or of something else. Player characters complete divine labors, fulfill prophecies, and can even, eventually, redeem a world fallen into shadow.

Sound fun? We think so. That's why it's a new setting for the Cypher System. As usual, the insights and great ideas provided by the other members of the creative team were invaluable. This book wouldn't be what it is without them. In addition, I'd like to acknowledge the inspiration, enthusiasm, and great ideas contributed by Torah Cottrill, whose creativity and support were indispensable.

When I started writing *Gods of the Fall*, I thought the PCs were gods who had been expelled from "heaven." A familiar story; too familiar. Thankfully we hit on the idea that the entire realm of the gods—called Elanehtar—*physically* fell. It smote the world, killed all of the gods, and spawned a new dark age of misery, doubt, and evil. The site of the impact, called the Eye of Elanehtar, hosts a never-ending cyclonic storm constantly throwing off curses, and creatures formed from the corpses of the dead gods, called ravers.

Rumors, omens, and prophecies speak of new gods rising, weak and uncertain, but possibly the redeemers the world needs. These new gods are your player characters. Are you ready to forge a new pantheon?

BRall



PART 1

GETTING STARTED



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CHAPTER 2: MOURNING IN THE NIGHTLAND	19

CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO THE AFTERWORLD



Elanehtar pronunciation:
eh-LAN-eh-tar

Taran pronunciation:
TAR (as in "black as") -an

Elanehtar, page 68

Taran, page 128

Sleen, page 127

Cavazel, page 52

Gods once watched over the world. Deities of Rain, of Fortune, of War, of Travel, of Tricks, and of Death all resided in their celestial realm called **Elanehtar**. Humans, as well as other creatures like **tarans** and **sleen**, revered (or feared) the gods according to their needs and circumstances. A select few could even channel divine power to work miracles.

Then Elanehtar foundered. Burning and crumbling, it dropped out of the sky and smashed into the world like a vengeful

falling star. Elanehtar shattered into hundreds of millions of shards known today as cyphers. The mortal kingdom of **Cavazel** was utterly annihilated in the catastrophe. Other nations and regions survived, but all trembled and shook. Nothing was ever the same again. The gods were dead. And so the world gained a new appellation: the Afterworld.

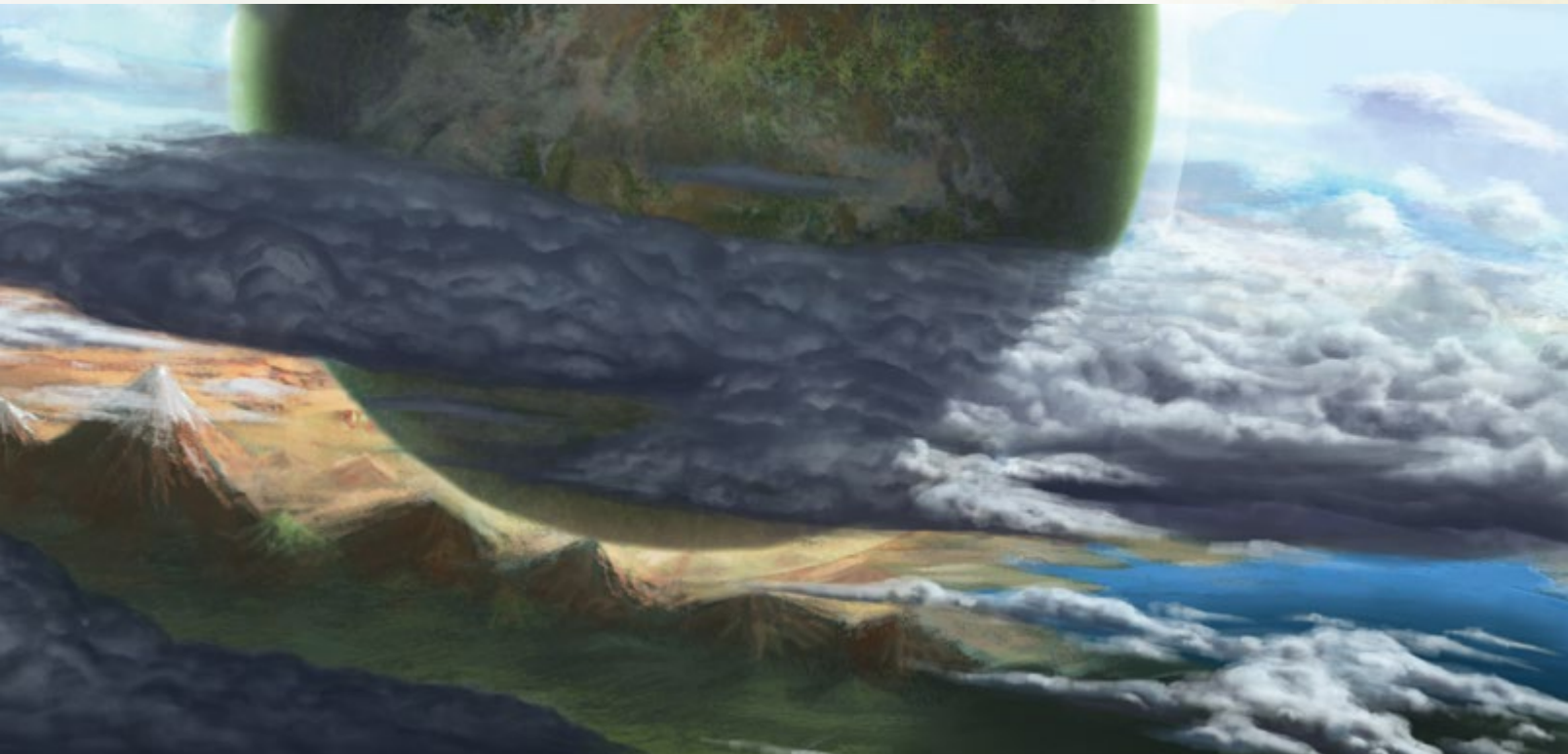
The gods, everyone knows, are gone for good. All the pantheons of Elanehtar perished. Zenia, Balakar, Thordin, Aren,

HOW TO PLAY GODS OF THE FALL

Gods of the Fall is an RPG setting designed for Cypher System rules, as presented in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. You'll need the *Cypher System Rulebook* to use the material presented in this setting.

However, *Gods of the Fall* is a fully realized setting. Though it references rules, descriptors, and foci presented in the *Cypher System Rulebook*, it doesn't require you to customize the types presented there, or tailor the rules to fit *Gods of the Fall*, because we've done that tailoring for you. For instance, the flavors presented by the *Cypher System Rulebook* as building blocks have already been incorporated, to the extent it made sense to do so, into the fully customized types: the champion, shaper, destroyer, and savior.

Likewise, a world-appropriate adaptation of the power shift rules from the *Cypher System Rulebook* have found their way into the dominion abilities that PCs can unlock as they advance in tier. In addition, the particular method of how the setting handles cyphers has been selected from all the options provided in the *Cypher System Rulebook*.



Verecocho, Mudarak, Avi, even malefic Samiel, and all the other greater gods, lesser gods, and their many avatars died when Elanehtar disintegrated.

So who are these new pretenders claiming to be divine heirs of fallen Elanehtar?

Grim times descended in the Afterworld. Forty-two years have elapsed since prayers failed and the heavens fell. If any gods remain, why didn't they announce themselves before now? Doing so might have saved many lives in the purges brought on by recrimination and sorrow, war mongering, revenge, and the outright madness that swept the Afterworld for decades. Two generations grew up in the Afterworld never knowing the divine. They scarcely believe it when their elders describe the existence of gods, and many who were alive before *the Fall* have purposefully forgotten.

Which is why few give credence to those who have lately announced themselves as rising gods. Called charlatans, purveyors of lies, and petty criminals, these pretenders

face a doubtful world. But those with unexplained abilities that hearken back to the gods grow in number and in power. It's clear that *something* is happening. Whether it's truly a return of the gods, mass hysteria, or a particularly insidious sorcerer's plot is anyone's guess. Those who yet recall the old ways say the time of the *Seven Prophecies* is finally at hand. But not too loudly, lest they be tracked down and slain by *Reconciliators*; agents charged with eliminating divine influences in the Afterworld.

PC DIVINITY

Gods of the Fall's central concept is that the PCs aren't just powerful adventurers: they are also divine. They might even be on track to raise a new heaven, or revitalize Elanehtar. Why and how did that happen?

Simple enough, really: destiny. Of all the mortal souls scattered across the Afterworld, the PCs (and select nonplayer characters [NPCs] and creatures) are the ones who discovered latent divine powers

Sleen are intelligent people with snakelike features.

Tarans are intelligent people with no eyes who tower over others.

Seven Prophecies, page 95

Reconciliator, page 165

The Fall is an all-encompassing term for when Elanehtar fell, the gods died, and the world lost hope.



SOME OF THE MOST WEALTHY AND ENTITLED CLASSES KEEP TORTURE DENS, WHERE SLAVES AND DEBTORS ARE BRANDED, WHIPPED, AND MUTILATED FOR AMUSEMENT (OR HORRIFICATION).

Chapter 9: GMing Deities, page 94

Aether, page 85

Nod, page 78

Nightland, page 22

within themselves. The transference of that power might have come from any of the following, or something else entirely.

- As an accident of a PC's birth, when the stars, worlds, and realms in the hidden **Aether** all aligned
- From the bloodline of a long-dead divine parent, grandparent, or ancestor
- From the acquisition of a divine implement that confers its power on a worthy (or merely lucky) wielder
- Because a PC is actually one of the gods of Elanehtar who has forgotten who they once were

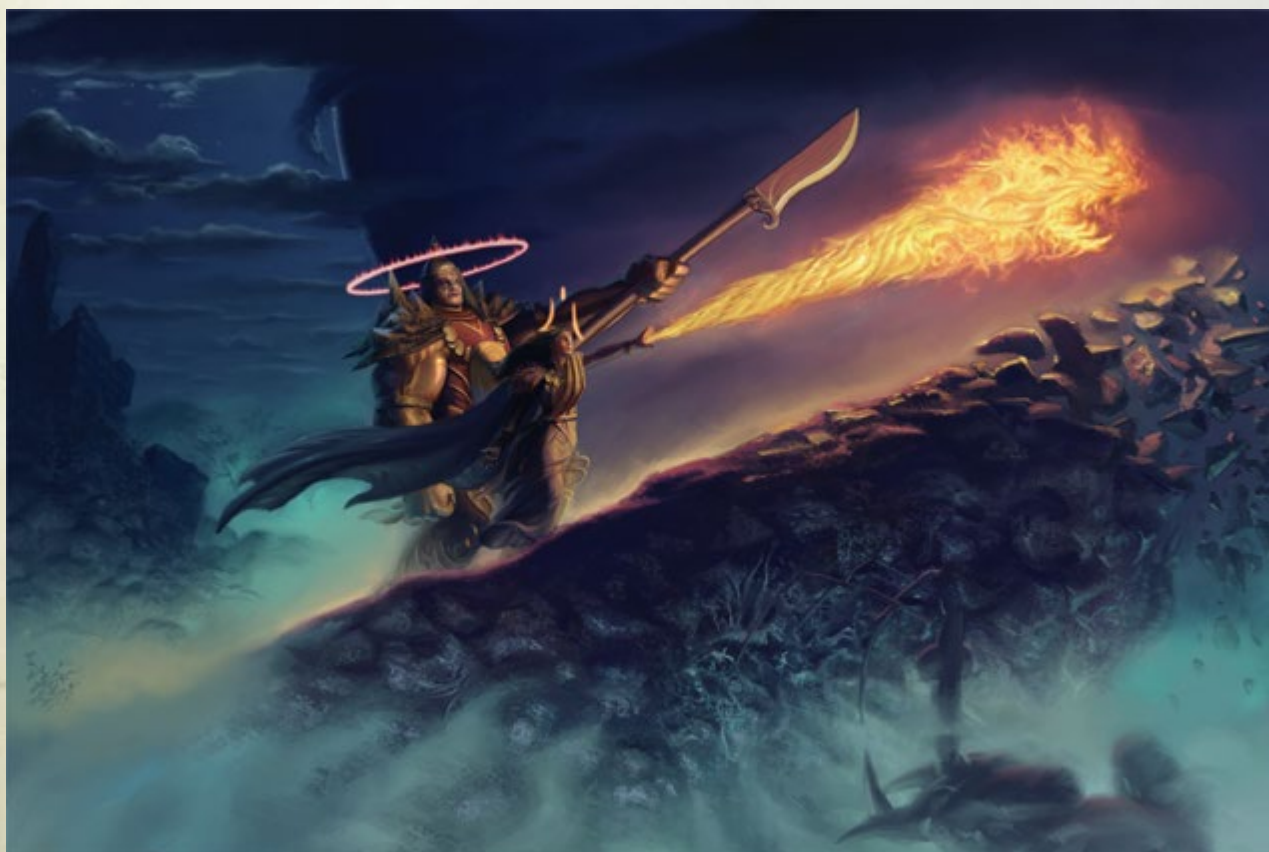
The point is, knowing how and why a PC is given access to the abilities only gods could wield doesn't matter nearly as much as what they will choose to do with that power. And of course, what a PC chooses

to do has a lot to do with what you, the game master (GM), decide to do when you create adventures for Gods of the Fall. If you want your players to address the evils infesting the Afterworld, you'll find a wealth of suggestions threaded through the setting material, as well as in **Chapter 9: GMing Deities**.

DARKNESS OF THE AFTERWORLD

The gods once took an active interest in the welfare of their worshippers both in this life and the next. People didn't react well when this moral universe shattered. The Fall also brought with it a literal darkness, as it ushered in the arrival of an eternal eclipse in the form of **Nod**, an intruder moon. But a psychic darkness grew in the wars, riots, and rampages that followed, a darkness that persists to this day.

Life is cheap in the Afterworld. An insidious ethos took root, especially in a region called the **Nightland**. Many there think nothing of financially ruining, kidnapping, torturing, enslaving, crippling, or killing someone of lesser means as an



idle amusement, as part of a game, or to make some quick coin. While this barbarous attitude isn't universal, it is epidemic.

Some of the most wealthy and entitled classes keep torture dens, where slaves and debtors are branded, whipped, and mutilated for amusement (or horrification). Being less powerful or financially secure is reason enough to be targeted for killing or being sold into slavery. Murder, rape, theft, assault—all these and more crimes are tolerated in most places. In the largest city-state in the Nightland, called **Corso**, they are even regulated by the payment of indulgences—if you pay a fee to murder your neighbor, you can do so and remain on the right side of the law. Corso is a terrible place to be powerless.

PCs IN THE AFTERWORLD

Gods of the Fall is about characters discovering and developing their divine potential, and gradually awakening godlike power. Some characters empower themselves for selfish reasons, but most take up their power for the sake of saving the Afterworld from evil. And it certainly needs saving.

The average person in the Afterworld has a hard life, beset by a horrific event or three, and one that ends without hope in a better life after death. But player characters are not average people. PCs are heirs of the fallen gods of Elanehtar. They begin the game already suspecting their divine potential when wild dreams of wielding vast power finally crystallize into actual memories—though not their own—of the gods who came before. This realization is called the **Awakening**. PCs who Awaken are able to see not only their own **nimbus** denoting a fledgling divine spark, divine spark, but also the nimbus of other god-touched creatures and objects.

Player characters can choose to embrace divine power, and develop it by finding lost secrets, joining up with other gods,

Throughout this book, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to the *Cypher System Rulebook*, where you can find additional details about that rule, ability, creature, or concept. Often, it will be necessary to look up the referenced item in the rulebook, especially if the item is a descriptor or focus ability that isn't replicated in *Gods of the Fall*. Other times, it might not be necessary to reference the item, but doing so will provide useful information for character creation and gameplay.

rekindling faith and worship, and gathering cyphers. Each cypher used liberates another shard of lost Elanehtar into the universe. Some believe that if a critical threshold is reached, Elanehtar—or something completely different—will be birthed anew.

PC adventures in the Afterworld begin as in any standard fantasy game. Perhaps the PCs are caught up in violence and need to make a stand in order to survive. Maybe they hear of a divine implement of a dead god languishing in a distant ruin, and decide to make for it. Or perhaps they learn that someone needs help, and decide to offer it, as heroes do.

As PCs gain experience and knowledge, their power increases, as does their connection to the divine. Character connection to the divine comes in the form of dominions, special divine abilities PCs gain in addition to their regular abilities. Dominion abilities are similar to standard **type** abilities, but they are often broader in application. For example, dominion abilities include **Steal Name**, which allows a character to learn the name of a person or thing simply by looking at it, and then use that name to gain an advantage in the situation.

Corso, page 24

Awakening, page 136

Nimbus, page 143

Character Type,
page 22

Steal Name, page 143

AS PCs BECOME MORE LIKE GODS THROUGH ACCESS TO DOMINION ABILITIES, THEY ARE ABLE TO MORE CLEARLY SEE THE SEVEN PROPHECIES THAT UNDERLIE ALL THINGS LIKE THE THREADS OF FATE.

*Seven Prophecies,
page 95*

*Adventure and campaign
themes associated with
the Seven Prophecies can
be found in Chapter 9:
GMing Deities*

GMing Deities, page 94

Aether, page 85

Raver, page 169

As PCs become more like gods through access to dominion abilities, they're able to more clearly see the **Seven Prophecies** that underlie all things like the threads of fate. The Seven Prophecies are Law, Liberation, Understanding, Salvation, Restoration, Love, and Ruin. The Prophecies can act as guiding principles for characters who want to see a world redeemed and brought out of the darkness in which it languishes.

A GM can choose to create a campaign focused on fulfilling bits and pieces of several of the prophecies, or just one. For instance, if the GM devises a campaign centered around seeing the Prophecy of Liberation fulfilled, PC adventures might include taking down a slaver company from the inside out, freeing those held in bondage, fighting off the inevitable retaliation in the form of assassins and bounty hunters, finding those who are truly behind the insidious practice, and ultimately breaking the slave trade completely in the Afterworld.

MAGIC OF THE AFTERWORLD

The Afterworld reverberates with magic. Even after the fall of Elanehtar, when enchantments dependent on the will of the gods dissolved, mortal magic remains. Sorcerers and bibliomancers yet stride the world casting spells for battle, exploration, and profit. Magic is everywhere. Even the meanest barnsweep might know a charm for keeping away biting fleas.

In addition, ancient sorcerous echoes remain wound into objects, creatures, and locations. Ruins slumber underground, luring adventurers with a promise of legendary magical artifacts. Necromancers, without life-affirming gods and their followers to stop them, raise legions with ancient spells, and rule city-states. Dragons, no longer banished to distant lairs by godly decree, are real and present threats across the Afterworld.

ARTIFACTS are magical items that typically can be used more than once to produce the same result. An artifact might be a sword that speaks, a statue that fights on command, a decanter that pours out a never-ending stream of water, or a cloak that transforms into angel wings allowing its wearer to fly. The term is almost always used for an item that has an obvious purpose—a weapon, a defense, a mode of transport, a means of communication or learning new information, a means of obtaining food or other necessities, and so forth. Artifacts make their users more powerful, or they make life easier or better.

CYPHERS are pieces of heaven precipitated from the **Aether** when Elanehtar fell. These shards took on form, shape and function, transformed by the collective unconscious of the mortal sphere. Some call them divine sparks or god tears. They are usually small objects or mementos that characters can coax a single extraordinary effect from, such as healing wounds, protecting the wearer, granting temporary abilities like enhanced quickness or strength, or as single-use attacks of special effectiveness. Once used, a cypher's essence is released back to the Aether. However, cyphers are dangerous when gathered together because they draw **ravers**, which are the husks of dead gods. Ravers descend on large cypher accumulations in ever-increasing swarms.

GEOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The gods may be gone, but their works, as well as the constructions of powerful mortal sorcerers, are scattered across the Afterworld. Fantastic landscapes and half-ruined structures are everywhere. Trees of impossible height, floating mountain ranges, abandoned citadels larger than cities, permanent storms, magical phenomena that defy description, walking stone colossi, and the weathered bones of beasts too large to



DRAGONS IN THE AFTERWORLD ARE NOT GREAT WINGED BEASTS; DRAGON IS THE TERM CONFERRED ON SORCERERS WHO LEAVE BEHIND MORALITY AND ETHICS IN THEIR QUEST TO GATHER MAGICAL POWER.



THE NIGHTLAND LIVES UNDER THE MOON OF NOD'S CONTINUAL, JEALOUS ECLIPSE. IT'S PARADOXICAL THAT MOST OF THE CIVILIZED AFTERWORLD LIVES IN PERPETUAL DARKNESS WHILE THE NEFAR AND OTHER CREATURES LIVE IN THE LIGHT. IT'S JUST ONE MORE TWISTED RESULT OF THE FALL.

comprehend are only a few of the wonders that PCs might encounter.

Along the southern edge of the Afterworld's most populous continent is a wide region known as the **Nightland**. Though not directly destroyed by Elanehtar's physical fall, the Nightland still suffers from a lingering curse of twilight: a second moon (called Nod) appeared after the Fall, springing into the sky to exactly track and blot out the sun (called Avi). The Nightland lives under the Moon of Nod's continual, jealous eclipse. Rather than evacuate to realms that still enjoy Avi's light, most within the Nightland learned how to cope. Several independently governed nations lie within the Nightland's shroud, including the metropolis of **Corso**, the supposed center of civilization in the Afterworld.

The dragon **Nulumriel** declared herself empress over every region cast into twilight. She enforces her claim with savage determination, insidious diplomacy, and mastery over terrifying enchantments. Nulumriel also established the **Order of Reconciliation**. Reconciliators hunt those who gainsay her rule, as well as all those who show interest in the old gods, and those who claim to be new gods.

Far past the Nightland's northeastern edge is the **Eye of Elanehtar**. This country-sized inland sea is marked by a crater where the realm of the gods fell. An unrelenting storm rages here, home to ravers, corrupted power, and mystery. As such, despite the danger, it draws those hungry to learn the secrets of the dead gods.

The Eye of Elanehtar lies at the heart of a stretch of kingdoms and principalities

The original moon that swings over the Afterworld is simply called the moon, though sorcerers may refer to it as Door, believing that its cycle influences access to other realms in the Aether.

Nulumriel, page 30

Nightland, page 22

Order of Reconciliation, page 90

Eye of Elanehtar, page 68

Corso, page 24





VIOLENCE IS ALSO OFFERED BY THE RECONCILIATORS TO ANY BOLD ENOUGH TO CLAIM THEY ARE NEW GODS.

Soulrest, page 84

Ruinscape, page 52

Hellmaw, page 164

Verge, page 72

Cerulean Peaks, page 71

Nefar is an Afterworld term for goblins, trolls, orcs, and similar creatures.

Aether, page 85

Nod, page 78

Guild of Sleep, page 28

that were destroyed in the catastrophe. Collectively known as the **Ruinscape**, the region includes the famous kingdom of Cavazel (though it is now famous for how thoroughly it was annihilated). The Ruinscape is named both for the ruined and contorted lands surrounding the Eye, and also for the series of far more ancient ruins from forgotten ages that the impact of Elanehtar exposed when the earth buckled. The Ruinscape, some say, is direct evidence of a previous Fall, or perhaps a cycle of many previous Falls, going back millennia. Several holdfasts dot the edges of the Ruinscape, some bankrolled by interests in Nightland cities.

The **Verge** borders the Nightland and the Ruinscape, and is mostly wilderness. The region remains much as it was before the Fall. Here and there, small farming villages, ancient ruins, and the occasional small city-state can be found. So far from the Nightland's metropolises, the communities of the Verge are more willing to keep alive traditions of worship for the dead gods. They do so partly out of some hope for a divine return, but mostly out of cultural habit. Either way, such communities make tempting targets for the occasional Reconciliator sortie. Mostly, however, the Verge is home to the nefar—goblins, orcs, ogres, trolls, and the like. Almost all nefar are bestial, murderous, and degenerate. The nefar seem to constantly multiply no matter how many are eliminated. Other monstrous predators are more common in the unknown reaches of the Verge, including entities from the **Aether**.

Nod is more than a literal curse; it is the land of dreams, ruled over by the King of Nod, sometimes referred to as the Dream King. Bibliomancers in Corso belonging to the **Guild of Sleep** fight a long, drawn-out battle with the King of Nod, though why or for what stakes isn't generally known. One can physically journey to Nod, or do so as a psychic construct—a dream—but the latter is dangerous. Dreams that occur on Nod (as opposed to those that play out safely in one's sleeping mind) have a special potency, as well as all-too-real danger.

Soulrest can't be pointed to on the map of the world, yet it exists. Once the name conjured images of peaceful endings and just rewards. Now, souls that end up there after a brutal life in the Afterworld face the possibility of immortal enslavement by one of the various Lords of Hell who sprang up when the gods who once judged the dead disappeared. Or worse, they might be erased forever from existence by becoming a meal for the ravenous beast—the **Hellmaw**—once set as a guardian of Soulrest's sanctity.

THE NEW ATHEISM

When thinking about the Afterworld, one should consider that the gods, though absent, were once a real and active force. They wielded unimaginable power. They shaped the world to create amazing structures, artifacts, and creatures that remain active to this day. Thus most people appreciate that gods once existed—they need merely look around.

The gods that once walked the face of the world and thundered across its skies were impressive in their feats. Common knowledge gives each dead god their due:

- Zenia the Earthshaker carved out the **Cerulean Peaks** and set them adrift in the sky.
- Balakar the Windfather planted the world's forests, in which many strange creatures yet survive.
- Aren the Namer could alter reality on a whim, merely by concentrating on the name of someone or something. Objects and people were like toys to her, and many artifacts and oddments of craft are said to be of her legacy.
- Verecocho, god of Magic, famously unlocked access to sorcery for everyone, not just the elite. Those with no training can practice minor tricks and charms by reciting simple spells by rote, even without any understanding of the forces they manipulate. Unfortunately, dragons—already steeped in sorcery—also grew all the more powerful.
- Mudarak the Pathbreaker journeyed far and wide into the Aether, and brought

back many impossible and amazing trophies.

- Avi forged and lit the great lamp of the sun, which still bears her name.
- Samiel bred the Hellmaw to keep watch on the gates of Soulrest. With its master gone, the Hellmaw now occasionally leaves Soulrest, and hunts the living as well as the dead.

Though their works remain, the gods are long departed. In fact, given the complete divine absence for nearly two generations, Afterworlders no longer worship gods (with the notable exception of the [Adherents](#), a cult dedicated to secret worship of the old gods). It's not that most people can't conceive of magical beings with vast powers; it's the opposite. Those old enough to remember the Fall (those in their late forties and older) see the gods' absence as a personal betrayal that can't be forgiven.

On the other hand, those who grew up never knowing the gods' direct influence can't understand how things once were. More importantly, younger people don't see how a dead history has any bearing on the present. Gods are old news, dead before they were born. Those under 42 years of age live in a world of amazing wonder and appalling brutality. But they do not thank—or blame—the gods for it. They merely attempt to make a life for themselves.

Both the old and the young react the same way to claims that new gods are rising: disbelief. For some, that disbelief turns to distrust, believing that such claims could only come from a shyster. For others, anger, outrage, and sometimes even violence follow. Violence erupts from those who personally remember the gods, and who suddenly recall long-repressed feelings of betrayal. While such people don't initially believe that PCs really are new gods, the player characters at least serve as a convenient whipping horse for long-buried feelings. Violence is also offered by the [Reconciliators](#) to any bold

enough to claim they are new gods. Thus those who proselytize divine redemption seek to found new religions, while those who claim dominions over aspects of the world face disbelief and violence.

THE PEOPLE OF THE AFTERWORLD

Desperate times breed desperate measures. When the gods fell, many peaceful, moral, and upstanding people died. Meanwhile, the bold and cruel did what they had to do in order to sustain themselves. The survivors worked out a new way to live in a world without divine will. They found their place in the new order. Unfortunately for most, their place is significantly worse than when the gods guided the world. Life has never been the same. Slavery has come to the Afterworld, as well as dragons that were formerly kept to the edges of civilization by the gods' jealous will. Life is cheaper than before the Fall. Even the promise of Soulrest has been stripped away.

Order was finally returned because the Afterworld has bountiful resources for rebuilding a civilization: sorcery, [artifacts](#), and [cyphers](#), as well as other remnants of fallen Elanehtar. Such arcana is dangerous, volatile, and sometimes linked to ancient curses and powers. Despite those downsides, magic represents power. Dragons are best known for accumulating spells and cyphers, but they're not the only ones who do so. Anyone with an interest in gathering influence collects magic, including city-states, organizations, adventurers, and even rising gods.

The average Afterworlder lives a modest life using limited, pre-industrial technology and, depending on their knowledge or station in life, sorcery. Most people don't practice serious magic, though it isn't uncommon for a person—be that a soldier, a farmer, a bartender, or a street urchin—to have picked up a simple charm or spell that

Samiel, Hecali, and Etanernal were known as the Three Judges. They watched over Soulrest.

Adherents, page 91

Artifacts, page 178

Cyphers, page 176

Reconciliators, page 165



GODS OF THE FALL IS ABOUT CHARACTERS DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING THEIR PERSONAL DIVINE LEGACY. SOME CHARACTERS EMPOWER THEMSELVES FOR SELFISH REASONS, BUT MOST TAKE UP THEIR POWER FOR THE SAKE OF SAVING THE AFTERWORLD FROM EVIL.

helps them get through the day. Charms that clean, illuminate, make sounds, distract, and otherwise provide some small manipulation of the immediate environment are common. Likewise, when someone finds a minor magical artifact or a cypher, they either use it or sell it, usually without understanding either its origin or its history.

Afterworlders generally wear clothing woven or spun of natural material, though **spellweave** (a magically crafted cloth) offers the well-off additional options, and relic costumes and artifacts of older eras are also common enough that those wearing them don't stir too much notice in the streets. Similarly, Afterworlders forge tools, armor, and weapons both from naturally occurring materials as well as from those recovered from the Ruinscape and the hoards of dead dragons. These later materials are often obviously enchanted, and glow, float, shimmer, sing, or otherwise betray their lineage to onlookers.

Salvage guild members, adventurers, and other fortune seekers track down artifacts, cyphers, and other relics of magic, often from the Ruinscape. A group known as the **Reconciliators** claims special jurisdiction over cyphers and other items of obvious godly origin. By decree of **Nulumriel**, the self-proclaimed empress of the Nightland, all such items gathered by the Reconciliators are brought to her tower in the city-state of **Corso** where they are destroyed. Most suspect that she doesn't actually destroy divine arcana, but instead studies them to unlock powers for herself.

The people of the Afterworld are mostly human. A handful are heavily modified by magic and transformative artifacts. For instance, the cenobites of some chapterhouses choose to **Abide in Stone** as living golems animated by magic. Are they human? Maybe, though it's possible they're demi-human. Many similar examples exist.

Other humanoids also live on the world, including the hulking **tarans** and snakelike **sleen**. Some of these live within human communities and organizations as if they were human, though others prefer to live in communities of their own. The nefar are thinking creatures with culture and values (such as they are), though Afterworlders rarely think of the nefar as people.

And of course, there are the new gods. Not many Afterworlders yet admit that their

rise might be real. Most assume rumors of rising gods is a trick, probably perpetrated by a particularly self-seeking and crafty con artist.

LIFE IN THE AFTERWORLD

Many Afterworld humans abide in the various metropolises that dot the Nightland. Those with means live lives akin to city dwellers of Earth's Renaissance, at least in some ways. They may engage in a profession (though not always of their own choice), study magic, write books, do research, conduct trade, run a shop, produce art, or otherwise live a cosmopolitan life. That is, unless they're unlucky enough to anger or gain the notice of a powerful lord, city mayor, sorcerer, trader, slaver, or worst of all, dragon.

Unlike in the actual Renaissance, which was partly founded in humanism, the value of human life in most large cities of the Nightland is not respected. In fact, it's a commodity. This despicable situation is perhaps a reflection of the loss of hope that came with the gods' death, as well as **Nulumriel's** claim (and influence) over the Nightland. The largest city in the Nightland is **Corso**, with a population well over 500,000, but several other city-states abide in **Nod's** shadow as well.

Other Afterworlders live in holdfasts established in the Ruinscape, and work under a lord as salvagers. Some holdfast lords treat salvagers fairly, while others consider salvagers in their employ as little more than slaves. The most well-known holdfast is **Tanubar Holdfast**.

Finally, many humans who abide farthest from the centers of power live in small, agrarian villages. Such villages often take a keen interest in building walls for defense and are suspicious of strangers. Hospitality is a rare trait in the Afterworld, especially when the wanderer you take in one day might return with a slaver company the next.

Villagers may farm and grow food (if they live in the Nightland, they do so within magically enchanted regions called **golden bowers** that provide light for crops), tend flocks, hunt, or otherwise work the land. Life can be brutal for people in outlying areas. But those without power face worse in cities like **Corso**.

Spellweave, page 149

Order of Reconciliation, page 90

Nulumriel, page 30

Corso, page 24

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Abides in Stone, page 94

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HORRIFIC STORIES CIRCULATE CONCERNING HOW THE HELLMAW, ONCE SET TO GUARD THE REALM OF SOULREST, NOW HUNTS BOTH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, DESTROYING THEIR IMMORTAL SOULS FOREVER.

Because traditions, religions and cultural norms vary widely, the ceremonies and resulting relationships take vastly different forms from place to place. The only universal custom is the treatment of the dead. Before the Fall, funeral ceremonies were elaborate and rife with hope for the peace promised in Soulrest after a life well lived. Now when someone passes, the corpse is usually remanded to a family or municipal crypt, and the less said about the death, the better. People don't want to be reminded that things in Soulrest may no longer be so restful. Horrific stories circulate concerning how the Hellmaw, once set to guard the realm of Soulrest, now hunts both the living and the dead, destroying their immortal souls forever.

CLASS

In several city-states in the Nightland, an educated or trading class survived the Fall. This class has financial means, a useful magical ability, a saleable skill, a powerful acquaintance, or some other advantage, but they are not nobility. Nobles are less common, but affect their surroundings more significantly by using their vast wealth to purchase influence.

An underclass of slum-dwellers also abides in most of the metropolises. These least-fortunate make do as best they can by thieving, begging, and doing horrible jobs for scant pay. Slaves make up an ever-growing population at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Slaves are mostly drawn from slum-dwellers who have no resources to resist press gangs. Slaves earn nothing, the average citizen of a Nightland metropolis earns about 5-10 moons per day,

Throughout the Afterworld, couples of all orientations join together in commitment ceremonies that take various forms, depending on the location.





THOUGH AFTERWORLD-SPECIFIC NAMES FOR MONTHS AND DAYS EXIST, USING REAL-WORLD NAMES IS A CONVENIENT TRANSLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, ZENIAVAR IS THE AFTERWORLD DESIGNATION, IN SOME REALMS, FOR THE DAY YOUR PLAYERS KNOW AS SUNDAY.

All PCs speak Silver and possibly one other language associated with their background or species.

and nobles usually possess wealth enough to purchase whatever they require.

Anyone with sufficient funds to buy slaves can legally own them, unlike before the Fall when the gods outlawed the practice. As the number of slaves grows thanks to increasingly bold stock acquisition by various slaver guilds, the price for owning slaves has become relatively low. An average level 1 slave costs about 50 stars, and thrice that for a year of upkeep.

Tarans and sleen who live in a Nightland city are more likely to be slum-dwellers or slaves than humans are, though there are many notable exceptions.

RELIGION

New atheism holds most of the world in sway. Where it doesn't, Reconciliators arrive to stamp out all vestiges of divine worship, both old and new. Thus, organized religion is essentially extinct, or has gone completely underground. Old temples and shrines have been razed, converted into buildings with a different purpose, or made anew into chapterhouses.

A chapterhouse doesn't teach religion, but it does house resident cenobites who study philosophical sutras, meditations, and sometimes, ancient styles of martial arts. Those who enter a chapterhouse may achieve temporary spiritual balm for mental pain, usually in exchange for a few moons, or they may receive bruises if a cenobite exhibits the philosophical application of a sutra as a physical reality in the form of a martial arts demonstration.

LANGUAGE

Many different languages are spoken in the Afterworld, including—but not limited to—those noted below. However, the language spoken most is the one spread by traders, called Silver (shorthand for Silver Tongue).

All PCs speak Silver and possibly one other language associated with their background or species. The following languages are a small sample of the

LANGUAGES

Language	Typical Speakers
Silver	Traders, humans
Arenic	Humans
Taranic	Tarans
Sleenic	Sleen
Nefarious	Goblins, orcs, trolls, and so on

hundreds spoken in the Afterworld (not to mention weird languages spoken by natives of different realms of the Aether, though the sample includes those most widely spoken). On average, about seventy percent of the humans who speak Silver or Arenic can read and write it, though that number drops for those who do not live in a Nightland metropolis. In the Ruinscape and in rural villages, only one in twenty humans can read and write, and their spoken dialect often sounds rough to the ears of a city dweller.

AFTERWORLD HISTORY

The people of the Afterworld use a calendar to track the seasons that includes twelve months composed of thirty-odd days each, arranged in seven-day weeks. They use terms to name specific months and days that correspond with long-vanished gods without giving it a second thought, despite the new atheism that holds much of the Afterworld in sway.

To the people of the Afterworld, the history that matters began just forty-two years ago; the years are numbered sequentially forward from After the Fall, or AF. (The default year for beginning a *Gods of the Fall* game is 42 AF.)

Before the Fall, a period of time most people now refer to as the Divine Age, the record of years had reached a tally of 32,571 (32571 DA). Records exist of various events and important periods during the Divine Age, but only a few historians or sages

retain even a portion of such documents or knowledge, given the vast span of time the Divine Age encompassed. According to the oldest histories, before the Divine Age, an even earlier span of time counted years of the New Age, which lasted who knows how many thousands of years, but that tidbit stretches the knowledge of even the wisest sage. Some hypothesize that even older ages existed—possibly tied to the number of Deeps beneath the Ruinscape.

Nulumriel declared herself empress of the Nightland in 7 AF, and established the Reconciliators in 12 AF. By this time, the worst of the economic and social catastrophes following the Fall had mostly stabilized. Since then, several wars between city-states (especially between Corso and Cryserch), infectious curses, and a variety of cults have come and gone.

All told, the major events since the Fall don't amount to too much, other than to serve as a record of all that was lost. But as PCs begin to Awaken their divine spark, that may change.

For additional historical details, refer to the [Afterworld Timeline](#).

ANIMALS AND CREATURES

Most common animals, including most mammals, reptiles, birds, and so on can be found in the Afterworld occupying their expected environmental niches. In addition, nefar, [ravers](#), [seraph](#), and dozens of other supernatural creatures described in Chapter 14: Creatures and NPCs occupy the Afterworld. The average person doesn't commonly encounter such monstrosities, and might even think that entities like ravers or seraphs are mythical. But even for someone that knows such things to be real, the average Afterworlder doesn't give ravers, trolls, or [griffons](#) much thought in their day-to-day lives, especially if they live in the heart of a city-state. Only adventurers, explorers, and PCs must usually worry about such esoteric beings.

CLIMATE

Despite the constant dark, the Nightland rarely grows colder than 45° F (7° C) when it's night in surrounding lands, and never warmer than 55° F (13° C) during the period that Avi lights the other lands. Even with the curse of eternal darkness, some sort of ameliorating magic maintains a livable

Raver, page 169

Seraph, page 170

Griffon, page 163

Afterworld Timeline, page 189





Cerulean Peaks, page 71

Cursed weather affects victims with curses from the Curses Table.

Curses Table, page 69

A raver is the cast-off, malignantly animate skin of a dead god.

temperature. Beyond the Line of Nod, climate returns to expected norms.

As one travels north, temperatures grow cooler. The northernmost regions of the Ruinscape border on slowly advancing glaciers that are almost certainly fueled by magic. It's possible that if left unchecked, those glaciers might one day threaten all of the Afterworld. The central portions of the main continent have warm summers, with snow in the northern regions in winter. The **Cerulean Peaks**, a range of floating mountains in the north, are always colder thanks to their elevated altitude, but summers on their high slopes can be pleasant and warm.

Rainy seasons brush across the southern portions of the continent in late winter and into spring, sometimes gentle, sometimes bursting with ridiculous fury across the landscape. Sometimes unnatural storms rage across the land regardless of the season, born of a curse or of some magical side effect. These cursed weather storms can kill livestock, sicken crops, and worse—some have been known to transform victims' bodies to stone or insects, or simply melt

them away. A recurring storm of a different category, known as the Delirium, isn't strictly a physical phenomenon at all, though it is accompanied by boiling clouds and lightning.

The Delirium: The Delirium can take several forms, but usually appears as a violet-tinged mist or a violet-hued thunderhead underlit by lightning of the same hue. Anyone or anything caught in the Delirium risks dying of mental trauma as their brain is assaulted by visions too extreme to be described. Death is preferable to many. More survive, but they are never the same. They're mentally damaged, often with a psychosis that turns them into vicious killers, dull simpletons, or raving lunatics. Lovers who survive a storm may kill each other afterward, loyal beasts might attempt to tear out the throats of their masters, and children may plot the deaths of their parents in secret. Most believe the Delirium to be a single wandering phenomenon, and suggest that it is possibly a colossal raver. If so, it's a raver of such enormous size and scope that quelling it is probably as impossible as fighting a normal storm.

CHAPTER 2

MOURNING IN THE NIGHTLAND

The candle flames bowed and flailed when he entered the hall. He took off his tall hat, but not his coat and scarf. Why bother, he thought. He wasn't staying.

His mother stood at the edge of a long dark box. Lilies in white vases clustered around, leaning as if peeking over the box's edge. When she noticed him, she said, "Devan! Come here."

Devan knew what was in the box. He shuffled forward anyway. Floorboards complained under his boots. There lay his father in a suit of black satin. Despite Devan's healing hands, he hadn't been able to save the man. He hadn't wanted to. He looked away. A huddle of servants in grey robes stood at the back of the hall, heads close as they exchanged whispers.

His mother said, "Did you . . . did you prepare a few words? A remembrance?"

"A beautiful funeral doesn't guarantee peace in Soulrest," he said. "It never did."

Pain crumpled her face. He didn't want to be cruel. He only spoke the truth. And he'd warned her more than once that holding any kind of ceremony was not only pointless, it was dangerous. If she slipped and called on one of the dead gods by name to guide his father's soul to safety . . . Well, Reconciliators had been known to act on less.

She ventured, "Once, before the Fall—"

"No, hush," he said, stopping her before she launched into a story about the way life had been before. Before everything fell to ruin and hopelessness. He'd never known things to be otherwise.

Rebellion tightened her features. Then she sighed, seeming to slump into herself. She said, "You're right. Your father wouldn't want me to draw attention. Which reminds me." She leaned over the box and plucked out a long, thin object he hadn't noticed.

She continued, "He wanted you to have this, you know. Not so soon, of course." Wet tracks on her cheek glistened in the candle flames as she handed him a sword still in its scabbard.

He'd seen the blade only once before, and never unsheathed. His father had kept it locked away, never speaking of it. Devan suspected it was an artifact unearthed in the Ruinscape, but that was just a guess.

The leather of the scabbard was warm like a living thing. The touch reminded him of something . . . He concentrated, trying to remember. Sensations not quite like memories sleeted through him: a scream

of exultation, falling without fear of ever landing, and bright sunlight on his face—

He nearly dropped the sword.

"It's enchanted," he said. "Except it's not *just* magic. Somehow, it's more . . ." Illuminated symbols he didn't recognize materialized, wavering in a procession wheeling around the weapon, so faint he wondered if he imagined them. A feeling of longing awakened, a desire to finish something forgotten that desperately needed attention.

He closed his eyes. When he opened them again, the symbols and sensations were gone. His mother looked at him, offering no explanation or acknowledgement that she'd seen anything peculiar. He'd imagined it after all.

Devan slipped the scabbard onto his belt. "I have an appointment. We'll talk later."

He glanced again at the coffin, and the body that lay there. You never wore a suit so fine in life, he thought, and walked out.



He walked, hat in his hands, long coat trailing on the cobbles. Corso's cold air cooled his brow and racing pulse. The city's high lamps, burning red as blood, threw his shadow across the ebony sculptures of nameless dead avatars and seraphs lining the bridge. Underneath the great span, the river muttered as it made its way to the sea.

Climbing the eastern horizon, past the irregular spires and towers of Corso's skyline, a slender semicircle traced Nod's rising edge, a yellowish rim encircling the cursed moon. When Nod reached its zenith several hours from now, it would dully glow with a fickle radiance, not bright enough to provide actually useful light. Devan had traveled only a few times beyond Nod's continual eclipse, where instead of the interloping moon rising and setting through an endless, decades-long night, he'd shaded his eyes against the spot of brilliance in the sky and the spectacle of daylight.

Funny that he should remember that now. Perhaps it was the sword's unsettling influence, real or imagined.

A carriage driver called to him from her cab high on the back of an elephant, offering him a ride. He shook his head and moved on, just one more body walking Corso's raised streets in bespoke coats, sharp hats,

bright scarves, and veils of breath steaming in their wake. These were nobles, merchants, students, and the guild workers who'd set aside enough golden stars to aspire higher.

He'd adopted the same outerwear that minor nobles wore, of course, despite the ruinous cost. The facade of *seeming* well-to-do was important, lest a slaver press gang decide you didn't have the stars to pay off an indulgence, and take you away for branding and the grey robe of servitude.

The bridge led him down into the Central Market. Well-built shops were set invitingly back from the streets. Golden lanterns strung on lines overhead provided the main illumination. Something in that glow gave the bright orange and purple flowers sprouting in planters along the shop fronts what they needed to thrive. He didn't have enough coin to buy much in the upscale shops located so close to the Tower of Reconciliation, but no one charged for the scent of lavender, lilac, and primrose.

A few streets over he spied his destination. "Spotless Soul" was inscribed on the placard overhanging the door. Devan entered the memory tailor's shop, where distasteful recollections could be scraped away.

He hung his scarf, hat, and coat on a rack by the door among other garments of similar cut but finer material. The difference made him wince. Devan wasn't sure to whom they belonged, because the simple front room was empty except for a shop servant, a stout woman in grey. She sat on a stool behind the bare counter. If she hadn't been there to see, he might've acted on his temptation to take the best jacket and leave his own, shabbier coat.

Instead he said, "Oruvan sent for me."

"He's waiting," the woman replied, and motioned to a narrow hallway leading back. He passed, ignoring the side chambers. There, the shop keeper presumably provided memory tailoring for those who could afford the freedom of forgetting being tortured, losing a lover, being betrayed, or often enough, one's own rotten deeds. Devan wondered if the coats up front had been left behind by clients who'd lost more memories than they'd paid for.

In the last room, Oruvan lay in his sick bed, his body wizened under a thin blanket. The smell of infection made Devan wrinkle his nose. He decided not to inquire after the odor's source.

"You're the healer?" wheezed Oruvan.

"Yes."

The shopkeep shakily gestured to a coin purse on the stand next to the bed.

Devan retrieved it. It was satisfyingly heavy. He attached it to his belt next to the sword, already mentally running through the simple regenerative charm he'd try first.

"Where did you get that?" Oruvan asked, his voice suddenly sharp.

Devan paused, realizing the old man could only mean the sword.

"It's an inheritance. Why? Interested in buying it?"

Oruvan blinked. His gaze finally left the scabbard on Devan's belt and tracked up until their eyes met. "I recognize it," he said wonderingly. "It's an omen. The Seven Prophecies are *not* dead!"

Devan rolled his eyes. First his mother, now this sick old man; both were determined to call down the wrath of Reconciliators. He said, "Be still. You'll feel better soon."

Oruvan nodded, and settled back, eyes shining. "I didn't know you, until now. My dear lord of Healing. Returned from fallen Elanehtar—"

Devan sent the memory tailor to sleep with an arcane touch to his lips. The man was feverish and hallucinating. "Crazy bastard," Devan muttered. He set to work addressing the man's sickness.

PART 2

THE SETTING



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THE NIGHTLAND



Nulumriel, page 30

A dozen city-states and the barren regions surrounding them are shrouded within the Line of Nod. Most of the city-states that lie within the Line of Nod are metropolises, the largest of which is Corso. Though each has its own putative ruler or ruling council, all give unwilling fealty to the dragon Nulumriel. To do anything else risks her striking them down directly, by secretly instigated wars, or by the hand of the Order of Reconciliation, which can be led into nearly any atrocity by claiming false gods are involved.

Curses Table, page 69

The Nightland, for all its issues, is the most settled and civilized location in the Afterworld. The Ruinscape, which once hosted shining Cavazel, is now a wasteland of broken ground holed with passages to dangerous ancient ruins, while the Verge was never extensively settled in the first place. Despite the civilization that the Nightland retains, the constant darkness presents dangers to travelers. Though some roads are maintained, travel is always a risky proposition.

The Nightland encompasses all the land from the Sea of Shadows north to the Verge, east to the Ruinscape, and west to the sun-washed Aravan Range. The most significant city-states include Corso, Cryserech, Hornscar, Iron City, Mehergan, and Somorrah.

CURSED WEATHER

More so than the Verge, the Nightland suffers cursed weather that streams in from the northeast, flung off by the Eye of Elanehtar. Many bibliomancers and hedge wizards sell small baubles that promise to keep such creeping curses at bay. A few actually work. Any day could bring with it howling winds, driving rain, or dense fog, and with it, the possibility of being affected by a random curse from the [Curses Table](#).

GROWING UP IN THE DARKNESS

Many people, PCs included, who grow up in a world without hope are affected by it as adults. For NPCs, this is reflected



in their personalities and histories. Many NPCs, even if they lived in a large city like Corso, grew up in a setting similar to a war zone. Many were separated from their parents after their parents were killed in the immediate aftermath of the Fall, or afterward when one or both of their parents were slain or sold into slavery. Orphaned children don't fare well, and even those who survive must do so by scrabbling for enough food and water to subsist, while being tough enough to survive illnesses that prey on the less fortunate.

Survivors can be counted lucky only in the most general sense. Often, reaching adulthood meant becoming a brigand, being forced into slavery, or being exploited in some other fashion. Even those with the resources to avoid the harsh realities of the Afterworld still grew up surrounded by them.

Thus, many people in the Afterworld suffer from some variety of stress disorder or visible mutilation. Depression, facial tics, addictions of various sorts, limps, scars, stammering, sadistic tendencies, and

straight-up crazy behavior just touches the surface when it comes to potential negative personality traits. This kind of disability is too common for Afterworlders to think too much about it—they merely accept it as part of their lives.

PCs may have avoided the worst of some of these while growing up. That said, they grew up in the same world. They have similar histories, even if the households they grew up in were wildly different. Even if they avoided the early loss of one or both parents in childhood, it doesn't mean a PC came through their early life without mishap and heartbreak.

The most straightforward way for players to model such an effect for their character is to choose a negative **descriptor** like Craven, Cruel, Dishonorable, Doomed, and so on. However, many PCs will decide to go with a more upbeat descriptor like Lawful, Sharp-Eyed, Beneficent, or Lucky. After all, the PCs are playing characters with a touch of divinity, and maybe that helped them either avoid coming to mental and physical harm as youths, or overcome extreme adversity.

A player can elaborate slightly on the background they choose from those provided under types to include one or more additional background incidents that left their mark.

Character Type, page 106

Character Descriptor and Focus, page 124

Descriptors table, page 66

CORSO

The metropolis of Corso is enormous, with a population of over 500,000. The city also hosts the Tower of Reconciliation, home to the self-proclaimed empress of the Nightland—Nulumriel—as well as the Order of Reconciliation. Despite the dragon's presence and supposed rule over all the Nightland, sometimes Corso and the metropolis of Cryserech engage in brief conflicts over squabbles among feuding nobles, which are more than skirmishes, but less than all-out war.

CORSO SIGHTS

Corso's architecture is grand and imposing. The city is composed of two main sections. The raised portion is known as High Corso by locals. On this upper tier, nobles keep palatial fortresses near the city's center, around the Tower of Reconciliation.

Black stonework columns, arches, colonnades, domes, and spires are everywhere, as are high lamps that burn with bright red flames and provide illumination. The main streets are raised on those same stonework columns and arches, as well as by massive sculptures carved to resemble great beasts bearing the load. In addition to those, Corso is famous for its many sculptures of dark stone scattered here and there (and relief carved onto walls and buildings) depicting seraphs or other divine entities. Often the sculptures stand 20 feet (6 m) or more in height, and are incorporated into surrounding structures. The sculptures have endured since the original founding of the city, which some suggest may have been *well* before the Divine Age, because few know exactly which dead gods the sculptures are supposed to depict. Some of the sculptures are warlike, others shockingly lewd, and still others sprawled as if enduring ultimate heartrending grief.

The people of Corso, in their fashionable long dark coats, scarves, and tall hats (accompanied as often as not by personal slaves in simple grey robes), take the main roads. Only fools risk a run through the slum wards beneath. Foot traffic is thick, but elephant-borne carriages and buffalo-drawn hansoms are also common. An elephant carriage can reach most destinations in High Corso for just a couple of moons.

City Watch guard:

level 3, detecting falsehoods as level 4; health 12; Armor 2; sword and long-range bow attacks inflict 4 points of damage

Indulgences range from 10 moons for randomly assaulting a penniless victim to 50 or more stars for enslaving someone who can't resist (or pay a countervailing fee). Torture ranges from 20 to 80 stars, depending on lasting effects, and killing a victim costs at least 100 stars in indulgence fees.

Carriage driver, typical:

level 2, knowledge of Corso and beast mastery as level 6; travels in a six-person carriage borne by elephant

THE LIBERATOR

The Liberator is a sculpture—carved of onyx—located in Corso. The Liberator is a slender man in simple armor. The man stands, arms held out before him, holding his large shield concave side up, which serves as the basin of a fountain. Water streams from his eyes, the grief of the ages, filling the basin to overflowing. The armored figure stands in a secondary basin that absorbs the runoff.

Any creature that drinks from the fountain has an asset that can be applied to any task within the next day. The benefit, whether used or wasted, is gained only on the first drink. Subsequent sips from the fountain sate only thirst, not fate. (Gossip has it that a select few who drink from the fountain gain visions, as if from the perspective of one of the long-dead gods.)

LIFE IN CORSO

Perhaps it's Nulumriel's presence that makes Corso a place where depravity—torture, cruelty, and public executions—is almost always visible along the wide, raised city streets lit by flickering red lamps. Those who anger the wrong noble can expect reprisals, harassment, or even lifelong enslavement. What was previously (before the Fall) considered illegal, immoral, and despicable is now permitted in Corso, if the appropriate indulgence is paid. Seraphs of sin, nefar, and lesser dragons sometimes walk the streets, and are not attacked by [guards of the City Watch](#) on sight. Likewise, slavery, public sacrifice, and torture are all permitted, if the indulgences are paid to the City Watch.

INDULGENCES

The degree to which another individual is inconvenienced sets the indulgence amount, but if the fee is paid (and such fees are often paid in advance), the act is not considered criminal—*not* paying the fee becomes the only unlawful behavior. The City Watch enforces what few laws exist, and more importantly, the payment of fees. Often, City Watch enforcement includes protecting slavers from itinerant do-gooders, guarding legally paid public torture events, and executing enemies of the city (of course, "enemy" of the city is a murky concept that can be defused with enough coin).



As might be expected, indulgence fees are ultimately collected by Nulumriel, who pays them back out as bribes to keep her empire afloat.

Regular citizens are not *usually* targeted as victims. Mostly, victims are selected from visitors without connections, and from the lower classes who have the sad misfortune to inhabit the slum wards of Low Corso. These desperate souls are considered a resource by slavers and others who have a use for living bodies. They live in fear of being legally acquired during raids.

CORSO DISTRICTS

Corso is composed of several separate districts (each made up of dozens of smaller neighborhoods).

LOW CORSO

The undercity, called Low Corso, is composed of cellars, basements, and the dark spaces under the raised sections. It's a shabby, disease-ridden place, inhabited by those with no hope and no coin. Sections of it regularly collapse, which is ignored unless it inconveniences someone above.

Representatives from every species, including nefar, can be found living in

squalor in crumbling tenements or dead-end alleyways beneath a raised road or patio. Those who are outcast from their discipline, guild, or kind sometimes find a home here. Vicious street gangs are the only law in Low Corso, as the City Watch doesn't much care to police the area.

The lord of Low Corso is a sleen named **Fenn**, who thousands of undercity residents obey, and who all the street gangs revere. Fenn demands that all who pass through "his" realm be marked with his sign, which is a brand depicting a writhing snake. Fenn doesn't have any actual official authority. To most in High Corso, he's just one more beggar.

BOOK DISTRICT

Books are a rare and valuable thing in the Afterworld, and Corso is unique for the fact that it has such a glut. The city boasts

Sleen, page 127

Fenn: level 5, stealth and deception tasks as level 7; Armor 2; carries two random cyphers, and a brand artifact that always burns red hot (Depletion: 1 in 1d100); disease immunity from artifact



THE LORD OF LOW CORSO IS A SLEEN NAMED FENN, WHO THOUSANDS OF UNDERCITY RESIDENTS OBEY, AND WHO ALL THE STREET GANGS REVERE.



Bibliomancer, page 156

Slaver guard: level 3, level 5 for intimidation tasks; Armor 2; melee (sword) and ranged (bow) attacks inflict 5 points of damage

Gunn: level 4, tasks related to knowledge of published books and deciphering written languages as level 7

Flagg: level 8 (level 4 without divine shifts); health 30; Armor 3; long-range celestial fire attack that inflicts 13 points of damage and ignores Armor from divine shifts; carries two random cyphers

Divine shifts, page 105

Neer Skal: level 5, tasks related to auctioneering as level 7; Armor 2 from spellweave tunic

several private book shops that trade in both old and newly published books. Authors, publishers, and book printers are situated in the city, mostly within the Book District, though the district is a daily destination for **bibliomancers** from the adjacent Mage District. (Bibliomancer is just another word for sorcerer, though one who can draw magic from books, even mundane titles.) A book buyer known as **Gunn** peruses each shop at least once a month, looking for old books, especially those unearthed from the Ruinscape.

Everyone assumes Gunn buys her books on behalf of an unknown patron. She becomes violently upset if she discovers someone purchased such a book from a shop owner before she was able to claim it.

Flagg's Books: The other most well-known character in the Book District is the owner of Flagg's Books. **Flagg** is a bibliomancer of uncommon power. Rumor has it that even the Reconciliators give Flagg a wide berth, which further enhances his reputation. A lunatic few suggest Flagg has a secret, and that perhaps he is one of the original gods of the Fall hiding in plain sight. Flagg laughs off all such suggestions, but points out that repeating such claims could mark one as a legitimate target for Nulumriel's wrath.

SLAVE DISTRICT

The Slave District has its own set of walls designed to keep potential runaways at a minimum. The gates are always open, but each is watched by half a dozen **slaver guards**.

The interior of the district is ill-lit, grimy, and moist from the nearby Corso Bay. Cries, smells of refuse and piss, the snap of the whip, and the constant bark of half a dozen auctioneers are a constant reminder of what goes on. Three major and a dozen minor slaver guilds have holdings here.

A series of connected amphitheaters, where the business of buying and selling is conducted, is always filled with buyers, slaver executives and slaver guards, and their downtrodden merchandise.

An average level 1 slave costs about 50 stars, and thrice that for a year of upkeep.

By no means is Corso the only place slaves are bought and sold. Dozens of slaver guilds operate in the Nightland and beyond it.

Neer Skal: Buyers and slavers alike prefer the auctioneer services of **Neer Skal**, a taran with a voice like a tornado and the ability to track fluctuating bids and work sums like a banker. Neer is not a slave, but many tarans pass through who are. These tarans throw themselves on Neer's mercy, to no apparent avail. (Neer's children remain in bondage,

and his employer, the Kasmandar Slave Company, hides their location from Neer to keep him as a “willing” employee.)

Kasmandar: The Kasmandar Slave Company takes its name from its sole owner, Kasmandar. It is the most prominent slaver organization, with ownership stakes in several other guilds. If you’re dealing with a slaver, odds are it’s either directly with a representative of the Kasmandar, or with a guild connected to it.

Kasmandar herself is a red-haired, pale-skinned woman of indeterminate age who prefers bright green clothing. Kasmandar has more than a way with words—she has a psychic ability to dominate and make slaves of anyone. She can sometimes be found in her company offices in the Slave District, but her true home she keeps secret. She also keeps secret the fact that she’s actually an *empusa*, one who fled service in *Soulrest* after the Fall. (An *empusa* is a supernatural creature originally native to *Soulrest* that feeds on life force.)

DOCKS

The volume of trade that passes through the docks of Corso is immense. Dozens of ships come in, are unloaded, reloaded, and set out again each hour. Dockworkers, City Watch inspectors, captains, crew, and warehouse workers mingle and shout across the vast, fishy-smelling domain. Besides piers and warehouses, the Docks District is thick with establishments perfect for separating moons from crew people. One such place is the Carrack.

The Carrack: Built to resemble a large ship (perhaps it was one, once), this tavern serves fish, ale, and hard liquor. The owner, a human called the *Captain*, is rumored to be part fish. The Captain is loud and abrasive. He hides scales that cover part of his body beneath his elegant ship captain’s coat. Though not advertised, if payment is offered, the Captain will produce the Red Menu, on which specialty cuts of flesh other than fish are served, about which the less asked, the better.

Sea Knives: In a place where everything is legal, for a price, the concept of criminality loses something. Still, there are those who’d rather not pay a “tax” on their activities, such as the group based in the docks called the Sea Knives. The Sea Knives is an organization involved in smuggling, slave

trade, and theft, but it attempts to evade the City Watch without paying indulgences. The current leader of the Sea Knives is a strapping taran woman named *Tamsi*. *Tamsi* is often directly involved in the jobs the Sea Knives take on.

MARKET DISTRICTS

Corso has many large markets, in particular along the docks. Rare pipeweeds, oddments out of the Ruinscape that haven’t found a buyer, foodstuffs, garments, fabrics, spices, spirits, both mild and dangerous drugs—if people want it, it can be found and bought in the markets of Corso. All the items described in the *Equipment* chapter can be had from the stalls and stores located here.

The Central Market—located adjacent to the Nobles District and the Tower of Reconciliation—provides an expensive and elite shopping experience for the nobles of Corso and other Nightland metropolises alike. Here, nearly anything can be bought and sold, with no luxury too exotic or fantastic for one of its shops. It’s always swarmed with well-dressed buyers and discreet sellers. Architecturally pleasing shops are built in and around flower-filled arcades and open-air cafés lit by lanterns of golden hue (rather than red, like the rest of the city) that also provide warmth. Sometimes it seems hard to imagine that the Central Market is in the Nightland at all.

The only thing the Market Districts do not deal in is slavery, which by decree of the City Watch must be conducted in the Slave District.

Spotless Soul: A shop in the Central Market called Spotless Soul offers a service described as memory tailoring. Those in the Nightland who wish to forget a terrible experience, torture, or betrayal (either by someone trusted, or a betrayal of their own) can beg the shop owner, *Oruvan Sal*, to wipe it away. *Oruvan* claims ninety-nine percent success, but doesn’t bother to explain the repercussions suffered by the one percent who fail his procedure.

Oruvan wears eyeglasses with many lenses on moveable arms. He claims that with them he can see the bad memories that must go.

Second Thoughts: A shop in the Central Market called Second Thoughts sells poisons. Owned and operated by a human woman named *Aladurra*, the front room

Tamsi: level 7, administrative and stealth tasks as level 8; ability to see in the dark from artifact

Equipment, page 148

Empusa, page 158

Soulrest, page 84

The Captain: level 5, tasks related to cooking, swimming, and hospitality as level 8; ability to breathe water thanks to curse slowly turning him into a fish

Oruvan Sal: level 3, tasks related to persuasion, hypnosis, and memory modification as level 9

Aladurra: level 4, tasks related to alchemy and poison brewing as level 8; ; summon two level 1d6 + 2 creatures (type at the GMs discretion) from tattoos infusing her flesh from a curse

sells boutique poisons, which could be deadly in large doses, but normally have different effects in small doses, including euphoria, sleep, priapism, and so on. Some poisons, if used in small doses, serve as cures for certain kinds of infectious disease, so not all of Aladurra's clients are would-be killers.

The back room sells much more expensive, and heinous, poisons out of a secure vault associated with an alchemy lab where the owner Aladurra crafts her masterpieces. The back room poisons are deadly to a one, and often cause additional deleterious side effects (such as intense pain before death). Aladurra is assessed an indulgence fee for each poison she sells, which is why her poisons are particularly pricey. The average death poison, per dose, costs 100 stars per level of efficacy.

Aladurra wears a body-covering black leather wrap, a leather face mask, and crystal goggles. She says she wears this

outfit to protect herself from exposure to the poisons she crafts in the back room, but it's actually to keep the tattoos that move and writhe on her skin from escaping.

MAGE DISTRICT

The Mage District, adjacent to the Book District, holds Corso's largest concentration of sorcerers and bibliomancers, though few approach anything close to a dragon's power. Fabulous, obviously magically fortified structures dot the area, unique for having survived the Fall. Crystalline minarets, floating buildings, and wandering geometric shapes of solid light are not unusual, though the most common architectural theme remains that of grand raised roads, squares, and ebony sculpture.

Most sorcerers in the district are human, but many more sleen can be found here than in other parts of the city. Many sorcerers belong to any of the handful of magical organizations (which compete with each other), while others set up private research, a minor trade in magic items, or in selling the casting of the particular spell they know best.

The Commorancy: The organization known as the [Guild of Sleep](#) keeps its headquarters in Corso's Mage District. The Commorancy is a three-story brick mansion with extensive cellars and crypts, some of which may even connect to sea caves that empty into the [Sea of Shadows](#). The foyer is candle-lit, jasmine scented, and strewn with pillows and rushes. Dozens of dozing people—petitioners—are often found here. They're not members; they're regular citizens of Corso partaking in the gift of peaceful, dreamless sleep (for a donation of 1 star per hour). Doses of [dream dust](#) are also available.

The Commorancy is also riddled with tiny chambers where members—called Sleepers—dream away whole days in devotional comas. Masters of the Guild of Sleep doze for months, years, decades, or more. At least one has been asleep since before the Fall. Most search for arcane secrets accessible in dreams and on [Nod](#). Some also battle in secret with the [King of Nod](#).

A Sleeper named [Murugan](#) is the face of the guild, and thus he sleeps less than other members. Murugan wears a blue mask depicting six faces, each one slightly more demonic than the last, which is akin to his dream aspect (he says). Anyone

Guild of Sleep,
page 92

Sea of Shadows, page 37

Dream dust, page 79

Nod, page 78

King of Nod, page 80

Murugan: level 6, tasks related to dream interpretation and navigation as level 8; can pull armor, weapons, and other objects from dream as an action; long-range sleep spell puts up to three targets to sleep for one minute





MASTERS OF THE GUILD OF SLEEP DOZE FOR MONTHS, YEARS, DECADES, OR MORE. AT LEAST ONE HAS BEEN ASLEEP SINCE BEFORE THE FALL.

wishing to secure the services of the Guild of Sleep must make a deal with him. If the deal involves fashioning a passage into a dream or visiting Nod, Murugan agrees, but stipulates that he will come along to serve as a guide.

Red Wands: A guild of warrior mages called the Red Wands maintains a spell library defended by golems. Red Wand spellbooks are filled with death and war spells collected across the decades. While they do not let outsiders peruse these books, they do offer their services as war mages for those able to pay their exorbitant fees. A **war team** of four battle-hardened sorcerers can be contracted for the lordly sum of 250 stars per day. Of course, “battle hardened” might actually mean “battle trained,” but when someone is at least theoretically capable of throwing around death spells, quibbling is discouraged.

A woman named **Sarika** leads one of the most reputable war teams, consisting of herself and three level 4 battle mages. Sarika is secretly a spy from the rival city of **Crysech**. Though she usually works on behalf of clients from Corso (including Nulumriel on one memorable occasion), she gathers intel and notes about Corso’s weaknesses in a black ledger trapped with death spells. Like all Red Wands, she wears red spellweave robes, though Sarika also sports a tall scarlet hat.

CASTLE FARRAN

Castle Farran is one of the palatial mansions located near the Tower of Reconciliation. It’s been continuously inhabited for hundreds of years. The structure contains many ancient secret chambers and hidden properties that the new owner, Lady Farran, has yet to discover. One of those properties is the castle’s ability to spontaneously generate tiny humanoid creatures with yellow skin. These “**boggins**” (as Farran calls them) manage castle upkeep, singing in an unknown language as they do so. They also rise in defense of any residents, if it should come to that. Their total numbers aren’t known.

Lady **Farran** wears expensive noble’s clothing, except for the spare silver pendant she wears at her throat, which seems out of place in its simplicity. It depicts a bird in flight, symbolizing freedom.

Nominally, Farran’s income is due to the small fleet of merchant ships she owns. The largest of the Farran merchant ships, called **Bright Star**, can usually be found at the docks. Secretly, Farran heads a resistance movement at odds with Nulumriel. Though not an Adherent, Farran believes in the values that many of the dead gods once stood for. Using her castle and small fleet, she hides and ships out refugees, freed slaves, and other victims. She’s established several cells around Corso to help her with her cause. If her activities were discovered, her punishments would be severe.

TOWER OF RECONCILIATION

Surrounded by minor palaces of the nobility, the far grander Tower of Reconciliation rises over 3,000 feet (900 m) in height, which means it dominates the Corso skyline. Before the Fall, it was the grandest cathedral to the gods that existed outside Cavazel. It nearly toppled after the Fall, but Nulumriel’s magic keeps it standing, which serves as a reminder to all that Nulumriel is too powerful to be crossed. Despite all the interior space it possesses, the tower is relatively empty of living creatures. The dragon empress inhabits the zenith, the Order of Reconciliation claims most of the floors between the top and the bottom, and the City Watch is housed in the ground floors.

Great metallic wings spread from the tower’s top. Residents whisper that the wings are actually a golem that Nulumriel can wake at need, though no one has ever seen it move.

City Watch Headquarters: The center of civil rule in Corso, such as it is, lies with the City Watch, which is commanded by **Mayor Malick**. Malick is easily recognizable for his shock of white hair, white coat and pants, and black gloves piped with gold. Malick, of course, answers to the empress.

The headquarters has space for a few platoons of **City Watch officers**, a courtroom

Lady Farran: level 6, persuasion as level 8; health 28; Armor 1

War team sorcerer: level 4; Armor 2 from spell; long-range fire attack inflicts 5 points of damage from spell

Sarika: level 5; Armor 4 from spells and spellweave robe; long-range death energy attack inflicts 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) on failed Intellect defense roll; return from death from artifact (Depletion: 1 in 1d6)

The Tower of Reconciliation was originally one vast shrine to the divine, where prayers to the dead gods were chanted day and night.

Crysech, page 34

Boggins have made off with more than one would-be thief or spy attempting to gain entry without permission. Those victims have never been seen again. Some suggest that the boggins are what become of missing intruders.

Boggin: level 1, stealth and bite attacks as level 4; bite inflicts 4 points of damage and, on a failed Might defense roll, puts victim to sleep for up to a minute

Mayor Malick: level 4, administrative and persuasion tasks as level 7

City Watch officer: level 6; Armor 2; sword and long-range bow attacks inflict 7 points of damage

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Thieves (Law): A band of escaped taran slaves has gone to ground in Corso. During periods when most others are sleeping, they emerge and ravage shops in the various market districts. They've even slain a few shop owners.

Bounty Hunter (Understanding): A man with short-cropped grey hair riding a [griffon](#) arrived in Corso. Calling himself Ubaran (level 7), he says he's hunting an heir to the Iron Council because he has uncovered knowledge hinting at their ultimate fate.

Missing Traders (Restoration): A group of merchants traveling by caravan is long overdue into Corso. The merchants were loaded down with books unearthed in the [Second Deep](#) of the Ruinscape. Given their origin, and the strange glyphs reported printed on their pages, they promised to be a treasure of knowledge. But now they're gone.

Underground Road (Liberation): Lady Farran is looking for a hardy few to help her explore an old tunnel beneath her mansion that she believes might connect to the sea caves, like the tunnels beneath the [Guild of Sleep](#). Those contracted to chart a route are warned to be wary of Sleepers from the guild, boggins, and strange ghosts that may haunt the roots of Corso.

Captain's Fear (Love): The Captain, owner of the [Carrack](#) tavern, fears that his lover Balveer has been captured by Reconciliators for the crime of retaining a small shrine to the dead god Zenia. Both the captain's lover, the lover's belongings, and the tiny shrine to Zenia are missing. The Captain would owe a huge debt of gratitude to anyone who could learn the truth about where Balveer has gone.

Dangerous Dreams (Salvation): Representatives of the Guild of Sleep are looking for the dream of a member who died in his sleep. The untethered dream now haunts Corso, appearing as a ghostly apparition in other people's dreams and drawing them on to their own deaths.

The Iron Council is a group of wizards who chartered a boat into the unknown east more than 50 years ago, and no one has heard anything about them since.

Griffon, page 163

Second Deep, page 61

Guild of Sleep, page 92

Carrack, page 27

Order of Reconciliation, page 90

Reconciliator, page 165

Nulumriel: level 13; uses spells for attacks, defense, and other tasks; target killed within immediate range transfers one ability to Nulumriel for indefinite period

Stone tiger: level 6; Armor 5

where the Mayor himself often presides over issues important enough for his personal attention (which means it is an issue likely to provide a large payout, adding to his level 8 vault that already holds vast sums collected from the many indulgences paid to the City Watch). Every so often, much of that wealth is transferred to the Order of Reconciliation and Nulumriel.

Order of Reconciliation Cathedral: A grand stairwell leads up past the ground floors controlled by the City Watch to those controlled by the [Order of Reconciliation](#). Architecturally, the area is more like a cathedral than an administrative office. The main cathedral gives new meaning to "high ceiling," as it stretches at least 1,000 feet (300 m) upward into the central core of the hollow tower. Where the altar would be is a massive furnace, chased with gold and diamond. Here, relics of the dead gods and cyphers collected from around the world are burned in weekly ceremonies called Cleansings. Sometimes, recalcitrant believers taken alive are also Cleansed in the same way. When Cleansings occur,

glowing smoke streams from the Tower of Reconciliation's top, then smears across Corso's sky.

The Cathedral always houses at least a few dozen [Reconciliators](#) of various rank, though most are bishops. A few are primates, and even the patriarch is on hand from time to time to oversee particularly important ceremonies. Sometimes, [Nulumriel](#) herself comes down from her throne chamber at the top of the tower to watch a Cleansing.

Nulumriel's Throne Chamber: Magic is how Nulumriel reaches her high abode, but other ways exist. Visitors without esoteric means must ascend via the stairs studding the interior of the hollow central tower. Nulumriel's throne chamber is open to the sky at the tower's top.

Nulumriel usually appears dressed in the height of noble fashion, wearing fine cream-colored silks, boots of oiled white leather, a tiger-hide coat, and a magnificent hat that only magic could steady. Her eyes reveal her true dragon nature—each orb is a nexus of swirling sorcerous power. She doesn't go anywhere without her many pet tigers, some

of which are living, and some of which are of animate stone.

To be brought into Nulumriel's presence by an escort of Reconciliators can be a great honor, but it's usually something far more horrific. Nulumriel's method of questioning someone she believes to be lying, and her way of showing appreciation for an ability or attribute another possesses, is the same: the empress absorbs those qualities directly via a painful magical transference. Nulumriel gains the secret (or the ability) for a few days, but the victim of her attention is rendered into a pile of smoking ash.

As a dragon, and as one of the most preeminent dragons at that, Nulumriel's magic approaches the divine abilities of the old gods, or at least those gods' avatars. Her abilities likely outstrip the fledgling power the PCs can summon after they first Awaken. Thus, PCs who wish to oppose her should be circumspect, lest they rouse her anger or lust, or in any other way attract her attention. The one thing Nulumriel secretly desires more than anything else is the return of her son Thamul, missing some 200 years. Despite all the magic the dragon has brought to bear, she's found nothing. So she assumes that Thamul's soul was consumed by the Hellmaw.

In addition to her open-air throne chamber, her residence contains dozens of other well-appointed rooms for entertaining guests and holding meetings, several magical laboratories, a library filled with rare and dangerous tomes, and much more.

THE DEAD WOOD

Splintered, dead trunks dominate this bleak forest, a cemetery for the great trees that formerly thrived here. When they were alive, many of the trees reached stupendous heights well over 400 feet (120 m). Once green and lush—when it was called the Emerald Woods—the Dead Wood died when Nod blocked Avi's light.

A few of the trees were blessed by the old gods, including the Mother Tree. The Mother Tree was visible from along the road that winds through the forest that connects Corso and Cryserch. The Mother Tree's woody corpse remains, retaining some vigor even in death, reaching a height of a thousand feet (300 m). Adherents

sometimes risk pilgrimages to the tree to touch it and feel a shiver of the old power, or to dream at its base of a time when the tree was still hale and whole. Sometimes when they do, a glimmer of green light, like the light that once streamed down through the forest before Nod, shines from above. Some claim to hear words of encouragement or prophecy, or even requests for aid.

Traveling in small groups through the Dead Wood, even if along the main road, is dangerous. The ghosts of the trees, as locals call them, walk the woods. Sorcerers call them **bleak trees** (or sometimes dream shallows), and unlike their dead cousins, they seem to gain enough strength from darkness to uproot themselves and stalk strangers. Most bleak trees seem to patrol the main road, along with several bandit groups who know the secret of avoiding their attention.

Along the northern edge of the Dead Wood are several abandoned mills, including Adya's Mill. Prior to the Fall, lumber was an important export of the Emerald Woods. That bounty is over, but wood scavengers still journey into the Dead Wood looking for non-rotted branches and root scraps. Though rare, trees in various enchanted groves yet dot the Dead Wood. Not entirely dead, the wood of such trees—called dendra wood—commands high prices in Corso, Cryserch, and other cities of the Nightland.

Fatuh: A group of mushroom growers under the leadership of a sleen named **Isaleran** ride elderly **war elephants**, patrolling the trade road and their bordering fungi fields against bleak trees, bandits, and other thieves. (The war elephants are elderly because many once served as mounts of Corso's cavalry before the Fall.) The other fungi fields in other parts of the Nightland provide much more food for the cities; some of the rare truffles Isaleran and his farmers are able to grow are considered special delicacies. Despite the war elephants, the fields are under constant threat by one additional plague: **giant spiders**, which apparently desire mushrooms more than life.

Erinyes Nest: A flock of **erinyes**—winged terrors with a vaguely human aspect—has escaped **Soulrest** and now roosts in the Dead Wood. One sometimes takes wing

The Seven Prophecies are divine visions of the future that can inspire adventures. If the PCs complete an adventure associated with a particular prophecy, they may gain XP, as described under Using the Seven Prophecies.

Using the Seven Prophecies, page 99

Treat bleak trees as mobile dream shallows.



Dream shallow, page 288

Isaleran, sleen: level 4, tasks related to growing mushrooms and riding elephants as level 6

War elephant, old: level 5, Speed defense as level 3 due to size; health 40; Armor 1; tusk attack inflicts 10 points of damage



Giant spider, page 297

Erinyes, page 159

Soulrest, page 84

Book Of The Dead Gods

HYMN FOUR THOUSAND TWENTY SEVEN: AVI THE SUN

- 1 TO AVI THE LIBATION BEEN OFFERED, A BREW OF PRAYER AND REVERENCE, POURED BY THE WORTHY INTO THE SKY.
- 2 SHALL A FATHER TURN HIS BACK ON A SON, A MOTHER HIDE FROM HER DAUGHTER'S CALL? NO, NOR SHALL AVI CEASE TO SHINE.
- 3 WAVES SPLINTER ON THE SHORE FOREVER, A RAPTURE OF BREAKING FOAM, SCINTILLATING IN AVI'S BRILLIANT GAZE, PRAISING HER.
- 4 GENEROUS AND ALL-SEEING, AVI DOES NOT MOVE; THE WORLD MOVES ABOUT HER. SHE IS THE CENTRAL POINT OF HEAVEN.
- 5 THE CANDLE FLAMES THAT FLICKER AT NIGHT ARE THE AVI'S TONGUES, TELLING OF HER EVENTUAL RETURN.
- 6 AVI'S SON, SOLMYRAN THE BRIGHT, SINGS OF MOTHER'S SOVEREIGNTY OF THE AIR, AND HER PLACE ABOVE THAT OF ALL GODS.
- 7 SHADOWS ARE THE SHAPE OF AVI'S ARMS ENFOLDING EACH CREATURE AND TEMPLE IN THE WORLD IN HER SHINING ARMS.
- 8 WISE WITH AGE, AVI HAS SEEN CYCLE UPON CYCLE, GOING BACK SEVEN GENERATIONS. EVEN GODS DIE, YET NOT AVI.
- 9 OH AVI, YOUR BRIGHT WEALTH IS ALL WE REQUIRE, ALL WE HOPE FOR, AND THE SOURCE OF ALL ELSE. PRAISE BE AVI, FOREVER.

MUDARAK'S SONG

- 1 "MY HEART REJOICES IN MUDARAK
MY LYRE SOUNDS IN HIS NAME.
HE GRINS AT HIS ENEMIES,
AS I SMILE AT MINE, LIKE MUDARAK.
- 2 "FAR-TRAVELING MUDARAK SAW EVERYWHERE,
AND MANY SPACES BEYOND. EACH OF HIS STEPS
CROSS A SEA, A REALM, OR A WORLD.
- 3 "MUDARAK'S BOW SENT SHAFTS FAR
FINDING THE HEARTS OF HIS FOES.
THEY DIED CURSING HIS NAME. HE LAUGHED,
FOR DEFYING MUDARAK IS DEATH.
- 4 "HE FINDS THE LOST, GUIDES THE FORLORN,
RAISES THE POOR, AND DISCOVERS LOST ROADS.
MUDARAK BREAKS PATHS TO NEW PLACES,
RANGING EVEN TO WHERE THE INVISIBLE SUN SHINES."

SAMIEL 2:17 BOOK OF THE DEAD GODS

SO IT CAME TO PASS IN THE SHADOWS OF A FORGOTTEN YEAR THAT NAVARANA CONCEIVED AND BORE A SON, AND CALLED HIS NAME SAMIEL, SAYING, "THOUGH HIS FLESH IS OF MINE, I GIVE HIM UP. A MOTHER KNOWS HER SON. HIS BLOOD IS DEATH; THE MEREST DROP IS POISON. I LOVE HIM, BUT HE CAN BE A KING ONLY WHERE THE DEAD REIGN, NOT IN ANY REALM WHERE THE LIVING YET DWELL."



and chases down merchants and others who travel in or near the forest. Victims are snatched up and away, and brought back to the nest. The nest is thick with the broken bodies of victims dropped from a great height to snag on branches or break on the ground.

GOLDEN BOWERS

Here and there across the darkling plain, golden sparks waver like distant candle flames. When a traveler approaches one, the glow resolves to reveal a hovering orb of soft yellow light in a wrought-iron frame: a magnificent lamp hanging without tether several hundred feet over the ground. Stretched out beneath it are fields of grain, fruits, nuts, berries, and other plants. A cluster of farm buildings is visible at the light's edge.

Farms lit by tiny magical suns are scattered about the Nightland. These farms provide about half the food required to feed the metropolises. (The balance is brought in by trade from the Verge and other locations where Avi still shines.) The bower suns are each separate works of magical art resulting in a hovering lamp of exceptional power. Commissioned from either a sorcerers' guild or a dragon, the lamps are pricey, and last only about a year before replacement is required. Some suggest the lamps are powered by seraphs that are slowly sucked dry of their vitality, and die when the lamp finally goes out. Without the lamps that make each golden bower possible, the living populations of metropolises of the Nightland would soon starve.

GOLDEN BOWER OF ADILABAD

Every golden bower compound houses farmers, equipment such as plows and tools, and livestock such as water buffalo, seed stock, and a handful of **guards**. Adilabad, located upriver from Corso, has just one guardian, named **Willer**.

Willer is a creature of a type not normally seen: instead of hair, a nest of tentacles writhes on his head, each black as a night without stars. Willer doesn't talk about where he's from, but a group of salvagers on the way back from the Ruinscape recently noted that they found petrified bodies of those like Willer in the buried subterranean layers. Willer has a memory

gap—he doesn't know whence he came. As far as he knows, he woke about twenty years ago on the banks of the Winter River, and was taken in by the caretakers of Adilabad. In return, he guards the farm from vandals. However, of late, Willer has begun to hear a voice no one else can from Adilabad's magical lamp. The voice pleads with anyone who will listen to release it.

ARAVAN RANGE

This range of peaks extends into the west, out of the Nightland and into Avi's full light. Their heights are visible, burning like a promise across a wide swath of the Nightland, and that reflected light, at least during the day, provides illumination that some creatures use to get around in the dark.

The peaks extend into uncharted, unsettled territory. Legends suggest that the Aravan Range was once the foundation of a fantastically large fortress, but if so, the fortress was fallen long before even the gods of the Fall ruled. Now these peaks are home to griffons, fire elementals, and several unexplored ruins. Most notable are the white tumbled stones at the foot of a pair of closed crystal doors. Supposedly the doors open when a long-period comet burns across the sky. Inside, ancient magic and secrets are said to linger. Sages wonder if those secrets are related to the Ruinscape, or if they are completely unique.

DEAD CITIES

Strangely uniform rock formations are folded into the strata of several upthrust peaks in the Aravan Range. Blocky and seeming in some places almost carved rather than natural, these formations are referred to as Dead Cities by travelers. Given that many of these locations have a reputation for being haunted, the name is even more appropriate.

According to one popular traveler's tale, the formations were indeed ancient cities that turned from the gods of Elanehtar. They did so due to the influence of the one called the Shadow Lord. In popular tales, a mysterious god—the Shadow Lord—loved another deeply, but the god **Samiel** stole away that love. Incensed, the Shadow Lord swore a terrible oath of vengeance that, among other things, denied

Bower guard: level 3

Willer: level 6; health 30; Armor 3; tentacles deal 9 points of damage each round to anyone caught in their grip

Samiel, page 85

*Soulrest, page 84**Zenia, page 136**Ghost, page 293*

all those who died within the ancient cities access to *Soulrest*. An army of seraphs was dispatched by *Zenia* to bring the Shadow Lord to bear, but he didn't back down. Ultimately, the angelic army leveled the cities into so much rubble.

Chiseled portions of the formations are sold in Nightland markets as charms that, supposedly, either lure *ghosts* or drive them off, depending on the seller's spiel. What's not generally revealed to customers is that every so often, a ghost does in fact appear to murder the recipient, and take the chiseled stone back to the Dead City from which it was carved.

CRYSERECH

Cryserrech is gothic and grandiose. Marble slabs, mausoleums, tall memorial spires, and granite monuments predominate in the city. It's clear that the second largest city of the Nightland, in all its imposing wonder, is built to resemble a necropolis. Moreover, the majority of Cryserrech's citizens are not alive, nor are they dead. Their spirits remain bound to their magically preserved corpses. They are the reanimated. They are pale, thin, and given to wearing garish clothing, or often enough, nothing at all. Despite being walking dead, Cryserans are known for their excesses. They regularly indulge appetites that would kill normal living people.

Escaping the judgment of *Soulrest* by binding souls to bodies beyond death was occasionally practiced before the Fall. Back then it was considered an act of great evil, even if the transformation was willingly undertaken. However, with the rumored desecration of *Soulrest*, the rampage of the Hellmaw, and news that former servitors of the Three Judges are claiming a portion of *Soulrest* as their own kingdoms, many would rather not find themselves delivered there at the end of a long life. Cryserrech citizens have found their answer with a ritual called Necromigration.

REANIMATED

The reanimated resemble regular people, except for a ghoulish pallor to their skin and a noticeable gauntness to their frames. Reanimated are intelligent, free-willed creatures. They are like living people in many ways, except they do not *need* to eat, drink, or breathe. However, many still do—

eat and drink, anyway—because it brings them pleasure, though of a muted sort. Because they are magically animated, they retain vestiges of their former physiology, which means drugs, food, and alcohol can still affect them, if to a lesser extent than when they were alive.

Likewise, Cryserans still enjoy various entertainments, arts, the thrill of discovery, love, and even sex, though the pleasure of all these activities is likewise muted (and no children ever result from the last of these, obviously). This insulation from the sensations a living creature possesses is known as “the veil” among Cryserans. Many reanimated exist in constant states of excess, hoping that by overstimulating their dead flesh, something of the feeling they once enjoyed will return. This is known as “tearing the veil.”

This explains Cryserrech's reputation, even among the other dark metropolises of the Nightland, as a place of massive excesses and debaucheries. Everything to the limit, and beyond, is the often-stated rule. Month-long festivals, binges of drugs and alcohol that would kill living creatures in short order, and a variety of similar related behavior occupies many Cryserans.

A minority, not considered true Cryserans, seek a different path to peace. They are referred to, with some irony, as the Bloodless. The Bloodless practice meditation, or join chapterhouses where cenobites teach inner peace and calm through perfect bodily discipline, and the creative joy that art can sometimes bring.

Since reanimated do not sleep, most Cryserans spend about ten hours a day pursuing a trade similar to any that might be conducted in other metropolises of the Nightland. The remainder of their time is spent seeking new ways to tear the veil.

BONE HILL AND NECROMIGRATION

A wide, barrow-like hill called Bone Hill looms at the center of Cryserrech. On its slopes lies a forest of poles pointing skyward. Many of the poles host a single form, which is sometimes a dying human, other times a corpse, and more often than not, a newly created reanimated.

The ritual of Necromigration is offered once every three days on Bone Hill. The ritual is sought by those who have had

enough of the mortal life. But not everyone who seeks the ritual is accepted; otherwise the city would quickly overflow with the reanimated. A 500-star fee keeps new applicants to a manageable level.

The day-long ritual sees each participant nailed with cursed iron spikes onto a pole. The pole is raised to stand on the hill amid a field of others. Each self-selected victim of the ritual endures excruciating pain as they slowly expire over the course of one day. The Necromigration Conductor stands ready, and when an individual perishes, the ritual is concluded. Calling upon baleful magic, the conductor impales the city's newest citizen with a piercing of cursed iron, which binds the soul and raises the corpse to reanimated status.

Reanimated Longevity and Toughness:

A reanimated enjoys special longevity and toughness. A Cryseran rarely dies of natural causes, such as old age, suffocation, thirst or starvation, or normal disease. That said, a reanimated may grow more wrinkled through the years without proper hydration, and acquire scars and stitches from reattaching lost limbs. In addition, reanimated who wish to retain their sanity must enter a period of meditation every day or so, which roughly equates to the sleep and rest that a living creature requires.

In game terms, if a reanimated is subject to an attack that would reduce its health to 0 (and thus finally end its existence), the attack does so only if the number rolled by the attack was an even number; otherwise, the reanimated's health is reduced to 1 instead.

A reanimated's one weakness is their piercing. If the cursed iron stud is ever lost or destroyed, the soul binding is released. The body remains animated, but is nothing but a mindless **zombie**, the soul once linked to it gone forever.

Ishver is Cryserch's current Necromigration Conductor, and he is, of course, a reanimated himself. He originally pioneered the ritual. Those who praise Ishver consider him to be the city's spiritual leader. Those on the other side of the fence, including a council of eleven lords who are actually supposed to be running Cryserch, would prefer to see Ishver removed. But so far, no one has, lest the disruption be traced back to the council, along with a mob of angry Cryserans.

PALE CRYPT

This brightly lit three-story mausoleum is white-washed, clean, and festooned with dried flowers. Alluring sculpture surrounds the Crypt, revealing shapely bodies entwined in lustful unions. The Crypt of Pale Delight is a destination for the rich from all over Cryserch and beyond.

Visitors find themselves in a narrow entry hall with glass walls. Walking the thoroughfare affords the visitor-turned voyeur a glimpse into a series of glass enclosures on either side of the hall. Here, bodies writhe, or limply flop, in tight embraces. To some, it is a torturous walk of depravity. For others, the walk serves as an advertisement for potential adventures of their own to be had within. The proprietor, **Evening Glory**, describes the services offered by her establishment as unique in all the Nightland. It's true that some of those services would require indulgence

Evening Glory: Level 4, tasks related to pleasant social interaction, persuasion, and various philosophical topics as level 7; reanimated longevity and toughness



Zombie, page 333

A PC may undergo Necromigration only with the GM's approval, and even then, must sacrifice a tier 2 or higher special ability to gain a reanimated's special toughness and longevity.

Ishver, reanimated: Level 5, tasks related to death magic as level 7; reanimated longevity and toughness



Lord Jalendru, reanimated: level 6, crossbow attack as level 7; reanimated longevity and toughness

Lady Kalana, reanimated: level 5; reanimated longevity and toughness; two random cyphers

Owl-hound, reanimated: level 7; reanimated longevity and toughness

Three Judges, page 85

Naimish: level 6, knife attacks as level 9 that inflict 11 points of damage due to three divine shifts; resurrects a few days after death due to ancient curse

Divine shifts, page 105



Assassin, page 335

collection if they were offered in Corso, and other cities would shut down a place like the Pale Crypt immediately. Evening Glory sees that as a badge of honor. No slaves are employed at the Pale Crypt, and as long as Evening Glory remains the owner, she vows that that will remain true.

For those who merely wish to observe, the main room is also a luxurious bar. Many important meetings between nobles, lords, and other figures of importance in Cryserch occur here. Many consider being seen in the Pale Crypt as an act of piercing the veil all its own.

THE GRAND HUNT

Every week a rotating Cryseran lord or noble sponsors the Grand Hunt. Each sponsor maintains a location to host the event. Locations vary among wilderness areas beyond the city, a section of the mazelike catacombs that stretch beneath the city, or a dilapidated mansion set aside specifically to serve as a hunting ground. The hunters are usually made up of those self-same nobles and lords, while the quarry is a selection of criminals, slaves purchased for their supposed strengths in eluding capture, and sometimes, Cryserans who purchase the opportunity to be hunted as another way to pierce the veil. Reanimated join voluntarily to feel a strong emotion (fear). If they are caught, their piercing is removed by the hunters and they "die."

The rules are simple: if a quarry can survive or elude the hunters for a full twenty-four hours, they are released. Otherwise, their heads or other body parts may go up as trophies on a hunter's wall.

Most of the lords and nobles of Cryserch see the Grand Hunt as the most important social activity in the city. It is sport, entertainment, a social outing, and the source of countless anecdotes and jokes. Bets are often made on which lord will bag the most prey, or how long a particular

hunted individual will survive. One avid hunter, **Lord Jalendru**, is especially fierce in his devotion to the sport. His father was a quarry that failed to survive the experience a generation earlier. Rather than turn Jalendru away from the Grand Hunt, it made him the most avid practitioner. Secretly, Lord Jalendru looks forward to the day when he can hunt the hunter that brought his father down, elder **Lady Kalana**. Jalendru is a heavily scarred reanimated, thick with stitches, and prefers a white cape, while Lady Kalana never goes anywhere without her gargantuan reanimated **owl-hound**.

THE TRANQUIL

An old cathedral remains in Cryserch, decorated with red gargoyles, sculpted erinyes, and relief-carved rakshasa. Within, a high-ceilinged nave was once a place where the **Three Judges** were revered. Now it is where the assassins' guild called the Tranquil take contracts to end the existence of other intelligent living beings. Here, clients meet with the **Naimish the Knife**, leader of the guild. Naimish is sometimes referred to as the Grand **Assassin**.

Naimish always appears wound in funerary wrappings, and is over a thousand years old. He's not reanimated, but whenever he's killed, he tends to reform within days. He was a servitor of the Three Judges for most of that time, and after the Fall, parlayed his experience in ushering victims into Soulrest into a lucrative business. The assassins' guild is composed of more than twenty active members, though most are usually deployed elsewhere in Cryserch and beyond. The price for ending a life varies on the circumstance and importance of the victim, but Naimish usually charges 200 stars per level, and three times that for also permanently destroying the soul.

Those who fear contracts might be taken out in their name sometimes purchase



WE RAN. WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO? WE LEARNED FROM JANDER'S EXAMPLE. HE TRIED TO FIGHT. THE REANIMATED COURSERS SAVAGED HIM WITH MOUTHS OF HORN AND TALONS OF BONE. THEN THE DEATHLESS HUNTERS RODE UP, AND FINISHED OFF THE MEWLING MESS THAT HAD ONCE BEEN A MAN. YES, WE RAN.



EVEN REANIMATED FALL FOREVER SILENT TO THE BLADES WIELDED BY THE TRANQUIL.

assassination insurance directly from the guild. While a protection contract is in effect, the Tranquil will not take contracts on the purchaser.

SEA OF SHADOWS

Stormy and cold, the Sea of Shadows lies partly within the shadow of Nod. Severe storms plague it, but ships out of [Corso](#), Cryserch, and distant lands to the south brave it anyway. Rich captains employ sorcerers or powerful spells to ward off the worst effects of the storms.

FLEET OF SIN (EMPIRE OF THE SEA)

Ships comprising the Fleet of Sin cut the water like sharks. Low, sleek, and maneuverable, they fly white sails that sparkle from the supernatural push of conjured winds, allowing each craft to go where it wills regardless of the weather. Each craft is under the command of a captain who wields enough sorcery to summon the wind, and sometimes far more. The Fleet harries trade vessels that put out of Corso and smaller coastal communities along the Nightland's southern coast.

The Fleet of Sin—as it is called in Corso—is more than just an allied group of pirates. Though Nulumriel would say otherwise

out of pride, the Fleet is actually akin to a country, albeit a fluid one. Calling itself the Empire of the Sea, the pirate nation claims a territory spread across a dozen or more islands dotting the Sea of Shadows south of the Nightland. However, the islands are merely places where ships sometimes put ashore for repair and resupply. The center of the community and life in the Empire of the Sea is on board the ships themselves.

Every month, a sizable portion of the entire fleet gathers at a predetermined point somewhere where no land can be sighted on any horizon. There they moor together to create a floating city with a population of several thousand. Many of the ships making up the mesh of watercraft have a particular specialty they contribute to the whole. Thus, Empire City has a changeable constituency of taverns, shops, and other specialties, depending on the ships making up the gathering. Likewise, Empire City exists for only brief periods lasting no more than three days at a time, and never twice in the same place.

The Hundred Captains control the Empire of the Sea, each with at least two or three ships under their control. Each time Empire City forms, many of the Hundred Captains (or their envoys) gather to discuss policy. However, the group is a contentious lot, and

Corso, page 24

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Finding the Quarry (Liberation): A woman from Iron City claims that her adopted child is “the chosen one” who will one day bring peace to the Afterworld. However, the child has been stolen by slavers, and is scheduled to serve as a quarry in an upcoming Grand Hunt.

Chalice of Memory (Restoration): Grand Assassin Naimish of the Tranquil wants something back that was stolen from him. Naimish can't enter Soulrest without immediately being expelled, so he wants to find those with the power to enter on his behalf and find an artifact called the Chalice of Memory. He believes it is being kept by the queen of the rakshasas.

Kidnapped (Law): One of Evening Glory's most popular performers at the Pale Crypt has gone missing. Suspicious, Evening Glory discovered that the performer was hustled aboard a carriage five nights ago and taken out of the city altogether. Evening Glory is willing to pay handsomely for the performer's return, but no one is stepping forward to offer a ransom.

Cryserech, page 34

Nulumriel, page 30

Captain Larandu: level 6, perception tasks as level 3, tasks related to commanding a ship as level 7; can summon winds strong enough to propel a large sail-powered sea vessel

Unlike in most places in the Afterworld, seraphs are active in Iron City.

The Sunset River that flows past the city gets its name from the bright orange color it sometimes turns when mine debris from Iron City finds its way into the water.

Demenic: level 5; health 30; Armor 2; belaying pin melee attack inflicts 8 points of damage

Samiel, page 85

Seraph, page 170

Arch of Heaven, page 70

not much ever comes of such meetings. The most commonly discussed topic is a motion to ally with **Cryserech**, some nobles of which want to divest themselves from **Nulumriel's** control. While many freebooters love the idea, more are too enamored of the booty taken from Cryserech ships. An alliance would put an end to that stream of revenue.

CAPTAIN LARANDU

With his eyes hidden behind a red blindfold, white coat, and hair a shocking green, many assume that **Captain Larandu** isn't entirely human. They believe he is a creature out of the deeps who somehow learned to speak Arenic, and command a crew. Larandu speaks in ringing tones, but nothing in the voice, dress, or appearance demonstrates the captain's gender. Those who answer to the captain assume Larandu does not have one.

Of all the Hundred Captains, Larandu is most even-handed. When a merchant ship is beset on the seas by the pirates under the captain's control, the crew isn't automatically slain or taken as slaves. If they give in to the inevitable and surrender, they are treated with some measure of dignity, and offered a chance to become part of the Empire of the Sea. However, those that fight Larandu, or insult the captain, are slain and dumped overboard. Larandu is always attended by a bosun called **Demenic**, who is the big stick to Larandu's soft speech.

SHIP OF LOST SOULS

A ship cursed by the god **Samiel** before the Fall still roams the Sea of Shadows, chasing down merchant vessels and Fleet of Sin ships alike. If this so-called Lost Ship catches up with another vessel, that vessel and its crew are never seen again. The Fleet of Sin occasionally tries to chase down and sink the cursed ship, but so far, all efforts have ended disastrously. Death finds all those who come aboard. Survivors, rattled and potentially deranged, describe grasping shadows that stalk the decks, screams that echo up from the holds, and otherworldly nightmares with teeth for eyes that greet those who think they've made it to safety. Some say the Empire of the Sea should stop chasing down the Lost Ship, but the Hundred Captains believe that its hold contains an implement of the sea god

Samiel that will give them power over the Nightland.

SOUTHLANDS

Explorers and slave traders have discovered peoples native to lands to the south, but the inhabitants have successfully fought off any incursions or attempts to kidnap them. It's possible that Southlanders enjoy a natural immunity to magic.

IRON CITY

A series of walls, streets, stairs, and towers cascade down the steep sides of a small mountain. Flags of smoke and steam rise from the city, underlit by the red gleam of forges and smelters. The smell and taste of ash is impossible to avoid. Black, glasslike sand—called slag—runs in slow drifts like rivers. Iron automatons move with clocklike precision on the streets, mingling as if they were people, not the cast-off hosts of the gods that they so closely resemble.

Located in the foothills of the Aravan Range along the Sunset River, Iron City is renowned for its mines. The mines produce iron, of course, though silver, copper, gold, and other elements from throughout the nearby mountains are also extracted. In addition to the many smelters, foundries, and forges the city-state boasts, Iron City is also known for its talented crafters who forge metals into beautiful pieces of jewelry, weapons, armor, and other objects. Of late, there is concern that the mines are beginning to play out, offering the potential for conflict of all sorts.

Unlike in most places in the Afterworld, **seraphs** are active in Iron City. Seraphs are created entities, forged by ancient gods as servitors. Their iron carapaces are animated by divine grace. The city is something of a refuge for seraphs that survived the Fall and remained trapped in the world. Humans, taran, and sleen also reside in the city, and in greater numbers than seraphs, but the metropolis's nickname—Seraph City—is still commonly used.

The main entrance is through a massive iron arch, which some say is reminiscent of the far grander **Arch of Heaven** that once glittered across a vast width of the sky. Iron City's entrance arch is guarded by a pair of seraphs.

Refugee seraphs often work as miners, smelters, or crafters. Despite having found their place, many suffer some long-lasting psychological damage from the Fall. This gives some a belligerent demeanor, especially among themselves. Ancient arguments between seraphs who once served rival gods commonly spring up, though usually do not lead to fights—just simmering resentments. Some seraphs are so old that they claim they served gods of a Fall that occurred prior to the last one, though little of what the seraphs have to say is believed. In spite of their argumentative ways, the seraphs come together when the city or their mines are threatened.

Visitors from other parts of the Nightland discover some of the most talented crafters in Iron City, and many of them are seraphs. The main city market is often filled with caravans, envoys, and other travelers looking for rare pieces, metals, or a crafter capable of taking on a particularly difficult commission for a part or an entire project.

MINT

A stone building with great white-washed granite columns is patrolled by a herd of golden bulls. **Golden bulls** are divine kine that once lived in Elanehtar. The building they guard is the Iron City Mint.

The Iron City Mint produces a volume of circulating coinage. With Nulumriel's control of the Nightland, the Iron City Mint is the sole (legal) source of new coins in the realm. In addition to producing new coins (each stamped with Nulumriel's visage), the mint has other responsibilities, including distributing coins to other metropolises, and receiving, redeeming, and processing coins of earlier eras in order to melt them down to make newer coins. At any one time, the Iron City Mint has thousands of stars, moons, and pennies on hand, with an equal amount of raw material. Because of this, the Mint enjoys guards of a particularly powerful breed: a herd of golden bulls.

Mint workers (many of which are seraphs) answer to **Artemissa**, a bald woman with one golden hand and an eyepatch. Artemissa secretly despises the seraphs in her employ, but recognizes their value. Living slaves would quickly die from the heat of the foundries, as she's learned in her many attempts to do without them. Why she hates seraphs so thoroughly is

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Man From the Aether (Restoration): A gifted artist working in Iron City's bazaar named Claudio says he is not from the Afterworld. Rather, he claims to be an extradimensional castaway from another realm hidden in the Aether. A great storm plucked him from a metal bird and dropped him in the Afterworld. He says he'd give anything to return home. Though he remembers little of the world he left behind, he claims he was an inventor in the service of a great family.

Ogre Raids (Law, Liberation): A tribe of ogres and other nefar are raiding various mines that Iron City depends upon for its livelihood. The ogre chief, a brute called Mallor Three Eyes, is said to possess a divine relic that gives him a nimbus like the dead gods of old were said to manifest. It also gives him skin stronger than iron and a gaze that brings death to his enemies. Mallor has also taken many miners captive.

anyone's guess, but rumor suggests that Artemissa's father was a god of the Forge named Trumoren.

SOCIETY OF MONEYLENDERS

An old temple at the center of the city was refurbished and now has a new purpose: it is where coins are worshipped. Anyone can take a loan, but the fees are predatory, especially for those deemed to be bad credit risks. If a client fails to make a repayment on time, a contract is put out on the client's life that any bounty hunter can collect.

Rijal, the smiling front man for the Society of Moneylenders, is friendly and suave. He sells the services of his organization with only oblique references to penalties. To Rijal's credit, he is truly troubled when a client's actions force him into collection. Rijal wears an amulet that summons a **seraph of sin**. Rijal puts it on the trail of whoever owes money, though he also sometimes works with the **Tranquil** to collect debts owed him.

MEHERGAN

Northeast of Corso along the Winter Road lies the city of Mehergan, ruled by old Baron Uttama. Most of the city's structures are low and domed, closing out the perpetual night above with painted ceiling frescoes and lamps. Even the market district is mostly covered. Citizens are dressed in a variety of different styles, though the haute coats and hats of Corso fashion are starting to predominate among the noble and moneyed classes.

Golden bull, page 161

Rijal: level 5; Armor 1; amulet summons bound seraph of sin (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

Seraph of sin, page 172

The Tranquil, page 36

Artemissa: level 5, tasks related to metal-work as level 8 from three divine shifts



STORIES TELL OF BARON UTTAMA'S GRACE, HUMOR, AND COMPASSION. VISITORS, HOWEVER, ARE IN FOR A RUDE SHOCK. THE BARON IS CHANGED.

Portions of the Winter Road are literally built atop a thick, 20-foot (6 m) high wall that connects Corso to Mehergan. Many lesser roads and villages intersect it along the way, as well as the war-torn city of Old Nemoro.

Old Nemoro, page 51

Baron Uttama: level 7, Speed defense as level 4 due to girth; health 33; Armor 3 from spells; wields a magical artifact hammer that inflicts 12 points of damage (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

Besides Uttama's palace, Mehergan hosts the Hidden Hand thieves' guild, a wide market district where the items (and sometimes creatures) collected from the holdfasts of the Ruinscape are bartered and sold, and the ancient structure called the Furnace.

BARON UTTAMA'S PALACE

This massive palace has gone to seed. Once-bright banners lit by magical lights are weather-worn and soiled. Here and there, stone walls have crumbled, but no one living within apparently cares enough to have them repaired. More than anything, the castle evokes a feeling of desolation, especially to the citizens still alive that remember the palace in better days.

With a joking twinkle in his eye, Uttama used to claim that his great-grandmother was an avatar of Zenia. That was before he stopped caring about everything. People recall Baron Uttama's grace, humor, and compassion. Visitors, however, are in for a rude shock. The baron is changed. Those who knew him before or who grew up on stories of the baron's compassionate nature find only the wreck of a once-great man. These days the only thing he cares about is food and his collections. Eating and collecting are the only things that keep him tethered to the world at all after his wife Geyata was killed in a random accident in the Mehergan market quarter.

Grossly obese, [Baron Uttama](#) still gets around without need of a litter or overt magical assistance. His heavy footfalls thunder through his palace when he moves.

Baron Uttama's security relies partly on magic to detect and catch threats, especially thieves. He also culls slaves or prisoners from his dungeons and offers them guard service for a few years, in return for their eventual freedom. If he catches thieves, he adds them (or an interesting item in their possession) to his collection. Sometimes he is lenient to thieves if they know recipes Baron Uttama or his cooks have never heard of.

Even in his state, no one sets a finer table than the baron. To feed his voracious appetite, he keeps a staff of twenty cooks working around the clock to produce ever-more tempting pastries, desserts, dinners, and finger foods. Often, their creations are mouthwatering; just as often, they are disquieting and stomach-churning. But it's all the same to Baron Uttama; he'll literally eat anything. Those who have the honor of being invited over for dinner breathe a sigh of relief when they see that the night's repast isn't a heap of poached monkey hands, sleen stomach, slime surprise or some other equally outrageous concoction, fabricated by cooks desperate to please—or at least shock—their baron.

Baron Uttama is gluttonous not only for food, but also for interesting items. He has twenty-three immense rooms set aside in his palace for his current collection. They're overflowing. He's considering expanding his collection into the levels below the fortress to provide more capacity. The collection includes just about anything imaginable,



from live specimens—including people and animals—to famous jewelry, works of art, and even a few relics of dead gods. Some whisper Uttama even has a few implements of those dead gods, such as *Zenia's Spear*. This is why the Hidden Hand keeps sending thieves to pilfer the supposed wonders to be found there.

MUSEUM OF INQUISITION

This tall, slender structure has many windows, but all are shuttered. A placard over the door reads in both Silver and Arenic, “Museum of Inquisition: Tools for the Cruel.”

The proprietor of the museum, a sleen named *Delfual Ciud*, styles himself as an artist of the intimate, and a bard of the flayed soul. He jokes that those are just appellations—he is *actually* only a proprietor of a simple, if somewhat macabre, museum. He wears bright clothes and white gloves, and has a pet cat that goes everywhere with him. He's also a collector of ancient devices, crude or complex, used to inflict pain. Affixed to walls, sitting on displays, or hung from the ceiling are over a hundred devices of torture. Delfual gives tours, and is happy to provide explanations, using a sing-song voice at odds with the gruesome nature of his topic. Only those of strong stomach should consider taking the tour and reading about each device. Popular items include the hanging cage, the saw, the wedge, the wheel, the branding iron, the rack, the asphyxiator, the “sand 'n worm,” and plain old metal clippers.

Unfortunately, the museum isn't just for show. Delfual runs a business out of the back of his shop where discreet customers can purchase his pain-inflicting wares in private. Who are his customers? Slavers, jaded nobles, traders, and sometimes merely someone who believes they can gain true answers by forcing a captive to talk. Of course, as Delfual well knows, torture is only really good for forcing false confessions. Most people will say anything to avoid more pain. But false confessions have their uses.

HIDDEN HAND

The thieves' guild known as the Hidden Hand makes its headquarters in the catacombs beneath Mehergan. Most who access it do so by way of an opening in a

massive dome of lavender-colored stone at the edge of the city. Supposedly the tomb of a god dead long before the Fall, the hollow dome now hosts only vermin and thieves. Some hear the whispers of that dead, forgotten god each time they pass.

The Hidden Hand thrives in Mehergan because the baron can't be troubled to shut it down, or at least extract indulgences as would happen in *Corso*. The guild's Master Thief, *Massimo*, knows that his guild will continue flying beneath the baron's notice as long as he doesn't actually succeed in stealing something of value from the baron's palace. Being who and what he is, Massimo can't help continue trying anyway. The Hidden Hand also operates in *Crysech* and *Iron City*, and until recently, in *Corso*, until Nulumriel herself blasted the thieves' guild there.

It is easy to become lost in the catacombs. Those who know the way find a den of thieves with almost three hundred active members. Only a few dozen are normally on site at any given time. Massimo teaches thieving techniques to guild members. In return, members give a percentage of all they earn back to the guild. Those who steal in Mehergan and other cities claimed by the Hidden Hand who are not members risk the guild's wrath and retribution, usually in the form of a four-person team of thieves with a kill order in hand.

THE FURNACE GATE

A large iron structure, made of windowless planes and spires, serves as Mehergan's southern gate, in that the city's walls extend from either side of it. The structure's front and rear entrances provide access to the city. Called the Furnace Gate, the structure predates the other buildings in the city by hundreds or perhaps even thousands of years, and is scribed with all manner of undeciphered symbols that glow red like the coals in a furnace, but which are cool to the touch.

The structure's central, gated lane allows entry into and out of the city. A handful of the side chambers are used by the *gate guards*, but many more remain empty and unused, and mostly unexplored. That's because the interior of the Furnace is far larger than the exterior. Anytime explorers set out to fully map the interior, they end

Zenia's Spear, page 181

Corso, page 24

Hidden Hand thief, typical: level 3, tasks related to stealth and theft as level 5

Massimo, Grand Master Thief: level 6, tasks related to stealth and theft as level 8

Delfual Ciud: level 6, tasks related to torture as level 8; usually carries a couple of random cyphers including a level 6 fire detonation



Detonation, page 348

Crysech, page 34

Iron City, page 38

Gate guard, typical: level 3; attacks inflict 5 points of damage

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Accidental Death (Understanding): According to an old servitor of Baron Uttama's named Rathamo, the accident in the market that killed Uttama's wife Geyata was not random. It was part of a plot, one which may yet be playing out. If Uttama discovered his wife was killed, rather than died accidentally, it's uncertain how he'd react. Even more unknown—what if his wife Geyata isn't actually dead?

Taking Pains (Restoration): A trader named Vishay, one of the principals of [Tanubar Holdfast](#) in the [Ruinscape](#), was attacked by nefar. Vishay escaped, but without coin or means, he was soon swept up by a slaving press gang, dumped in Mehergan, and finally found himself a victim of foul play. Vishay lost a hand, a foot, and an eye before another Tanubar principal (and Vishay's lover) named Evich found and released him. Evich promises secret maps to secret areas of the Third Deep beneath the Ruinscape to anyone that can restore Vishay physically.

To All Things, an End (Ruin): The Tranquil has an open-ended contract on Baron Uttama, which was registered by the Grand Assassin, but never assigned. According to some rumors, whosoever takes up the contract and completes it will be given a gift of unfathomable worth by the assassins' guild.

Lost Explorers (Liberation): A contingent of explorers entered the Furnace a month ago and never returned. Among their number was a taran woman named Yama. Yama is widely known as not only an explorer, but also a teacher, and one of the most well-regarded people in all the Nightland. Many would sleep easier simply knowing she had been found and released from the endless Furnace passageways.

*Tanubar Holdfast,
page 54*

Ruinscape, page 52

Sha Opel: level 5, games of strategy and tactics as level 7; health 23; Armor 3

The ruined city of Hornscar, called Takaranu before the Fall, once boasted the highest concentration of magic in the world. Now it's a rubble-strewn ruin inhabited by twisted survivors called the Scarred. Amid the ruins of the city, only a single structure remains, the hornlike tower of the dead god of Magic rising high over the debris.

Corso, page 24

*First Deep Salvage List,
page 60*

up turning back when their supplies run low before they can complete the task. The rooms discovered so far are mostly empty and dark, but some have windows that look out into areas of sunlight that might be other locations in the Afterworld, or someplace completely different. Some explorers report hearing a terrifying hunter's howl echoing down the empty corridors. And some groups of explorers never return at all.

The captain of the Furnace Gate is [Sha Opel](#), originally from Corso. Like many others, Sha Opel came to Mehergan, drawn by stories extolling Baron Uttama's compassion. And like so many others, she was sadly disillusioned. Now she spends her days watching traffic flow through the dark gates, drinking, and wondering just why she keeps trying. Her one remaining passion is a dice game called causer, if only she could find a worthy opponent.

MEHERGAN MARKET DISTRICT

Mehergan's market district runs most of the distance along the main thoroughfare through the city. Despite its distance from Corso, the market is reputed to be one of the most interesting shopping opportunities in the Nightland. Here, goods on sale show a clear bias toward the oddities brought in from Ruinscape salvagers and traders. At one time or another, most of the items noted on the [salvage lists](#) of each Ruinscape

Deep have been offered for sale here, though many times such an object's (or creature's) true nature was not known by the seller or eventual buyer.

HORNSCAR

Hornscar is a metropolis that didn't survive the Fall. All its mighty towers, supported by divine grace, collapsed when Elanehtar fell—all except one. The city remains today as it was reduced to that terrible day some four decades ago: a rubble-filled ruin. The streets, towers, structures, basements, cellars, and subterranean levels were buried. Beneath the debris lies the centuries-old streets and foundations of buildings that once existed. The covered, empty streets are tented with unstable rubble. These half-collapsed structures sometimes completely give way if jolted. Additional dangers include the fruit of long-abandoned magical experiments, leaking toxins, and of course other salvagers, jealous of their claims.

The one notable exception is the huge, partly metallic structure that resembles a great horn, thrusting up from the rubble and wreckage: the Tower of Verecocho. Though [Corso](#) currently claims the highest concentration of sorcerers in the Afterworld, the center of magic thrived in Hornscar before the Fall. And the Tower of Verecocho is likely the reason.

HORNSCAR INHABITANTS

The Fall catalyzed a catastrophic release of magical and divine energy. Being so dense with sorcery, Hornscar was hit particularly hard. Surviving Hornscar citizens were horribly changed by this chaotic blast. Curses were born and dissolved, many residents simply vanished into puffs of dust, and holes in reality to distant realms were torn into the Aether. Now called the **Scarred**, the surviving original inhabitants and their children remain.

Besides the Scarred, Hornscar's buried streets and towers continually lure salvagers eager to uncover wonders and lost magical treasures of the slain mages and priests. But it's dangerous, not only because of the unstable nature of the rubble-filled terrain, but also because many of the Scarred don't take kindly to strangers.

The Scarred revere **two twins, Amel and Mosuf**, as their god. When apart, the twins have the stats of a typical Scarred citizen of Hornscar. But when together, the twins can act as one being, and when they do, they gain three **divine shifts** that they can apply to any task as they see fit. Somehow, a seed of divinity walks the rubble of Hornscar in the bodies of the twins.

Some of the Scarred are powerful and dangerous, and others are miserable, pitiful creatures. But most are xenophobic, with a few exceptions. Regular people disgust and appall them. If a stranger gains the trust of a Scarred, the Scarred may give that person a medallion. The medallion bears the ancient symbol of Hornscar, and serves as an asset to any future interactions with other Scarred. Alternatively, the medallion can be presented to the twins, who may grant the bearer a boon.

DOMES OF MISTS

Mists seep from a cracked, yet mostly whole dome on the western side of Hornscar, suffusing the rubble and buried streets with thick fog. Inside the dome, fire flares from braziers, pipes, nargilahs, and implements for smoking crystalized wodner that is more potent than the oil, and produces a prodigious amount of smoke when burned. Here, the Scarred (and the occasional traveler) have given up their lives for one of constant euphoria. They lie scattered about the dome, silent and smiling, drawing on their pipes.



Zarama, a Scarred with three eyes and a too-wide mouth, keeps the smokers in the dome supplied with crystal **wodner**, as long as they have paid up front for a day, a week, a month, or a longer term. Some of Zarama's clients, once rich nobles in Takaranu (the name for Hornscar before it fell into ruin), have paid for a lifetime supply of the drug.

TOWER OF VERECOCHO

The "horn" of Hornscar is actually the remains of a grand temple built by the god of Magic, Verecocho. The god—who sometimes appeared as a woman in ruby robes, other times a man with a wand of scarlet light—walked its many corridors, helping priests and sorcerers alike unlock magic not previously understood.

After the Fall, the structure remains, a testament to its incredible durability. Entering is easy enough through the many gaps and holes beneath the rubble layer from which it sprouts. Empty corridors and metallic stairs wend through its ruined interior, mostly empty but for the occasional Scarred family that has taken up residence, or guardian creature still bound by long-dead sorcerers to watch over a magical experiment or sealed vault. Near the tip of the horn is an arch set with two silver doors with no handles. No one has ever managed to open those doors, though many have tried.

A Scarred called **Nirmay** (with half an extra face fused with his normal one) likes to pass on a local rumor: unlike the other gods, Verecocho didn't die in the Fall. Right before

Scarred, typical: level 5; Armor 2; toxic reek accompanying the Scarred requires foes within immediate range to make a Might defense roll or become sickened, increasing the difficulty of all tasks by one step; one useful magical ability such as illusions, energy blasts, or mind control

Reconciliators in Corso do not credit rumors of the twins of Hornscar's existence.

The Twins, together: level 5; health 50 (combined); Armor 3; one task each round as level 8 from three divine shifts

Divine shifts, page 105

Zarama: level 5, tasks related to drug prep and persuasion as level 7

Nirmay: level 3, tasks related to getting around Hornscar and Hornscar history as level 6; can turn invisible for up to ten minutes at a time

Vaidik: level 7; health 30; regains 5 points of health each round he is within 2 miles (3 km) of the Pool of Life

Presh: level 5, tasks related to healing as level 7

White Hand: grants an asset to the use of any special ability. (Depletion: 1 in 1d6)

Elanehtar fell, the god of Magic was witnessed flying up the stairs to the tip of his tower, whereupon he passed through the silver doors. Only after those doors closed behind him did heaven fall, Nirmay claims. Verecocho might still be there, wherever there is. Of course, Nirmay is probably just insane.

POOL OF LIFE

Legend has it that all the magical elixirs of Hornscar shattered in the Fall, and flowed together. The resultant pool, located within a sunken vault beneath the city, has a power over all creatures and objects. This power is something the Scarred simultaneously revere and fear. If an object is cast into the pool, like as not it will crawl or stagger forth with a brief pseudo-life given to it by the magical properties of the liquid. Such conferred life usually lasts only for a few minutes. If a living creature bathes in the pool, sometimes its illnesses are washed away, and a feeling of great energy and vitality is conferred. (Awakened PCs who witness this see the affected creature or object temporarily gain a divine nimbus.) Other times, creatures and objects that

bathe in the pool are simply washed away, gone forever.

The pool's guardian, a Scarred named **Vaidik**, is taller even than a taran, thanks—he says—to years of indirect exposure to the pool. Vaidik is never harmed by exposure to the pool, but he says he has no control over what it will do to petitioners. Vaidik keeps a secret: petitioners who are washed away sometimes return, as if washed up in a storm, days later at the edge of the pool. They have no memory of what happened, or even of who they once were. Vaidik usually sells these poor lost souls to the nearest slaver guild.

OTHER PEOPLE OF INTEREST

Presh, a traveling healer, returns often to Hornscar. He is fascinated by both the plight of the Scarred and the presence of the Pool of Life. Old and wrinkled, Presh has endured more than his own share of tragedies of which he does not speak, but is still focused on helping others. Most of the Scarred respect him and give him no trouble on account of aid he's rendered in the past.

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Skinned Alive (Salvation): The Scarred are made up of many smaller tribes and families. Some of them are especially vile, such as the Qataraji tribe, who are nothing short of cannibals. The Qataraji hunt other Scarred (and anyone else) for food, eating everything but the skin. The skins they save for grisly clothing. Eating people is not something for which the other Scarred want to be known.

Silver Flyers (Understanding): Swarms of hundreds of glowing silver objects—too far away to be made out clearly—are sometimes seen to swoop down from the sky, briefly touch the tip of the Horn (as the Tower of Verecocho is often called), then depart minutes later. Sometimes singing is heard on the wind when the silver objects are visible, other times racking sobs.

Conflicted Reconciliator (Love): A Reconciliator in the metropolis of Corso named Verteva has a daughter suffering from a curse. Verteva believes that her daughter contracted the curse through contact with banned scriptures from before the Fall. She is torn—she wants to seek a remedy for her daughter, but fears repercussions if she does so, given the curse's source. Thus she secretly seeks someone to guide her to the Pool of Life in Hornscar.

Death in the Mists (Law): It started when Zarama and those near the Dome of Mists heard what sounded like animals scrabbling on the outer walls. At first she assumed rats. Then Zarama discovered one and then another client missing, as if the mists of their own smoke had swallowed them. Zarama doesn't know the cause, and she has hired a few Scarred to patrol the dome. Now one of those has gone missing. Who will guard the innocent dreamers from that which takes them at the heights of their euphoric escape?

White Hand (Restoration): A bibliomancer in Corso claims that an artifact shaped like a gauntlet, or perhaps a literal relic (a mummified hand of a dead saint, avatar, or even a god), was housed in the Tower of Verecocho. The hand was rumored to provide whoever held it with enhanced sorcerous power.

Faina is a Scarred who looks human enough, except her skin is as white as parchment and she's as hairless as a doll. Faina knows of a hole in the world in one of Hornscar's many buried vaults. She passes through it to a place devoid of color and emotion, where all hate and sorrow are laid to rest. So, too, are all happiness and joy, but peace is worth a lot, Faina claims. In preaching of this place, she has started a cult called the Unfeeling, which includes several Scarred of her tribe, though news of the Unfeeling has gone far beyond the ruined city. Would-be disciples arrive every month or so to experience the sacrament. However, the twins are not especially excited by Faina's new calling. They worry that the Reconciliators, so long held at bay, might finally take an interest.

SOMORRAH

Lying half in light and half in darkness, Somorrah sits along the terminus—also called the Line of Nod—of the moon of Nod's permanent eclipse. Half its domes, towers, and spires are shadowed, and half gleam in Avi's light when she rides the sky.

During the summer, it's significantly warmer in Somorrah than in other places in the Nightland, and its citizens rarely wear coats or hats. They wear tunics, sandals, dresses, and breeches, often stitched with designs representing the shining sun.

In fact, the metropolis of Somorrah is positioned at three significant intersections. Geographically, it straddles the Nightland, the Ruinscape, and the Verge. The city is also divided politically. Though it lies partly in the Nightland, the ruler of Somorrah doesn't recognize Nulumriel as empress. Nulumriel, in turn, views Somorrah as a rebel city. The dragon has devised a variety of schemes to undermine it, some subtle and long-running, others brutal and obvious. So far, all the assassins and military mercenary companies she's contracted have failed, but her disinformation campaigns are gaining ground. The most famous of these is led by a writer named Zathamus, who, despite his insidious rhetoric, has never actually visited Somorrah.

Somorrah is a metropolis that has mostly overcome the desperation and decline that defines the rest of the Afterworld. The slavers guild cannot legally operate within

Faina: level 4, tasks related to persuasion as level 6, resisting being knocked down, pushed back, or moved against her will as level 10





CRAZED AND DANGEROUS, IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A MORE TWISTED AND UGLY PLACE IN THE NIGHTLAND THAN SOMORRAH. PERHAPS THE CAUSE STEMS FROM THE UNBALANCED ILLUMINATION. HALF OF THE CITY BAKES UNDER AVI'S GLARE WHILE THE OTHER HALF REMAINS SHADOWED BY NOD. WHATEVER THE CAUSE, SOMORRAH IS POPULATED BY DEGENERATE CITIZENS UNDER AN UNHOLY RULER. THE TUMBLED CRYSTAL SPIRES OF THE PALACE OF LIES IS WHERE THE BABY-EATING QUEEN OF SOMORRAH DWELLS. THE ARCHITECTURE IS A REFLECTION OF ITS RULER. UNDER HER, NOBLES IN SOMORRAH HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR TITLES, TRADERS ARE ROUTINELY IMPRISONED AND THEIR WARES CONFISCATED, AND SLAVES RUN WILD IN THE STREETS. DON'T VISIT THERE UNLESS YOU HAVE A DEATH WISH.

~THE JOURNAL OF ZATHAMUS
(DEVOTED SERVANT OF NULUMRIEL)

Queen's Guard, typical:
level 5; Armor 2; melee
attacks inflict 7 points of
damage

Taran, page 128

Ku Reashak: level 5,
tasks related to disguise,
deception, persuasion,
and impersonation as
level 8

its walls (all slaves were freed ten years ago during the Emancipation Festival), indulgences and their collection have been outlawed, torture is not a sport, and the underclass are usually not viewed merely as resources to be rounded up and utilized however those with more power wish. The **Queen's Guard** (composed chiefly of **tarans**) keep the peace and enforce these laws.

Most of these reforms were instituted when Queen Etain seized power twelve years ago from King Jasith. Jasith himself came to the throne by proclaiming himself a loyal servant of Nulumriel, and overthrowing the previous ruler thirty years earlier. When his turn came around, the deposed Jasith went into exile, and some still whisper he will return. Upon taking the throne, Queen Etain—a sleen—wasted no time initiating change. She's managed to reverse many of the evils Jasith's rule wrought. Her oft-quoted refrain is, "Do not blame the gods' absence for your misery; blame yourself if you do nothing but despair."

AVI'S ROAD

Previously called the Lane of Shadow, the renamed Avi's Road marks the central thoroughfare through Somorrah. The Line of Nod also bisects this road. On one side, shadow falls, and on the other, sunlight. Every day a parade marches down the path at sunrise, as a celebration of the light, and again at sunset, as a good-bye to the light and a promise to greet it again the next day. Several small parks lie along this road (on the light side) that are always tended by gardeners.

In addition to several market squares, Avi's Road also hosts a great open-air amphitheater called Avidrome. It previously served as the slave market in Somorrah. Now it's a center of culture in a world that's mostly forgotten such niceties. The Avidrome is a favorite location for locals, and something of interest is always going on there. Refugees from other Nightland metropolises with nothing else to offer sometimes discover a talent for music, comedy, or drama that various companies based in the city are willing to develop.

Elizium Players: The most popular company, the Elizium Players, features several tarans, sleen, and humans performing plays remembering the dead gods. The leader of the company, a human male named **Ku Reashak**, is especially skilled at writing and performing memorable plays that almost always bring the house down. Ku is recognizable for the fancy hats he sports that feature colorful feathers. His most enduring epic, *The World Tumbled Down*, leaves no dry eye in the Avidrome.

Ku Reashak works secretly for Queen Etain as a spy, using his acting skills to take on other roles and personalities. He's brought back news of more than one coup-in-the-planning, allowing Etain to get ahead of it and survive.

CRAFT AND TRADE DISTRICT

Somorrah is ideally located to capture and exploit trade from all across the Nightland. Though coastally located cities like Corso

and Cryserech come close, most traders and crafters (in Somorrah) agree that policies in those metropolises keep markets from flowering in the same way they do in Somorrah. Protection rackets are short-lived under Etain's rule. Caravans constantly come into the city from salvaging holdfasts in the Ruinscape and from hunting expeditions in the Verge, replete with new raw materials and strange specimens. Goods also arrive from the Nightland via the trade road or up the Winter River. All these are either for sale in Somorrah, or used by local crafters to fashion a variety of wonders, curiosities, and needful things, which also go on sale. Food stalls in the craft and trade districts are especially thick, and no two seem to offer the same thing.

Ruin Walkers: Many explorers based in Somorrah have affiliations with guilds that represent delvers, salvagers, and the like. The Ruin Walkers is one such guild headquartered in the city. The leader is a thin, bald man named **Darran** who famously quit the Tranquil and lived to tell the tale. He claims to be protected by a magical charm that consumes any assassin that draws near, something he discovered while exploring the **First Deep** of the Ruinscape.

According to witnesses, a huge snake does indeed appear and swallow those who threaten the Ruin Walker guild leader. In any event, Darran admits anyone into the Ruin Walkers who has 20 stars to spare and a desire to trade tips, maps, and advice before heading into the Ruinscape. The Ruin Walkers have a few caches hidden to help their members in various deeps, and have worked out rights of passage through many holdfasts, including **Tanubar Holdfast**.

Nubmog the Goblin: Nubmog is a goblin that owns and operates a mobile food stall that is usually situated in the center of the craft and trade district. Goblins are often slain on sight out in the Verge by traveling humans, sleen, or tarans, and vice versa. But a few nefar have embraced civilization and become citizens of Somorrah. They are so few that they are seen as curiosities rather than threats, and Nubmog plays up the curiosity angle for all it's worth. He wears bright yellow clothing and a huge hat with glowing yellow feathers. He's a wizard at impressions of other personalities around Somorrah and the Nightland, and serves all manner of absurd food from his wagon, all of it wrapped in doughy slabs of bread. In fact, these special handheld meals

Tanubar Holdfast,
page 54

First Deep, page 58

Nubmog, goblin: level 3,
positive social interaction,
perception, stealth, and
setting traps as level 5



Goblin, page 297

Darran: level 6; possesses
a level 8 artifact that
unleashes a level 8
colossal snake that
attacks user's foes
(Depletion: 1 in 1d20)



Order of Reconciliation,
page 90

The Adherence, page 91

Needle of Inquiry,
page 181

Organizations, page 90

Reanimated, page 34

Cryserech, page 34

are his signature “nubwhiches” that visitors to Somorrah hear locals talk about. For a price, Nubmog will also provide advice for those thinking of traveling into the Verge, and even arrange for introductions to various goblin tribal leaders.

TEMPLE DISTRICT

Grand cathedrals, garden shrines, and simple chapels stand cheek to jowl in this neighborhood. Though the district was converted to warehouses and other uses during King Jasith’s reign, many of the buildings retain much of their original grandeur. And upon gaining the throne, Queen Etain granted certain groups the right to reacquire their old property. Given the new atheism that pervades even Somorrah, the district remains mostly empty and viewed by other citizens as a folly. Still, those who fondly recall the old gods can enter and offer a prayer in the shell of an old temple or shrine dedicated to their gods without being immediately targeted by Reconciliators. Groups who keep the idea of the dead gods’ eventual return—or of new gods arising—are also located here.

Temple of Adherence: Adherents believe that the old gods will return, and so maintain their faith, hoping that

demonstrating piety will usher in that return all the sooner. This infamous group of cultists, hunted by Reconciliators across the Afterworld, keep their headquarters in a refurbished temple to Zenia in Somorrah’s temple district. **Order of Reconciliation** plots have occasionally attempted to destroy the **Adherence** here at its root. None succeeded completely, though Adherents have weathered leadership turnover, thanks to a couple of successful assassinations.

The Adherents are always looking for new members to join their religious organization, but they are wary of moles, having been burned by supposed converts. So anyone wishing to join the organization must submit to the **Needle of Inquiry**, a magical artifact that determines a creature’s true intentions. Those who pass gain the benefits of Adherence membership as described under **Organizations**, as well as the danger of having marked themselves as targets for Reclaimers.

Temple of Visheidon: A young man sporting a nimbus of five golden points of light appeared on top of the walls of Somorrah three years ago during the Troll War. His presence and incredible abilities help turned the tide, keeping Somorrah safe. He claimed to be a mighty sorcerer—not a dragon!—who arrived in Somorrah to

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Divine Return (Understanding): Visheidon, a powerful sorcerer in the temple district, recently claimed to be a god, and what’s more, to be the patron deity of Somorrah. Queen Etain is taken aback at the announcement. Now Reconciliators in Corso have an excuse to bring Somorrah into the fold of Empress Nulumriel. Rumors swirl that the Reconciliators are marching on the city to destroy the false god. Meanwhile, Queen Etain merely wants to establish whether Visheidon is actually a god, and if so, what his true intentions toward Somorrah might be. For that, she needs those who can test the new god’s strength.

Dried Fountains (Liberation): The healing waters in Fountain Park have ceased to flow. Cathra claims it is because slavers managed to kidnap a group of naiads from the fountains and steal away south in the Nightland. Cathra is desperate to find the wrongdoers, and is looking for strong mercenaries to go with her straightaway in pursuit. Queen Etain might be convinced to send a few of her Queen’s Guard to help recapture the naiads and safely return them.

Strange Form (Restoration): A recent earthquake unearthed a massive shard of crystal—perhaps an especially large cypher—in the Krakens (a mountain range) to the south. The shard is as large as a house, and a figure of an oversized human wearing armor is embedded at its core.

Deposed Returned (Ruin or Salvation): Deposed King Jasith, returned as a **reanimated** entity and backed by an army of other undead out of **Cryserech**, plans to retake his city and bring back the old ways. All Jasith needs is a traitor to serve as his spy in the heart of Queen Etain’s court. Alternatively, all Queen Etain needs is someone to pretend to serve Jasith, but to feed him false information rather than true, despite the danger.

protect it. Adherents soon began to whisper, however, that **Visheidon** was nothing less than a reincarnated god. Visheidon remains mute on the topic, but seems close to making some kind of major announcement. In the meantime, he has made his residence in an old temple that was once dedicated to a minor war god—an avatar—named Nemerath. Though he has yet to publicly confirm it, Visheidon is indeed a god.

FOUNTAIN PARK

Adjacent to the temple district lies Fountain Park. This multitiered park hosts a series of waterfalls and jetting fountains built amid paved paths, groomed trees, and placid gardenscaping. Even for those who are not Adherents, Fountain Park is a sacred place. The park is a destination for citizens who desire a bit of respite and peace. The waters sometimes even heal those with illnesses, though it's not clear whether that's a property of the water itself or of the **naiads**. Naiads are a kind of water spirit. They appear as slim humanoids, often unclothed. They can sometimes be seen frolicking amid the pools like dolphins at play.

The park is tended by several gardeners, who answer to a woman named **Cathra**. Cathra usually appears in dirt-soiled overalls, wielding clippers. She had a secret naiad lover amid the pools, though that love is now unrequited. Thus, Cathra is an enthusiastic supporter of Fountain Park, but often dejected and sad.

QUEEN'S PALACE

Queen Etain resides in a modest palace by the standards of other powers of the Nightland, but its understated ramparts and spires suit her style. Etain usually wears purple robes and a slender crown, and is in the company of a group of towering taran Queen's Guard. She sincerely labors to keep her city a place where citizens of all economic means and levels of power can pursue lives devoid of fear and oppression. Given the reality of the Afterworld, that's not always possible. Sometimes nefar invade. Other times monstrosities out of the Ruinscape creep under the walls. More often than not, hazards from the supposedly civilized Nightland create the greatest threats in the form of secret slave press gangs, economic sanctions from the empress in Corso, assassins,

Reconciliators, and all manner of lesser rabble and villainy.

The Queen meets daily with many councilors, generals, merchants, community leaders, and mercenary captains. Her life isn't especially exciting most of the time, but that's how she likes it. If pressed to defend herself when her Queen's Guard proves inadequate, she uses the cyphers she keeps on hand for just such an emergency.

THE KRAKENS

The Krakens, already an impressive range of peaks, reared up even higher during the mighty quakes that emanated outward from the Eye of Elanehtar after the Fall. The Krakens roughly trace a portion of the Nightland's periphery, creating a natural barrier between the lands of the eclipse and the Verge and Ruinscape, at least in part. Nefar tribes and a few human settlers are the main inhabitants of the range. The Krakens are also home to especially large two-headed predatory raptors whose outspread wings darken the sky like a storm cloud. Called **rocs**, these massive beasts are thankfully rare. Seeing one and not being eaten is a good omen. Tarans sometimes train rocs as flying mounts.

SIA'S CLEFT

The main pass—Sia's Cleft—provides travelers taking the main trade road between **Mehergan**, **Somorra**, and **Tanubar Holdfast** a way forward, though in many places it is steep and dangerous, made the more so by nefar, slavers, and xenophobic human settlers. Several smaller trails lead across the mountains in various locations, with encouraging names like Road of Skulls, Path of Jackals, and Dead God's Trail.

SIA'S ROAD STATION

The pass gets its name from a road station along the path at the top of the pass called Sia's. Built of massive blocks of native stone, the road station is famous for the safe harbor it offers travelers on the otherwise dangerous route. **Sia** is a large woman—some travelers whisper that she is part giant. She says no harm will come to those who stay with her and pay for a night's food and lodging, but never explains how she arranged for that protection.

Visheidon has the stats of a demigod as presented in the Cypher System Rulebook.



Demigod, page 283

Naiad: level 4, level 7 while standing or submersed in water; moves a long distance each round in water; can transform into water and back as an action

Cathra: level 3, gardening tasks as level 6; naiads come to her defense if she is threatened near water

Roc: level 8, Speed defense as level 4 due to size; flies a long distance each round; two beak attacks (one per head) per turn

Queen Etain: level 4, tasks related to social interaction, persuasion, and rulership tasks as level 7; carries a vanisher and two other random cyphers



Vanisher, page 363

Mehergan, page 39

Tanubar Holdfast, page 54

Sia: level 5, tasks related to hospitality as level 7; attacks inflict 10 points of damage due to two divine shifts

OTHER NIGHTLAND LOCATIONS



Ghost, page 293

Goblin, page 297

Sleen savage, typical:
level 2, stealth and
spear attacks as level 4;
Armor 1

Shwalg, page 74

Corso, page 24

Cryserech, page 34

Seraph, page 170

Akain Desert: The Akain Desert is a waterless waste between the Nightland and sunlit regions to the west, typified by odd, spinelike spires erupting from the parched ground. Extensive crevices around the spires lead down to tunnels crowded with tribes of **savage sleen** who do not see humans (or gods) as their allies, but rather as prophesied foes.

Dark City: An enigmatic flying city of ebony windowless towers floated down from the sky above the Dead Wood a few years after the Fall. Shortly thereafter, it landed on a spit overlooking the Sea of Shadows. Sometimes atonal music can be heard echoing from the towers, along with voices speaking in a language unknown in the Afterworld. Those who manage to bypass the gates find the interior towers even more difficult to enter. Ten years ago, explorers found a human baby with skin the color of Nod's shadow lying abandoned in the courtyard. They named the child Kronetus and delivered him to the Uroch Chapterhouse.

Echoing Caves: The various sea cave chains along the Sea of Shadows coast are dangerous, but none more so than the Echoing Caves. The Echoing Caves riddle the limestone cliff, and depending on the uneven tides, either are empty or surge with crashing seawater. Deep inside, a

sometimes-flooded cave system is reputed to lead to an ancient tomb. Various legends claim the tomb holds a king or queen, a dragon, or even a god. Magic protects the tomb, as do several wandering **ghosts**.

Goblin Wood: Long abandoned by humans, this wood was once called the King's Forest and was claimed by the crown in the city-state of Sambhar. By all accounts, the King's Forest was once a pleasant place to hunt. With Sambhar's abandonment, the curse of Nod, and the Fall, the wood is now inhabited by nefar—chiefly **goblins** of the **Shwalg** tribes—as well as a few ogres and trolls.

Gurudan Marsh: **Corso** and **Cryserech** have been at odds since before the Fall. Usually these conflicts are hidden, but once they fought openly on the Plain of Gurudan. In addition to soldiers, each city was led by a divine city patron: Saberaash for Corso, and Girothen for Cryserech. The curses and divine blasts each leveled upon the other caused the entire plain to sink. The resulting Gurudan Marsh remains tainted with lingering curses, diseases, and mad **seraphs** who once answered to the patron gods of each city. Sometimes explorers unearth caches of war magic, which include artifacts of an earlier age.

Lake Wulan: Formerly Wulan City, Lake Wulan is a basin stretching for miles in all



directions, filled with water that glows with greenish light, like that of fireflies. The lake is perpetually shrouded in mist and fog, but sometimes the lights of a drowned fortress are visible at the lake's center. A dragon named Mitar is rumored to live within, though no one has heard from him in fifteen years.

Loreda: Along the trade road between Corso and Mehergan, this village contains more than 400 people, most of them fungus gatherers or hunters. It's significant only for its position along the road, a few inns that serve travelers and traders alike, and because it is home to a powerful sorcerer named **Galvant** who says he speaks for the land. Galvant protects Loreda from bandits and other foul influences, though some people whisper he's in the pay of the Kasmandar Slave Company, and sometimes culls guests and sells them as slaves.

Old Nemoro: This walled city of about 5,000 people occupies the crossroads of three trade routes. Nemoro was once far more influential. Internal bickering between royal families led to so much internecine fighting that much of the populace fled as refugees to Mehergan, Somorrah, and Corso. Nemoro remains, but now people call it Old Nemoro. Its paucity of population, lack of dependable power structures on which to hang agreements, and tendency to lapse into paroxysms of vicious fighting between the remaining noble families (each holed up in their own fortress-palaces) make it unlikely that Nemoro will soon reclaim a position as anything other than a stop-over.

Sambhar: The once-great city-state of Sambhar lies in ruins. It has become home, over the decades, to a succession of dangerous creatures, including goblins, dragons, and ravers. Intrepid explorers and salvagers sometimes chance its crumbling lanes, but they are usually driven out or killed. Five years ago, a mercenary company out of **Mehergan** and several trading consortiums combined forces, and marched on the city. They hoped to resettle it, and return Sambhar to prominence (and loot the treasures of the former city lords in the process). Some foul magic turned the entire force to glass.

Seraph Isle: In the Sea of Shadows lies an island with several abandoned silver mines. According to stories told by seafaring pirates,

an evil seraph (a **seraph of sin**) claims the island as its domain. Human slaves serve it and fill out its defenses. Some believe a portal into Soulrest lies at the bottom of one of the played-out silver mine shafts.

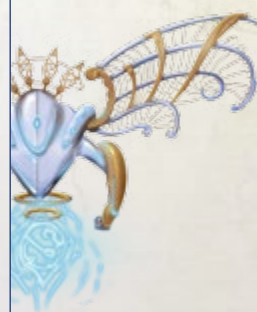
Sorcerer's Crypt: The god Cerissia was put down by her siblings two centuries ago for trying to steal the dominion of magic from Verecocho. Cerissia was a god of awesome power who served as the patron of the city called Ceriss. When the citizens of Ceriss revolted, she cursed them into undeath, creating a horrid city of wraiths, ghosts, and vampires. When she tried for Verecocho's power, she was struck down, and her city sealed under a dome of stone, inscribed with seven layers of runes. And there it remains to this day.

Uroch Chapterhouse: Like many chapterhouses, this walled monastery along a trade road houses cenobites who study philosophical sutras and martial arts. Master Muscari has long taught the cenobites, but he was recently displaced by one of his students: **Kronetus**. Kronetus came to Uroch as a babe ten years ago, but has grown rapidly in both body and mind since then. Today, the shadow-skinned man has the apparent age of a thirty-year-old human. More wondrous than his appearance are his powers, which give him control over rude matter and energy with the slightest thought.

Ghost Wood: Though it remains in Nod's shadow, this small forest is still green and alive. It grows back within a few months even when clear cut, as mercenary loggers out of Corso have done on more than one occasion. The thing is, every logger who participates in cutting trees in the Ghost Wood begins to complain of voices, nightmares, and feelings of dread. All find their deaths, apparently by unlikely accident, within thirty days of hewing their first Ghost Wood tree. Needless to say, loggers no longer work the Ghost Wood, except the naive, or expendable slaves.

Bone Reach: This old ruin is known for a concentration of ancient relics. But those relics are dangerous to recover; Bone Reach is overrun with **skeletons** of humans who died screaming in the Fall, but whose bones regained animation by curses born in the Eye of Elanehtar.

Seraph of Sin, page 172



Galvant: level 5, direct plants and insects as level 7

Kronetus: level 7; Armor 5 from energy shield; attacks by discharges of psychic energy, telekinetically lofted stones, and similar mental manipulations of the environment

Mehergan, page 39

Raver, page 169



Skeleton, page 314

THE RUINSCAPE



Nightland, page 22

Five Deeps, page 57

Shining Cavazel, the golden center of civilization, is gone, leaving the Ruinscape in its place. The Ruinscape's central feature is the Eye of Elanehtar, where heaven smote the earth and shattered into millions of pieces of petrified divinity. The impact tore a massive bite out of the coast. An unending, swirling vortex storm of wind, clouds, and lightning shrouds the Eye's core. Cracks hundreds of miles long splinter the ground, spreading from the impact site. The cracks lead down into crevices where ruins of earlier, completely forgotten civilizations can be found. Called the **Five Deeps**, each buried

layer holds ruins of a distinctly different nature. Each Deep is tens of thousands of years older than the one lying above it. The tale told by the ground suggests that, just perhaps, the Fall that happened most recently was not the first such catastrophe suffered by the world.

People and other creatures yet live—or have returned to live—in the Ruinscape. “Ruinscape” is a term favored by **Nightland** natives who believe that, as bad as their lives are, at least they don't live in a place typified by collapse, destruction, and the extinction of the divine. Ruinscape natives would prefer to call their land “Old Cavazel” but few listen. The Ruinscape's borders are not well defined. Generally, the Ruinscape extends in roughly a 200-mile (320 km) wide band around the Eye of Elanehtar.

Unlike the Nightland, where metropolises serve as huge population centers, humans in the Ruinscape generally live in small family groups, isolated villages, or small fortresses called holdfasts. The holdfasts try to keep contact with traders in the Nightland, especially those that eke out a living by



CAVAZEL WAS BUILT ON A HIGH, BROAD PLATEAU. DIVINE BENEFICENCE KEPT THE WEATHER WARM, THE CROPS BOUNTIFUL, AND THE BORDERS SAFE FROM THREAT FROM THE EXPANSIONIST TENDENCIES OF OTHER CITY-STATES. THAT WAS ALL DESTROYED IN AN EYE-SEARING FLASH DURING THE FALL.



sending salvage teams into the Deeps. But the villages and smaller family groups have only limited contact with the outside world. Because the light of *Avi* shines in the Ruinscape, farming, hunting, and other natural pursuits don't demand connections with other places for basic sustenance.

Many strange and unsettling customs have developed since the Fall. Survival often demands that those in isolated areas remain suspicious of strangers, lest smiling visitors claiming they come in peace turn out to be bandits or slaver press gangs out of the Nightland. Strange customs have also sprung up in many family compounds designed to ward off the malignant creatures and protect against effects of the cursed terrain so prevalent in the Ruinscape.

RUINSCAPE SURFACE FEATURES

The shattered lands of the Ruinscape, though fully bathed in *Avi*'s light, are a folded, cracked, and tortured mess infested with all manner of dangerous creatures, desperate brigands, and cursed ruins. One doesn't need to find a crevice into the deeps to have peril thrust suddenly upon them. The chief threats of the Ruinscape are dangerous creatures, becoming lost, and most significant, the tortured, cursed terrain itself.

CREATURES OF THE RUINSCAPE

The most commonly encountered threats are wandering *elementals*, crazed *seraphs*, giant spiders, and *rakshasas*.

Avi, page 11



Elemental, page 289

Giant spider, page 297

Seraph, page 170

Rakhasa, page 168



THE CHIEF THREATS OF THE RUINSCAPE ARE DANGEROUS CREATURES, BECOMING LOST, AND MOST SIGNIFICANT, THE TORTURED, CURSED TERRAIN ITSELF.

Delirium, page 18

Blindness, page 226

Curses Table, page 69

Cursed terrain afflictions work well as GM intrusions.

GM intrusion, page 193

Benaka Dol: level 4, all interactions as level 5

The elementals and rakshasas are usually active by day, while the crazed seraphs and giant spiders come out mostly at night. In addition to these threats, other explorers, salvage guilds, and even rival gods are potential dangers. Last but perhaps the worst, Ruinscape travelers are more likely to draw a visit by the **Delirium**, which happens day or night.

CURSED TERRAIN

Wandering into an area of cursed terrain is a real danger. The most common curse afflicts victims like a level 3 magical disease causing wasting, **blindness**, and bleeding from the eyes until dead (or cured). More active curses include crevices that snap shut like giant mouths, animate avalanches, and rains of stone (all level 5 threats).

In some cases, the terrain seems to warp and twist about, creating something like a maze that keeps turning travelers back on themselves until they can escape.

Alternatively, the GM can roll on the **Curses Table** to determine what happens to one or more PCs.

GETTING LOST

Compasses and magical means of finding north do not function in the Ruinscape. And because the cursed terrain tends to move and shift, finding locations by landmarks can prove frustrating. Each day a traveler treks across the Ruinscape without a road (even a ruined road), they must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect roll to keep from becoming lost. Once travelers are lost, the cursed nature of the land tends to send them in wide circles, into areas of actively cursed terrain, or to the entrance of a rakshasa's lair.

TANUBAR HOLDFAST

Thick walls of quarried stone create a fortress city along a massive swell of broken ground along the edge of a wide crevice falling into the Earth. Tanubar Holdfast is the largest and most successful settlement in the Ruinscape. More salvagers are based out of it than any other. Tanubar is built near one of the great cracks leading down to the Five Deeps. The fortress city swelled to about 5,000 residents in just a few years, thanks to the influx of new people interested in joining or forming their own salvage

guilds. Though the city's principals have run their holdfast peacefully for years, the burgeoning population puts pressure on that peace.

In Tanubar Holdfast, those with enough coin can apply to become principals of the city. Currently, there are about twenty or so principals. Each principal is paid a small fee from the sale of any item procured from the Ruinscape that is brought up and sold through Tanubar. Principals usually get the coin they need to make a transition from trader (or noble) to principal by putting in the effort running their own salvage gang first.

Over the years, incredibly powerful artifacts have been recovered from the Deeps. Some were of divine origin, but from gods not recorded in the Book of Dead Gods. Others derived their power from living minds. Some seemed to be so advanced in manufacture that they stumped even dragons who tried to decipher their secrets. In any case, it's become widely known that objects offering immense personal power are there for the taking in the buried Deeps. As would-be salvagers continue to pour into the holdfast, limited space inside has created a secondary camp-city just outside Tanubar's walls.

TANUBAR'S PRINCIPALS

The principals share power in the holdfast. Currently, Tanubar has about twenty principals, though that number is always in flux. Principals argue on many topics. Lately, they debate how best to handle the new influx of would-be salvagers, and how to deal with dangerous artifacts that are being recovered from the Deeps. Five principals in particular argue their positions the most vociferously, and sometimes come to blows via mercenaries and proxies. Other principals, salvage guilds, and visitors are caught in the middle.

Benaka Dol is the holdfast's first principal. Benaka wears a large white hat and matching cape. She opened up Tanubar Holdfast to other principals because she believes that by working together and sharing the finds brought up from below, people all over the Afterworld will benefit. As others argue for restrictions of various kinds, Benaka fights to keep things as they have been in Tanubar. Many respect her, but she has powerful enemies among the other principals.



Dalaja is a principal and an Adherent, a secret she recently let slip. Dalaja favors flowing robes and religious iconography on her many amulets and bracelets. She has come to believe that pulling artifacts out of the Deeps that are of obvious divine origin is heresy. She worries that by removing so many divine artifacts without fully understanding their true nature and place, a line that no one understands might be crossed. Her first question has to do with why so many holy artifacts seem to belong to gods that no one has ever heard of. Dalaja has taken to sending sabotage crews into various deeps to collapse tunnels and passages. PCs who venture into the tunnels might encounter the results of such a collapse, be caught up in one, or discover a crew hard at work with picks and shovels.

Barden Corbar is a principal turned preservationist. Barden wears sturdy armor and always carries a few sketchbooks with him. Upon discovering the race of giants and colossi, larger even than tarans, who inhabit the massive city of the **Third Deep**, he called for a stop to all salvage activity. Barden doesn't much care about the other Deeps—he's focused on the Third Deep. This reticence to delve deeper makes him a sometimes-ally of Dalaja.

Arthfael is a sleen principal who has determined that the **First Deep**, with its serpentlike artifacts and fossils, represents the lost history of his own sleen race. As a sleen, Arthfael distinguishes himself with a streak of red dye under each eye. When salvagers emerge from the deeps with treasure from the First, Arthfael sometimes secretly sends his own salvage teams to ambush them in order to abscond with their take.

Ekani Nalender always wears his hood up and his eyes are shadowed as if with lack of sleep. Once as supportive of the continued exploitation of the deeps as Benaka Dol, Ekani has recently been visited with a series of dreams depicting some vast, terrible evil located in the hard-to-reach **Fifth Deep**. Ekani believes that finding the evil—the **Annihilation Seed**—will cause a disaster even worse than the Fall. His closest confidant, his partner Balam, worries Ekani has been driven insane with his visions, and seeks a healer to bring peace to Ekani's mind.

SALVAGE GUILDS OF TANUBAR

Anyone with the means to do so can travel to the Ruinscape, find a passage down into the deeps, and explore. Of course, the

Dalaja: level 4, tasks related to religious observance as level 6

Arthfael: level 3, tasks related to sleen history as level 6; Armor 2

First Deep, page 58

Ekani Nalender: level 5

Fifth Deep, page 66

Barden Corbar: level 5, knowledge of the *First Deep* as level 6

Annihilation Seed, page 66

Third Deep, page 62

Ruinscape is a dangerous place to wander without support or resources. That's why many would-be adventurers join previously established salvage guilds rather than start their own.

Some holdfasts support only a single official salvage guild (which might or might not be open to new members), but Tanubar grants charters to any team that has 100 stars to pay and is willing to give more than 10% of their finds to the principals. In return, salvage guild members gain access to tips and maps where they are likely to make interesting discoveries in the Deeps, supply caches, and the possibility of rescue by other salvagers. The largest salvage guilds, including the White Caps, also have guild houses that contain common rooms, rooms for let, small libraries, and related conveniences. The smallest teams usually make do with tents and messages posted on a common board.

White Caps: The salvage guild known as the White Caps was founded by three explorers: [Marvelous](#), [Asama Kalan](#), and [Benaka Dol](#). Named for Asama's predilection for wearing white headwear (a fashion later adopted as a badge for the entire group), the White Caps got their start almost thirty years ago, and were among the first to attempt to explore the deeps beneath the Ruinscape after the discovery of their existence. Marvelous is a bibliomancer who wears fine, sapphire-hued robes.

Asama Kalan is a big woman who wears full body armor. All three usually wear some kind of white hat.

The White Caps keep a large guild house in the center of Tanubar. The group boasts more than fifty active members, though most are out exploring at any given time. They are always looking for new team members to join their ranks, but they are selective. Those who apply must enter a preselected portion of the [First Deep](#) and return with a named item of interest within a week's time to be considered. Many who apply never return at all.

Benaka Dol has stepped away from active salvage; as a principal of Tanubar, rulership duties come first. But Asama Kalan and Marvelous remain active. Asama, with her white hat and shining white armor, and Marvelous, with his golden staff and long black hair (going a bit to silver at the temples), can be found almost every night in the guild house, making plans, looking over the finds of recently returned salvagers, and telling thrilling tales of past exploits.

Symbol: White cap.

Ekambar's Band: Named after its founder, this salvage guild keeps its guild house in the First Deep in a previously cleared and explored [thunder beast](#) lair. Rumors suggest that Ekambar's Band has ambushed rival salvage teams returning to the surface to steal their take. If so, Ekambar's Band so far has managed to eliminate every member

First Deep, page 58

Marvelous: level 6; Armor 2 from spell; long-range electrical spell attack that inflicts 5 points of damage and ignores Armor

Asama Kalan: level 6, Speed defense as level 7 from shield; Armor 3; carries two random cyphers

Benaka Dol, page 54

Ekambar: level 8 (level 5 without divine shifts); health 33; Armor 4; long-range celestial fire attack that inflicts 10 points of damage and ignores Armor from divine shifts; carries two random cyphers



Thunder beast
(*tyrannosaurus rex*),
page 322

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Thunder Above (Salvation): A living thunder beast from the First Deep has breached the surface. It seems drawn to Tanubar. It appears at night outside the walls where the excess population shelters in tents and simple structures, terrorizing and eating those that can't flee as fast as their fellows. Those people need saving; someone needs to put that beast down.

Lost Team (Liberation): A salvage team failed to return from a trip into the Second Deep. Guilds in good standing are normally due a rescue attempt. But the rescue team has already deployed to find a different missing team in the Third Deep. Apparently a giant has captured the missing team, and if they're not rescued soon, they'll likely be sacrificed or eaten. The principals are looking for other salvagers to step in and help.

Principle of the Matter (Law, Love): Ekani Nalender has taken fellow principal Benaka Dol hostage, and promises to kill her if the White Caps, and for that matter, all the other salvage guilds in Ekambar do not cease their operations. Ekani keeps his hostage in a secret location no one has been able to find, even by magical divination. The White Caps, and especially Marvelous, are keen to get their founder back unharmed.

of each ambushed team, or bribe survivors not to lodge an official complaint. Ekambar, despite his apparent human stature, is almost as tall as a taran, has the strength of ten people, and has taken on at least one colossus of the Third Deep single-handedly. He searches the Deeps for an implement he calls the *Sword of Yesterday*.

Symbol: Two conjoined golden loops.

TANUBAR MARKET

The market in Tanubar is where merchants go to meet salvagers who have something to sell. Select stalls are set aside, offering the best rewards for salvagers who agree to sell their finds to them.

In addition to more coins, rewards offered include all manner of inducements, from delicacies imported from the Nightland, passes to special functions occurring in *Corso* that normally only nobles can attend, the attention of a devoted companion for the evening, discharge of a debt or legal entanglement, and pretty much anything that a salvager might value besides simple coin.

THE FIVE DEEPS

Great cracks splinter the earth and zigzag away from the edge of jagged cliffs ringing the *Eye of Elanehtar*. These deep crevices often end in dead ends, but some of them provide passage into a series of long-sealed, deeper subterranean layers called Deeps. Each layer seems to be evidence of a previous civilization that dominated the region of the world currently called the Ruinscape. How those civilizations ended, how they came to be buried, and the full extent and size of each Deep isn't immediately obvious nor yet discovered by anyone in the Afterworld.

Whatever else might be true, it's become clear that Elanehtar's fall and impact cracked these layers open, perhaps for the first time ever, allowing adventurers of the Afterworld to descend and explore, if they dare.

ACCESSING THE DEEPS

Every holdfast houses one or more salvage guilds who keep maps of various entrances to the First Deep. Some salvage guilds also have maps of special locations within the First Deep, as well as entrances to the Second and even deeper layers. Joining

Eye of Elanehtar, page 68

Sword of Yesterday,
page 181

Corso, page 24



Rakshasa, page 168

a salvage guild, even as a mercenary, is a great way to get such a map. Those who wish to strike off on their own and explore crevices of the Ruinscape may also eventually get lucky, assuming they aren't killed by **rakshasas** first. Characters who arrive via an uncommon route or by accident might face the requirement of finding their way up and out.

Typical Access: A rocky, twisting crack leads down some hundred or so feet into the upper reaches of the First Deep. If the access is regularly used by a salvage guild, such as most of those around Tanubar, some effort may have gone into carving steps, adding ladders, and otherwise making the initial descent easier.

Uncommon Access: Certain magical spells, creatures, artifacts, and even cyphers can spontaneously deliver a character into one of the Deeps. For example, the **Staff of Serpents** delivers a wielder and its allies into the Serpent Cavern in the First Deep.

Staff of Serpents, page 181

Accidental Access: Some portals found in other parts of the Afterworld deliver explorers into one of the Five Deeps. Travelers moving across the surface of the Ruinscape might also fall into a crevice, or become victims of cursed terrain that sends them via a long fall or watery torrent into one of the Deeps.

ENTRAPPING NATURE OF THE DEEPS

A subtle but powerful magic pervades the Deeps, keeping natives mostly contained to their specific layer. Sorcerers have learned that the effect is a component of a far greater magical curse related to each Deep's initial creation, involving a magical seal. Though unclear in origin, each Deep's entrapping seal has partially preserved its contents in imperfect stasis. Salvage teams believe that if explorers spend too much time in a particular Deep or eat food they find there, they might become trapped like the native creatures of the layer.

Katheer, typical: level 4; Armor 2; long-range cutting light attack inflicts 4 points of damage and ignores Armor from serpent-themed artifact (Depletion: 1 in 1d20); carries one random cypher

The stasis that preserved each Deep began to fail forty-two years ago, after the Fall. The layers preserve evidence of previous Falls by their very existence. However, no prior Fall seems to have been catastrophic enough to break the seals that preserved each preceding Deep in stasis. Until now. With those seals ruptured, access to each Deep from the surface has become possible. And natives of each Deep are slowly waking. Thankfully, it seems that while the seal has been cracked, a lingering entrapping magic generally holds the natives to their own Deep, but there are exceptions. And those exceptions seem to be growing over time.

FIRST DEEP

The bones of gargantuan beasts are thick on the First Deep, mostly embedded in rock walls as fossils, but sometimes jutting up from the ground, walls, or ceiling like massive white spires. Some areas contain fossils of what seem like clusters of chalky white eggs, each at least 60 feet (18 m) in diameter. When investigated, some seem solid, others have the mineralized remains of gargantuan thunder beasts in them, some are hollow and filled with odd relics and cyphers of a time *long* before the Fall (or even before the Divine Age), and some contain live creatures.

The live creatures found are the most worrisome. Though many remain in stasis, many also now roam freely in the First Deep, and have done so since sometime after the Fall. The creatures include hungry thunder beasts, giant insects of various kinds, and katheer.

Katheer: Katheer are intelligent creatures somewhat akin to sleen, but katheer are about twice as large, and have the lower bodies of serpents (instead of legs, each katheer's lower body divides into dozens of roiling snake tails). In addition, katheer speak a completely different language than sleen and use a strange kind of magic that no one in the Afterworld has ever seen



IF CERTAIN HISTORICAL HYPOTHESES ARE TRUE, THE FIRST DEEP CORRESPONDS WITH THE SO-CALLED NEW AGE, AN EPOCH FROM BEFORE THE DIVINE AGE.

THE DEEPS

Salvage teams have coined titles for each Deep.

First Deep: Empire of the Serpent

Second Deep: Fungal Throne

Third Deep: Stair of the Colossi

Fourth Deep: Tunnels of Madness

Fifth Deep: Tomb of the Gods

before, which is somehow based on serpent physiology. Some katheer are completely insane, possibly driven mad by long periods of stasis. Others have banded together, gathered thunder beasts of various kinds to them, and seem intent on releasing more of their kind as a prelude to larger goals.

The more that salvagers from the surface disturb the First Deep, the more katheer are released. As their population grows, they begin to more actively resist intruders. Simultaneously, active katheer work toward freeing a portion of the katheer in stasis, while killing other katheer on sight. Apparently an old rivalry existed before the creatures were sealed into the First Deep, and that antagonism extends to the present. Some salvage guild sages believe that the active katheer want to revive some forgotten katheer god, and are seizing the opportunity to kill those among their number who might have wanted to pursue some other agenda.

FIRST DEEP LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

The following locations represent a mere fraction of the First Deep.

Ekambar's Guild House: Ekambar's eponymously named guild house in the First Deep enjoys its own private passage to the surface in a location just outside Tanubar. The guild house occupies a series of hollowed stone eggs that once contained katheer artifacts and fossils. About ten

guild members are in the guild house at any given time. Ekambar himself visits about every ten days upon returning from his most recent delve. He hasn't found the Sword of Yesterday yet, but he has found several other powerful artifacts and odd cyphers, which he stores in a locked vault. Visitors might be welcomed and shown guest quarters; however, if said visitors seem like they have interesting treasures or secrets, they may be waylaid in the middle of their rest, imprisoned, questioned, and eventually slain.

Thunder Nursery: The tunnels leading to this area are strewn with the fragments of newly hatched eggs and the occasional [juvenile thunder beast](#), a creature only about 7 feet (2 m) long from mouth to tail. The central area is a wide cavity containing what seems to be thousands of freshly laid eggs tumbled upon each other, and dozens more freshly hatched, ravenous juvenile thunder beasts. Katheer keepers infrequently appear to feed the beasts, but they're happy to eat anything else that wanders in.

Katheer Vault: Thunder beasts guard the main access to this wide cavern that contains a broad, egglike dome structure at the center. Palms, ferns, and large insects grow in this chamber under an artificial magical light on the vault ceiling. Several dozen katheer live in the vault. Some move about on levitating discs. Others work at panes of interactive light that hang in the air and display symbols in an unknown language. They gather daily under the central dome, which contains a massive figure of what seems to be a snake several hundred feet long composed of iron. They might be praying to the iron snake, or undertaking some far more inexplicable exercise. If intruders are discovered, they are set upon by thunder beasts and [katheer priests](#) alike.

Juvenile thunder beast:

level 4, perception as level 5; health 15; Armor 1; bite inflicts 4 points of damage, and victim who fails a Might defense roll is held in its jaws and takes 6 points of damage from raking claws each round until he breaks free with a Might roll



Thunder beast
(*tyrannosaurus rex*),
page 322

Ekambar, page 56

Katheer priest: level 6; Armor 2; long-range cutting light attack inflicts 6 points of damage and ignores Armor from serpent artifact (Depletion: 1 in 1d20); carries one random cypher

THUNDER BEASTS

Thunder beasts come in a variety of types, all of them large and hungry. A typical thunder beast's roar is so loud that prey freezes in horror upon hearing it. But more terrifying yet is the sound of a thunder beast's approach. Each footfall is like a tiny earthquake, promising ruin.

Thunder beasts were contemporary with, and were probably created and bred by the katheer, a race of snakelike humanoids whose remains and serpent-themed works are scattered throughout the First Deep. The odd sorcery employed by the katheer has preserved many thunder beasts in stasis to the present day.



FIRST DEEP SALVAGE AND ENCOUNTERS

First Deep explorers might find objects or areas of interest like those on the list below. Living creatures might be found encased in eggs or a flickering field of energy that holds them in stasis until disturbed. Finding salvage is usually as simple as digging the edges of a fossil or egg casing out of the soft limestone-like rock of the walls and floor. Other times, it requires following a tunnel to a new area.

Artifacts, page 178

Cyphers, page 176

Raver, page 169

Artifacts, cyphers, and other equipment that originate in the First Deep are usually serpent-themed. An item might be shaped like a coiled or extended snake, inflict venom damage, produce snakes or serpents, and so on.



d20 Discovery

- 1 Serpent-themed artifact
- 2 Hundreds of gold coins stamped with a single staring snake eye
- 3 Serpent-themed cypher
- 4 Sympathetic katheer—telepathic—who offers PCs a place to hide from other katheer, and warns PCs not to let the other katheer succeed
- 5 Flying thunder beast (level 6)
- 6 An egg that sucks any explorer that touches it into stasis that lasts until explorer is freed
- 7 Eggs that transform explorers into katheer over the course of a day unless explorers can break the curse
- 8 Wasps the size of cattle (level 3, venomous attacks level 5)
- 9 Crushing stone trap (level 4) protecting a secret door leading into a smooth, spherical chamber set with all manner of strange light windows alive with unfamiliar symbols
- 10 Remains of another salvage team, eaten, digested, and redistributed by thunder beasts. Remains may contain a few cyphers, monetary treasure, and an artifact.
- 11 Three nefar hunters riding thunder beasts
- 12 Trail of slime miles long that ends at dead portal (or at least a portal that needs special key)
- 13 Salvage team (level 3) strung up in webbing, unconscious
- 14 A god trying to set herself up as new “god of thundersaur”
- 15 Intrusion from Second Deep: mushroom forest, air laden with soporific spores (level 4)
- 16 Intrusion from Third Deep: colossus, hunting thunder beasts
- 17 Elder **raver**, serpent themed
- 18 Inactive seraph fossil, serpent themed, wakes when disturbed as level 7 creature
- 19 Psychic stone, telepathically reveals image of a Fall predating the Afterworld
- 20 A vehicle appearing as if made of light, but solid as stone, able to travel a long distance each round, but only in the First Deep



SOME SALVAGERS BELIEVE THAT THE ENTRAPPING NATURE OF THE DEEPS IS TIED TO SOMETHING CALLED THE ANNIHILATION SEED, RUMORED TO LIE IN THE HARD-TO-REACH FIFTH DEEP.

SECOND DEEP

Towering fungus spires 30 feet (9 m) tall and higher fill much of this layer. A bluish bioluminescent glow hazes the air from a constant dispersal of spores. Films of oozing fungus cover patches of the ceiling and walls, partly liquid, but alive. Sprouting up through the ooze are smaller fruiting bodies like red, gelatinous mounds about the size of huts. Puff balls, fungal draperies, fronds, and toadstools are everywhere.

Since the Fall cracked its containment, the entire Second Deep has grown from ancient spores and come alive, and at least partly *awake*. That intelligence isn't cohesive, but seems to be gaining focus as the years pass and more and more explorers from the surface poke and prod at it. Certain fungal formations, especially the gelatinous red mounds, have been found to sometimes contain ancient oddities, including artifacts and cyphers of a non-Elanehtar origin. Other times these formations contain the digested bodies of earlier explorers. These latter mounds—called **faerie rings**—are actually predatory, and tempt explorers to their digestive embrace with alluring illusions. In the last couple of years, faerie rings have begun to appear on the surface, though most victims don't realize they originate in the Second Deep.

Other formations still bound to the Second Deep are mobile. Animate, vaguely humanoid masses of fungus—called **elf knights**—wander the mushroom forests, acting something like gardeners and guardians. Salvage teams have learned to give faerie rings and elf knights a wide berth.

POISONOUS SPORES

Experienced salvage teams always enter the Second Deep with filter masks. An explorer from the surface who breathes in the spores faces potentially dire repercussions. Once each hour, unless breathing through a filter mask (or damp piece of fabric), explorers who fail a difficulty 3 Might defense roll fall into an induced slumber. Characters who fall asleep in the Second Deep are

slowly colonized by rhizomes (growing from the lungs outward) at a rate of 1 point of **ambient damage** (ignores Armor) per hour. When a victim is dead, they become one more fuzzed-over component of the terrain. However, the victim's memories and experiences are siphoned out and fed into the single fungal intelligence slowly re-emerging from long eons of nothingness.

SECOND DEEP LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

The following locations represent a mere fraction of the Second Deep.

Bountiful Basin: This large cavern is even more fecund than the rest of the Deep. Bioluminescent caps on towering toadstools outshine the illumination from the spore haze. The gigantic mushrooms, small polyps, toadstools of all sizes, puffballs, lichens of every color, mold, and thousands of different fungus types abound. The smells of lemon, bread, and rot is strong here. Those who risk breathing the air here can commune with the intelligence of the Second Deep if they wish. Doing so requires a difficulty 4 Intellect roll (although the difficulty can be modified by the GM—see below). On a failed Intellect defense roll, the target falls asleep as if having failed the Might defense roll against poisonous spores, unless the GM feels this is an opportunity for the fungal mind to take brief control of the PC (treat as a GM intrusion).

On a success, the communer enters into a trancelike state as they interface with the intelligence. The intelligence doesn't usually answer questions about itself or other Deeps, but it is surprisingly cognizant of events on the surface. The communer can ask the intelligence one question and get a general answer. The GM assigns a level to the question, so the more obscure the answer, the more difficult the task. Generally, knowledge that the communer could find by looking somewhere other than their current location is level 1, and obscure knowledge of the past is level 7. Gaining knowledge of the future is impossible. The



Ambient damage, page 200

Faerie ring, page 160

Elf knight, page 157

level of the question sets the difficulty of the Intellect roll.

The intelligence answers questions because it gains information in turn from the nature of each question asked of it.

Sember Fortress: This retreat was established by a group of reanimated out of the city of **Cryserech**. **Lord Tinallos** commands this hidden fortress, located near a tunnel that leads directly to the surface (bypassing the First Deep). Sember's defenses include **reanimated soldiers** immune to the spores. The soldiers were slaves, converted to reanimated against their will, and brought into the Second Deep to serve as fodder for an upcoming offensive. Lord Tinallos believes that some new (or very, very old) god of Decay will arise in the Second Deep, and he is ready to pledge himself to that entity's cause, whatever it might be.

SECOND DEEP SALVAGE AND ENCOUNTERS

Second Deep explorers might find objects or areas of interest like those in the list below. Most living creatures found are likely to have a fungal origin. Finding salvage often requires opening fungal pods or delving into mounds of gelatinous goo (level 4 tasks).

Artifacts, cyphers, and other equipment that originate in the Second Deep are usually fungus-themed. An item might look grown rather than made, and emit spores, ooze, and so on as part of its effect.

d20 Discovery

- 1 Fungus-themed artifact
- 2 Pool of blue fluid; a sip instills a sense of superiority and infallibility for 24 hours
- 3 Fungus-themed cypher
- 4 **Faerie ring** avatar of a human male evangelizing the return of the god of Decay
- 5 **Fungal wolves** that attack in packs
- 6 **Flying fungus** with long-range psychic attacks
- 7 Ebony blade (small, medium, or large) that inflicts +3 damage against fungal creatures

- 8 Pool of yellow fluid; a sip grants imbiber +1 to Armor from new layer of fungus on skin
- 9 Hollow mushroom cap; serves as a home to small green woman with four divine shifts
- 10 Remains of another salvage team, eaten, digested, and redistributed by elf knights. Remains may contain a few cyphers, monetary treasure, and an artifact.
- 11 Black fist-sized gem that changes color when concentrated on
- 12 A 300-foot (90 m) section of rock wall, inscribed with cuneiform-like symbols. If magically deciphered from the dead language in use, the symbols describe an "**Annihilation Seed**" destined to bring about the fall of the god of Decay, and usher in a new world.
- 13 Pool of red fluid; a sip suppresses imbiber's pain sense for seven days so that they function normally even if down one or two steps on the damage track
- 14 New god trying to set himself up as new "god of mushrooms"
- 15 Intrusion from First Deep: a group of **katheer** riding thunder beasts on prospecting tour
- 16 Intrusion from Third Deep: giants looking for red pools
- 17 Intrusion from the Fourth Deep: a trio of **zekadid** on a killing spree
- 18 Pool of black fluid; a sip heals imbiber of all damage
- 19 **Mushroom forest** whose soporific spores send psychic avatars of victims hurling into the Aether
- 20 Tunnel that leads to the **Mouth of Winter**—a glacier chamber feeding a cold volcano

THIRD DEEP

Rubble from a metropolis bigger than any that currently exists on the surface fills this layer. Pockets, caverns, and corridors that stretch for hundreds of miles in all directions are filled with obelisks, broken columns, cracked pediments, and shattered sculptures. Relief carvings showing massive humanoid creatures engaged in an

Cryserech, page 34

Reanimated, page 34

Lord Tinallos: level 7; health 30; Armor 5 from magic breastplate (Depletion: 1 in 1d20); 9 points of damage with crossbow and sword; reanimated longevity and toughness

Reanimated soldier: level 3; Armor 2; 5 points of damage with crossbow and sword; reanimated longevity and toughness

Annihilation Seed, page 66

Katheer, page 58

Zekadid, page 175

Mushroom forest: level 4

Mouth of Winter, page 71

Faerie ring, page 160

Fungal wolf: level 3

Flying fungus: level 5



unending war with monstrous creatures are everywhere. Few elements in the Third Deep seem natural. All seem to have been carved, built, or forged, though most are now ruined. Despite the general sense of ruin, great lamps atop cracked marble still shine a bluish light in most chambers, providing dim illumination.

The disruption of the Fall has awakened a variety of creatures in the Third Deep, mostly vast and monstrous. **Colossi**—gargantuan animate statues—are most common. But living **giants**, wearing streamers of lightning, wisps of cloud, and capes of animate earth, also stride through the ruins of their ruined world, enraged at their entrapment. A colossal two-headed wolf that salvagers call the **Night Beast** has been glimpsed in the far distance on a few occasions.

Other native creatures that are smaller, but hardly less dangerous, haunt the debris, including **chimeras** and medusas. Most creatures encountered seem insane or caught in an unending rage, making communication difficult. When communication is possible, the one name that's whispered, sometimes in fear, other times in adulation, is that of Typhon, the Maker of Monsters.

THIRD DEEP LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

The following locations represent a mere fraction of the Third Deep.

Stair of the Colossi: One of the largest caverns in the Third Deep contains a grand stairway entry, a series of steps apparently made for creatures hundreds of feet tall. Human-sized visitors must rely on ropes, climbing expertise, or other means to descend. The stairs descend from a higher location that apparently no longer exists, originating from the face of a massive rubble front that blocks further upward access. A crack from the surface leads down and connects to the stair midway, and serves as the main method by which salvagers gain entry into the Third Deep.

Each step measures about 50 feet (15 m) high. Free climbing down each face (about fifteen total, from the access point to the surface) is a difficulty 5 Might task. Griffons nest along the stairs, making descent hazardous. The wide, rubble-filled cavern beyond is a favorite spot for salvagers who make it down so far to explore. Not many have ventured farther; they've seen colossi, giants, the two-headed wolf they call the Night Beast, and other massive creatures moving in the half-lit chambers beyond.



Colossi are referred to as animate statues in the Cypher System Rulebook, page 316

Giant, page 295

Night Beast,
gargantuan two-headed
wolf: level 12, *Speed*
defense as level 7 due
to size; two bite attacks
(one per head) per turn
each inflict 15 points of
damage; howl causes all
within long range who
fail an Intellect defense
roll to lose access to three
divine shifts (if any) for
one minute



Chimera, page 278

Lurusan: level 6, Speed defense due to green steel breastplate as level 7; Armor 3 from green steel breastplate; carries two random cyphers

White Caps, page 56

Cavazel steel, page 149

Gorgon, page 162



Colossus (animate statue), page 316

Standard demons, devils, and dragons as depicted in the Cypher System Rulebook are not common to the Afterworld, as described in Chapter 14: Creatures and NPCs. However, they do exist in Typhon's Tomb in the Third Deep, and some of them possess 1d6 divine shifts.



Demon, page 284

Devil, page 285

Dragon, page 287

Cast Spells, page 103

A salvager named **Lurusan**, an ex-member of the **White Caps** guild, can usually be found in this chamber near the foot of the Stair of the Colossi, working alone. Lurusan wears armor made of **Cavazel steel** and passes time playing a small flute in his semi-permanent camp. He seems friendly enough, and has useful advice for other salvagers who happen upon him. But rumors in holdfasts on the surface describe Lurusan as a raging lunatic. Stories say he killed every member of his former salvage team, and disappeared the bodies somehow. If questioned about it, he laughs it off. However, he's less friendly afterward, and tries to subtly direct his questioners to visit a "very interesting site off that way, under the gold dome." The directions are to the Lair of the Gorgon, though he doesn't provide that warning. He doesn't want anyone to know the truth of how his uncontrollable anger so overpowered him that he murdered everyone he once considered a friend.

Lair of the Gorgon: A **gorgon** named Sthenic keeps a lair under a golden-hued dome 3 miles (5 km) from the base of the Stair of the **Colossi**. The only clue as to her presence is the jumble of ruins around the dome, which contains an assortment of broken, human-sized—rather than giant—statuary. In fact, exploring characters might even notice a few tarans (the lack of eyes are a giveaway) or sleen (snake people aren't otherwise featured in the motifs or sculptures).

Sthenic is a priest of Typhon, a *long-dead* god of Monsters. The priest knows where to find Typhon's Tomb in the Third Deep and is preparing a massive ritual to resurrect him. To that end, Sthenic collects cyphers and empties their power into a crystal vessel shining with divine energy. When the vessel reaches full capacity, the gorgon will enter Typhon's Tomb and inject the vessel into the corpse there. However, Sthenic is finding it difficult to gather the cyphers she needs in the Deeps. So Sthenic works on a plan to free herself from the entrapping influence that keeps the gorgon bound. This plan is why Sthenic may bargain with salvage teams rather than immediately kill them.

Sthenic is protected by her own abilities, as well as by two colossi that she controls.

Typhon's Tomb: This subterranean vault holds a single vast mausoleum 200 feet

(60 m) on a side. Relief sculptures cover it, depicting all manner of terrible monsters, some recognizable, most wholly unknown to Afterworld natives. Cracks provide human-sized creatures with entry points that open onto a maze of corridors. Even though Typhon is dead, the god's residual power still spawns the monsters that wander these corridors. Creatures include the same sort of threats found outside the mausoleum in the Third Deep (giants and colossi, and of course the Night Beast), but also include a horrific mix of devils, demons, slimes, and other tentacled things.

At the mausoleum's center is a great basin filled with bubbling organic matter that smells of putrescence. This is the corpse of Typhon. Every few hours (or every few rounds, if disturbed), a new monster slops up over the basin and crawls away into the surrounding mazes, or attacks whatever is disturbing the tomb.

THIRD DEEP SALVAGE AND ENCOUNTERS

Third Deep explorers might find objects or areas of interest like those in the list below. Living creatures discovered are often giant (including actual giants). Finding salvage often requires digging down beneath the rubble of collapsed buildings.

Artifacts, cyphers, and other loot caches originating in the Third Deep are usually larger than a human could comfortably use (but might be suitable for a taran).

d20 Discovery

- 1 Excessively large artifact
- 2 Floating head of a huge statue that speaks riddles recalling past and prophesying future events
- 3 Excessively large cypher
- 4 Colossus, carved like a massive ape, that transfers travelers (against their will, usually) great distances into the Third Deep
- 5 A spell written on a massive stone tablet that reveals magic through a particular odor for one hour; learnable by characters with **Cast Spells** focus
- 6 Burrowing colossus that attacks from below

- 7 Lingering curse (level 5) that makes allies in the area see each other as enemies
- 8 A spell written on a massive stone tablet that calms distress, fear, insanity, and related issues; learnable by characters with Cast Spells focus
- 9 A mostly demolished wine cellar containing massive casks of wine. Most is vinegar, but some is divine.
- 10 The smeared remains of another salvage team apparently crushed under the heel of something immense
- 11 A pack of horse-sized **giant rats** that descend on intruders
- 12 Ruins of a gargantuan amphitheater; those who stand at the stone podium and make a wish sometimes have that wish granted
- 13 Lingering death spell (level 8): characters descend one step on the damage track each minute they remain within 2 miles (3 km)
- 14 A ruined treasure vault: hundreds of dinner-plate-sized gold coins, guarded by a trio of gorgons
- 15 Intrusion from the First Deep: a group of **katheer** riding **thunder beasts** on a prospecting tour
- 16 Empty cavity where the Night Beast woke from magical sleep; still contains active **nightfall wolves**
- 17 Intrusion from the Fourth Deep: four **zekadid** imprisoned by a giant in a massive gilded cage
- 18 A spell written on a massive stone tablet that renders colossi back into inanimate stone for a few rounds; learnable by characters with Cast Spells focus
- 19 Great green colossus mouth: dark portal teleports those who enter into heart of Typhon's Tomb
- 20 A spell written on a massive stone tablet that provides protection from something called the "**Annihilation Seed**" for one day; learnable by characters with Cast Spells focus

FOURTH DEEP

Few salvage teams have penetrated to the Fourth Deep. Even to most salvagers, the Fourth remains a mystery. That said, the journal belonging to the single White Caps team that returned with news of the Fourth is kept in a locked vault in the guild house.

The journal suggests that the entire Fourth Deep is a labyrinth of narrow tunnels filled with squirming, sluglike humanoids called zekadids. The journal, written by one Hexor Mavis, describes an encounter in which a group of zekadids burrowed out of the walls to confront his team. The creatures proved incredibly dangerous, and three of Hexor's five-person team were slain almost instantly by invisible hands of force and brain-draining psychic curses. Only by feeding the zekadids cyphers were Hexor and what remained of his team able to escape.

The entire Deep, according to the author, seems short on salvage (of a sort that humans would value, anyway), and high on danger. Hexor speculates that cyphers, artifacts, and other items with intrinsic value were consumed by the zekadids millennia ago. He supposes that the only value the Deep has to salvagers is as a passage to the possibility of a more promising, deeper fifth and final layer below the Fourth.

Gold Lake: This cavern is far wider than the narrow burrow-like tunnels making up most of the Fourth Deep. The unlit chamber holds a still lake of amber fluid. The zekadids have built structures of mounded stones around the lake, and a handful of zekadids can usually be found slumbering at the center of each of these mounds, perhaps engaged in meditation, rest, or something inexplicable to human understanding. The fluid in the lake has the consistency of thick water, smells slightly fishy, but tastes amazing. Creatures who drink from it gain an immediate recovery roll (once per day) but must make a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll. On a failure, the imbibor can't stop itself from drinking again and again (they get a defense roll each time). Unfortunately, the concentrated effect of the fluid is lethal. Each additional sip after the first causes the creature to descend one step on the damage track on a failed defense roll; a successful defense roll ends the compulsion.



Giant rat, page 296



Thunder beast (tyrannosaurus rex), page 322

Nightfall wolf, page 166

Zekadid, page 175

Annihilation Seed, page 66



“NEVER HAVE I FACED SUCH A FOE. EVEN THE COLOSSI OF THE THIRD DEEP, FOR ALL THEIR GROUND-SHAKING MIGHT, WERE AS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE ZEKADIDS. ENDLESS IN NUMBER, AND WITH MINDS COMPLETELY UNLIKE OURS, THEY WOULD CERTAINLY ERADICATE ALL LIFE ON THE SURFACE IF THEY EVER MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE FOURTH. WE SHOULD NEVER GO BACK, LEST OUR PRESENCE SOMEHOW INSTIGATE THAT BREACH.”
~HEXOR MAVIS, RETIRED WHITE CAPS SALVAGER

Raver, page 169

Descending the falls by raft, barrel, diving, or swimming are all equally fraught, and require a series of difficulty 6 Speed tasks to avoid taking 10 points of damage with each mishap.

Tesertan: level 10; trained in all skills and languages



Ravers seem drawn to the pool, despite their apparent inability to drink from it. They take out their rage on any zekadid or other creatures they find nearby.

Road to Annihilation: While most of the winding tunnels of the Fourth loop about in ways that seem incomprehensible to humans, one route is different. Red and silver markings appear on the walls of this path. Walking this road, which leads ever downward in long spirals, reveals more unfamiliar symbols, letters in exotic alphabets, images that refuse to come fully into focus, and long sections of

lines, sometimes jagged, other times broken. Other than serving as a guide, the markings appear random to most people. Someone who succeeds on a difficulty 8

Intellect task discerns an underlying pattern: the entire set of markings is one vast warning to retreat, to go back, to flee. Those who fail to heed (or decipher) this warning eventually descend out of the Fourth and into the Fifth Deep—assuming they can survive at least one zekadid swarm intent on preventing travelers from reaching their final destination.

FIFTH DEEP

The Road to Annihilation comes to an end where it intersects a vast waterfall. The waterfall, fed from a fracture located on the floor of the Sea of Clouds near the Eye of Elanehtar, is the only direct path into the Fifth Deep. Explorers who fall—or who purposefully dive—into the waterfall are deposited miles deeper in the Fifth Deep.

FIFTH DEEP ARRIVAL

A frigid chamber of indeterminate size—the heights and edges are lost in darkness—lies at the foot of the falls. The falls’ deluge drains through great cracks in the smooth obsidian floor. Here, zekadid corpses lie on the ground. Some are so old they are petrified, and others, much fresher.

Across a gulf of darkness miles across, in the distance, a dim light shines.

ANNIHILATION SEED

The base of the falls and the light are separated by a span of 10 miles (16 km). Explorers who approach the light discover a castle-sized clump of dark matter shining with a faint divine nimbus (visible to PCs and other creatures with divine shifts). Here and there along the path, withered bodies of zekadids, giants, elf knights, humans, and other creatures of the surface are found. Their cause of death is difficult to determine given how most of the bodies are centuries old, though the humans are freshest. Careful examination finds a pattern; it appears that most died due to some kind of self-inflicted wound.

A creature named **Tesertan** lingers in this zone. Tesertan wears layers of cloaks, shadowing its true nature in darkness. It approaches all visitors to the Deep, warning them off in a language they can understand in a surprisingly mild voice. Tesertan explains that it is the Watcher at

the End of All Things, but won't explain what that means. However, in exchange for a gift, it may describe what it believes the Annihilation Seed to be. Its answer is something the GM chooses from one of the options provided under Annihilation Seed Origin. More than likely, Tesertan is connected to one of those origins.

Anyone who continues to move closer to the seed feels a mounting dread (a level 15 effect). The dread mounts to greater and greater levels; characters who can't overcome the feeling with a successful Intellect defense roll must turn and flee, or kill themselves on the spot.

ANNIHILATION SEED ORIGIN

The Annihilation Seed has been studied—through indirect means—by bibliomancers, necromancers, sages, and even a few gods. Hypotheses have emerged regarding the nature and origin of the seed. Curiously, their hypotheses fail to agree.

Prison: The Annihilation Seed is a prison where the First Gods interred their most rebellious siblings. The hatred and resentment of the imprisoned eventually leaked, causing the first Fall, and each succeeding Fall over shorter and shorter timescales. The imprisoned within grow stronger with each such Fall. In fact, from the most recent, which created the Afterworld, the imprisoned drew so much strength that the seals that separated the Deeps shattered. And the imprisoned

themselves may soon break free into a world with only a few gods to defend it.

Eschatos: The Annihilation Seed isn't the cause of each Fall, as some have surmised. Instead, it is merely the product of the first Fall, like the other succeeding deeps. However, the seed represents the physical remains of the First Gods, who were slain and collected into a single petrified mass. The true arbiter of the Fall lies somewhere else: perhaps the *King of Nod* is the real perpetrator, making him the only surviving First God. A First God who turned on his siblings, murdering them, only to be imprisoned by gods of later generations—until he regained his freedom in the last Fall.

Stolen: The Annihilation Seed isn't native to this reality. It was pulled from another realm by the First Gods, who stole it from some other reality's divine pantheon. They wanted it because it represented a vast storehouse of divine energy. Unfortunately, it came with a retributive curse strong enough to bring down the gods, over and over and over again, with a curse that only grows stronger each time it activates.

Anathemic: The Annihilation Seed is an anomalous piece of rogue matter captured by the First Gods as it fell toward the world. It slept, but the First Gods finally deciphered its anathemic nature to all life. They buried it, hoping that it would never wake. It never did, but its presence was still so vile that it has caused Fall after Fall. If it

King of Nod, page 80



ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

First Deep Invasion (Law): The katheer of the First Deep are building a massive drilling device, pointed at the ceiling. It is guarded by a variety of thunder beasts and katheer warriors (against attacks by rival katheer, mostly). The awakened First Deep natives seem intent on completely breaking through the lingering entrapment effect keeping their kind in the First Deep. Who will protect the world from a flood of katheer?

Communion (Liberation): A call for aid eventually traces back to the fungal intelligence of the Second Deep. It promises a great boon for those who free a special white-leaved polyp, stolen from the Second Deep and transplanted in a noble's arboretum in Cryserech.

Tablet of Fate (Understanding): The Guild of Sleep in Corso has learned of an ancient stone tablet called the Tablet of Fate, which lies somewhere in the Third Deep. One who finds and reads that magical work might well become a god (or a more powerful god). Or maybe learn of the Annihilation Seed.

Amber Longing (Love): A level 6 foxlike creature lives in the Fourth Deep's Gold Lake. It seeks a worthy companion, one who is able to free it from the entrapment effect of the Deeps. If it finds one, it accompanies its new friend as a devoted pet would follow its owner.

is not removed from the world and cast far away, it will finally wake, spelling the end for all the worlds for all time.

suicide. Even glimpsing its edges from the great cliffs overlooking the obliterated land of Cavazel risks a curse or a raver attack.

EYE OF ELANEHTAR

The Eye of Elanehtar marks the site where "heaven" smote the world. A continent-sized, never-ending tornadic storm spins there, spawning curses and sheltering ravers. Entering the storm is considered

RAVERS OF THE EYE

Ravers are husks of the dead gods. Many reside in the whirling arms of the Eye, howling with mindless insanity, as does occasionally the eldest raver of all: the Delirium. It's uncertain if anything



could ever redeem the ravers other than destruction, putting the flayed memories of the gods they once were finally to rest.

EYE OF THE EYE

Many have dreamed of a stone tower floating above the land at the center of the Eye of Elanehtar. Something oily and vast lives within, contained by the storm. Given that nightmarish dream, sages warn that the vision might be from the *King of Nod*, and represent nothing more than a trap.

CURSES TABLE

The Eye of Elanehtar spawns smaller storm cells that spread to other lands. Even attenuated by distance, an underlying malignancy—a level 1d6 + 2 curse—remains. When characters encounter cursed weather or any other phenomena that can bestow curses, they are subject to being cursed temporarily or permanently (curses without a listed time limit are permanent). Curses could include the following effects.

d100 Curse Effect

01–06	Target bleeds from mouth and can't speak for one minute
07–10	Target loses one eye (increasing the difficulty of perception tasks by one step)
11–14	Target's eyes become glowing red orbs (due to appearance, persuasion tasks are increased in difficulty by one step)
15–17	Target becomes smitten with an ally's possession and tries to steal it
18–20	Target's skin becomes corpse-cold
21–23	Target bleeds from eyes and ears, and is blind and deaf for one minute
24–27	Target becomes pregnant, regardless of sex, and finally births a nightfall wolf
28–32	Flammable objects touched by the target catch fire for one day
33–36	Target's feet and hands begin to bleed, even through coverings, so that they leave bloody footprints and handprints wherever they go and on whatever they touch
37–39	Character loses the ability to make any sound
40–42	Character constantly emits a low, rumbling hum audible within short range
43–48	A minor raver is summoned and attacks the target until target or raver is destroyed
49–50	Threatening mental whisperings increase the difficulty of all target's Intellect tasks by one step for one minute
51–56	Target is struck by lightning (10 points of damage)
57–60	Three of the target's fingers fall off (increasing difficulty of tasks with hands by one step)
61–62	Target loses all hair
63–66	Target is drained of heat (10 points of damage)
67–68	Target's skin becomes hot as a smoldering coal, making it difficult for them to not burn through clothing or touch others without inflicting minor burns (1 point of damage)
69–70	Target's mind recoils from a horrific vision (10 points of Intellect damage)
71–74	Small animals and plants within short range wither and die for one day
75–77	A seraph of sin is summoned and attacks the target until one of them is dead
78–79	Target falls into a three-day sleep
80–81	Target's dreams are filled with nightmares, reducing recovery roll results by 1
82–85	Rash or lesions on the target's flesh increase the difficulty of all interaction attempts by one step for one day
86–89	Target is sickened (all difficulties increased by one step for three days)
90–94	Target's bones become brittle (takes +1 damage each time damage is taken)
95–99	Target loses access to benefits of their divine shifts for one day
00	Target afflicted by two curses; roll twice more or choose two curses

King of Nod, page 80

Permanent curses can be lifted by someone trained in sorcery who succeeds on a difficulty 6 Intellect roll.

OTHER RUINSCAPE LOCATIONS



Giant snake, page 296

Seraph of virtue, page 171

Namitra: level 8; *Armor 4 from magic; five bite attacks per round from floating heads*



Slidikin (Namitra's court), page 315

Bibliomancer, page 156

Protective Charm:
Each charm reduces the difficulty of a wearer's defense rolls to resist curses by two steps (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

Troll, page 174

Imearn Craf: level 6, *tasks related to deception and persuasion as level 7; health 28; staff inflicts +2 points of damage*

Rakshasa, page 168

Rakshasa Queen, page 87

Soulrest, page 84

Jade Wood: Though a portion extends south of the Krakens, the Jade Wood is considered part of the Ruinscape. The wood is typified by **giant snakes**, some of which may have crawled up from cracks in the ground connecting to the First Deep.

Lost Hold: A fortress floats above the cliffs overlooking the Eye of Elanehtar. But that was not always so. It was originally established as a holdfast thirty-odd years ago by a powerful noble of the Nightland named **Namitra**. Then something recovered in one of the Deeps brought an end to the salvage. The holdfast lifted into the air, and Namitra was transformed into a terrifying entity with many floating heads, and her court became pale creatures with many mouths.

Stormlook: Bibliomancers out of Corso inhabit a tower inscribed with glowing runes to keep out the curses (and ravers) generated by the Eye of Elanehtar. Each **bibliomancer** also carries a **protective charm** designed to ground curses before they can take effect. An observatory containing equipment designed to observe the everlasting storm is always deployed in the topmost chamber.

About twenty bibliomancers and double that number of slaves inhabit Stormlook. The bibliomancers constantly maneuver to be named Lead Observer. The current Lead Observer is **Imearn Craf**, a man who wears a stylish scarf. Imearn achieved his position over a long campaign of political maneuvering, displacing the previous Lead Observer, Anjika Temis. Anjika, who dyes her skin bright red with spells, left Stormlook in a rage after her undeserved demotion, and no one knows where she's gone. In fact, she went into the storm.

Alderqua: About 150 miles (240 km) east of the Mouth of Winter, another fractured city rises from the Ruinscape. Crooked but largely intact, the ruins are home to a family of **rakshasas**. The rakshasas prowl nearby crevices for ways into the Deeps. Lately, they have begun to predate holdfasts by posing as slavers (though they actually do buy and sell slaves, despite losing a lot of inventory to hunger). The rakshasa lord, Dalagen, claims he is a consort of the **Rakshasa Queen** in **Soulrest**.

Heavenfall: The grandest achievement of vanished Cavazel was the Arch of Heaven. This amazing arch, carved of massive slabs of white marble and held aloft by divine blessings and **seraphs of virtue**, traced a gleaming curve nearly 300 miles (480 km) in length, high over Cavazel's capital city—called Earthshine. The Arch of Heaven now remains only in memories and a few shattered lengths of broken marble spans along the northern edge of cliffs overlooking the Eye of Elanehtar. Salvagers sometimes attempt to gather stone from the arch, but are chased off by mad seraphs of virtue who still haunt the spans and foundation's stump. The arch had many interior passages and chambers for prayers, priests, and worship, and some of those chambers remain intact in the stump.

Cursed Quarry: A massive deposit of greenish iron ore yields a special emerald-hued steel called green steel (or Cavazel steel). Most of it was quarried from this mine operated by interests in Somorrah. The mine gained its present name when **trolls** from the Verge overran it ten years ago. The main entrance is under a broken fold of upraised stone. Something even worse apparently wiped out the trolls, but all mining expeditions sent by Somorrah to find out who or what has taken over have failed. As the price of green steel increases, more expeditions, from Somorrah and other Nightland cities, are inevitable.

Sea of Vapors: Southeast of the Ruinscape lies the Sea of Vapors. The Sea of Vapors and the Sea of Clouds are hard to differentiate, since both are often cloud-covered, but the Sea of Vapors reaches toward warmer lands to the south, and clouds give way to mostly clear skies. Sometimes foreign ships—usually corsairs and pirates—arrive from those distant lands in hopes of plundering trade and salvage routes around the Ruinscape.

Sea of Clouds: The eastern ocean extends from the eastern coast of the Ruinscape to the distant continent of Leralyn, 3,000 miles (5,000 km) distant. This mighty expanse of water was barely explored even before the Fall. Now, with the greatest seafarers

of legendary Cavazel gone, most can only guess at what wonders the ocean might hold. The terrors, of course, are well known, given how the sea abuts the curse-spewing Eye.

Mitavah Holdfast: **Zesther**, one of the original five founders of Mitavah, is now retired from leading salvage teams into the Deeps. He's still often seen around the holdfast, playing a lyre he says he recovered from the Third Deep. Some rumblings around the holdfast suggest that he didn't so much retire as get kicked out of the guild by the other four founders. According to gossip, Zesther sacrificed a slave to a dead god in the Third Deep to get his lyre. Normally placid and given to singing ballads in the holdfast public house, his expression changes if *that* story is referenced, and he sings down a curse on the perpetrator.

Creel Holdfast: This holdfast is built to keep the majority of its inhabitants inside rather than protect them from what lies beyond the walls. That's because the large majority of those sent out on salvage teams are slaves. Each salvage team includes a couple of overseers to make certain that the team descends into a crack in the earth rather than make a run for the **Krakens** mountain range. One way slaves of Creel Holdfast are kept in line is by threatening to withhold the protective charms each slave is given upon entry. As **Creel Amol** (the founder of the Holdfast) explains, if a slave's charm becomes inactive, the curses that accompany the inclement weather would be ten times as deadly.

Mouth of Winter: This massive volcano-like peak is visible for hundreds of miles in all directions. It hasn't erupted in centuries, but according to stories, it belches cold, not fire. The cold caverns that extend beneath it intertwine like tube worms parasitizing living flesh. Within these tunnels are creatures of cold and death, including rarely seen ice elementals. A small cult of Adherents inhabit the tunnels, protected from the cold by spells. They believe that the god of Winter lies buried miles beneath the earth and is reincarnated after each Fall. They believe she will come again if only they

pray hard enough, though lately talk has turned to trying human sacrifice.

Cerulean Peaks: One of the grandest visions in all the Afterworld is the range of floating mountains said to have been raised by Zenia ten thousand years before the Fall. If so, it's odd that they didn't come crashing down when Zenia perished with the other gods. The peaks remain home to all manner of predatory birds, including vicious creatures known as **erinyes**. The peaks are also home to several taran tribes who claim the floating islands for themselves. Though the **tarans** will come together to stand against any external foe, they often fight among each other for honor and prominence. Tarans usually move between peaks on the backs of two-headed **rocs**.



Zesther: level 5, tasks related to singing and playing an instrument as level 7; can inflict a random curse from the Eye by playing his magic lyre (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

Erinyes, page 159

Taran, page 128

Roc: level 8, Speed defense as level 4 due to size; flies a long distance each round; two beak attacks (one per head) per turn

Krakens, page 49

Creel Amol: level 6; carries an amulet that can selectively deactivate protective charms, and which grants an asset on defense tasks to resist curses

THE VERGE



Goblin, page 297

Orc, page 308

Ogre, page 307

Troll, page 174

Goblin shaman: *level 5, long-range lightning attack from spell as level 6; Armor 2 from spell*

Kolraga, orc: *level 5, interaction with other orcs as level 6*

The Verge is the nefar-infested borderland that hasn't known civilization for thousands of years. The nefar—goblins, orcs, trolls, ogres, and similar creatures—exist as scattered tribes across this great expanse. They hunt and kill intruders who attempt to cross this wild, uncivilized land. Groups of nefar also routinely transgress the Krakens mountain range into the Nightland to hunt for easier pickings in the form of human settlements, which is something they didn't dare before the Fall, at least, not after the Goblin God was slain by Zenia.

KASKAN "RED HANDS" TERRITORY

The Kaskan tribe of goblins and orcs, commonly called the "Red Hands" after their method of marking their territory, claim a wide region of the Verge along the Line of Nod. This territory includes the ruins of Inekaltas as well as Koryban Lake. The Red Hands mostly live in stone huts and caves in the foothills overlooking the scrubland interior of the Verge. Each Kaskan outpost (or cave complex) usually contains at least one **goblin shaman** who is able to cast helpful magic.

Many sub-chiefs rule the Kaskan territory, but the Red Hand high chieftain is an orc named **Kolraga**. She is relatively young. Her mother and father—who shared power—died in raids on Somorrah during the Troll War, leaving her in charge. Kolraga is less bloodthirsty than many of her tribe would prefer. Some whisper that she is not up to being chieftain. Others, who still remember the fury and resolve of her grandfather who won such a wide territory for the tribe, believe Kolraga will rise to the challenge. To date, she remains untested.



UNDER THE BANNER OF THE GOBLIN GOD, THOUSANDS OF NEFAR WARRIORS ATTACKED CAVAZEL THE SHINING. THE PALADINS AND WAR PRIESTS OF ZENIA THREW BACK THE ATTACKS, AND ZENIA SLEW THE GOBLIN GOD, WHOSE DEATH CURSE TARGETED ALL ELANEHTAR. MOST NEFAR BELIEVE THAT CURSE EVENTUALLY LED TO THE FALL.



Inekaltas, Ruins: Cracked and burned gold-and-silver-leaved domes alight this ancient ruin. Inekaltas marks one of many ruin sites containing similar architecture that can still be found across the Verge. The nefar, never concerned with history, use such ruins as lairs of opportunity. The Red Hands live in the top layer of these places, applying their bloody palm prints everywhere, denoting their claim. Sometimes orcs from the Shwalg tribe that rule a spur of the Krakens descend on Inekaltas en masse, believing that great treasures can still be claimed in the damp corridors beneath the ground.

Koryban Lake: Red Hands stone huts cover long stretches of hills overlooking the lake to the south. The locals hunt the hills, but also dive in the lake, seeking treasure from drowned temples of forgotten gods. Most divers fail to come up with anything of value, but sometimes magical artifacts of a previous era are recovered. And sometimes, the lake monster is roused. The creature's appearance varies according to the teller: sometimes it is a beautiful water nymph,

other times a scaled, fishlike monstrosity. Orcs and goblins are sometimes taken to the lair of this "dweller in the water." Instead of being eaten, most awaken three days later with no memory of the missing time.

Maledra Forest: Portions of the forest are rich in game, and thus draw competing tribes of nefar. Skirmishes between Red Hands and Shwalg tribes are common beneath the boughs. Some sections of the forest contain long stretches of twisted and



THE RUINS DOTTING THE VERGE, WITH THEIR GOLD-AND-SILVER-LEAVED DOMES, PREDATE THE DIVINE AGE. A NAMELESS, EXTINCT PEOPLE BUILT THEM, PERHAPS DURING THE NEW AGE. CERTAIN RELICS FOUND WITHIN THE RUINS SUGGEST THESE PEOPLE WERE HUMAN-LIKE, BUT OF A MORE SLENDER BUILD, A MORE PEACEFUL DISPOSITION, AND GIVEN TO SONG AND LAUGHTER RATHER THAN WAR AND SLAVE-TAKING.

Crow Face, orc: level 7 (level 5 without two divine shifts); health 27; Armor 2; long-range bow attack that inflicts 11 points of damage and ignores Armor from divine shifts; carries two random cyphers

Shwalg champion, orc: level 5



Ogre (Ironjaw),
page 307

scarred trees. Red Hands shamans believe these areas mark a massive tomb to a long-dead god of nefar called Maledra. There may be some truth to this belief, or it might be something the shamans say to enhance their own reputations.

What's certain is that these sections draw ravers, seraphs of sin, and other foul creatures, and that some kind of large complex (perhaps broken into several distinct pieces) lies beneath the roots.

An orc with no tribal affiliation named **Crow Face** roams Maledra Forest, and other nefar seem to respect him, even those of the Shwalg tribes. Always wearing a cursed,

unremovable mask that gives him his name, Crow Face keeps other nefar from over-hunting the woods. He also sometimes leads those who stumble into dangerous areas to the edge of the forest. According to the Red Hands goblin shamans, Crow Face was cast out of the tribes for speaking a blasphemy, which no one will repeat.

Dead City: Another ruin with silver and gold domes, the Dead City lies at the edge of Maledra Forest. The nefar avoid it, hearing screams constantly emanating from the ruin. A few adventurous types out of the Nightland claim that the ruined city contains cyphers and magic just lying in the streets. However, a strange doorway in the city's heart psychically calls to all visitors. Those who succumb to its lure and enter are never seen again.

SHWALG TERRITORY

Compared to the Shwalg, the Red Hands are a peaceful tribe of hunter-gatherers. The Shwalg are cruder in all ways, even in that they speak a degraded form of Nefarious, thick with profanity and coarse humor. Shwalg care about only one thing: strength. Merciless to both enemies and those within their own tribe who are judged weak, these orcs and goblins are feared by Nightland humans and other nefar of the Verge alike.

Shwalg goblins and orcs live rough. Most sleep in rude burrows or under deadfall, in small groups. Lone Shwalg are hunted as sport by the others. Groups with ten or more usually have at least one **champion** who has risen above the others, speaks for its group, and gains the lion's share of any booty from constant raiding into the Nightland, into Kaskan territory, or on attacks on other Shwalg nefar.

All the Shwalg answer to an ogre who calls himself Ironjaw. Ironjaw seized power ten years ago by murdering the previous high chief, named Pramic. The Shwalg high chief is fiercer than the average ogre. He carries an artifact axe he calls Blood Eater, and collects the skulls of vanquished foes, which he piles to make his somewhat odoriferous but effectively macabre throne. Each skull has a bite taken out of it, courtesy of Ironjaw. The high chief prefers to deal with situations with Blood Eater, but is shrewd enough to bargain if he senses an opportunity or a threat that might endanger him.



Drukelm: This ruin serves as the primary Shwalg “city.” But the Shwalg inhabit it like they would anyplace in the wilderness, and use the tumbled walls as rubble for their own burrows, the still-standing towers as convenient points to get a look from on high, and the clearings as places to gather and cook large meals. Ironjaw himself can be found here on his throne of skulls, watching contests between his lieutenants, captive nefar of other tribes, weaklings from his own tribe, or— especially exciting— fights between captured people of the Nightland.

Fire King Keep: Located at the tip of a lone peak near the Aravan Range, Fire King Keep is a fortress of obsidian inhabited by a **giant** called the Fire King. The Fire King keeps several ogres, orcs, and goblins as servants, and he demands tribute from the Shwalg lest he take more. The Fire King knows several powerful fire spells. Lately, he claims to have a power only gods should know: the ability to produce a lava-spitting volcano. This claim comes hot on the heels of a demand delivered to various cities in the Nightland. He promises to lay waste to each city if he is not paid vast sums of gold and magic. When **Nulumriel** sent an envoy to deal with the Fire King, he sent the envoy’s burned head back in a box.

Ghost Moor: This treeless moor northwest of the Nightland is haunted by the ghosts of soldiers who fell in a legendary battle. Two gods fought, though who those gods were and why they came into conflict in the world and not in Elanetar is not remembered. In the summer, Shwalg nefar hunt the moor for relics, old weapons, and magic, despite the chill. They clear out by night when ghosts seep out of the ground.

Gate of Dream: Several stories describe a ruin where **animate weapons**—swords, crossbows, spears, and lances—fly through darkened corridors. Any living creature that fails to provide the proper passphrase is set upon. The passphrase, according to the blind cenobite monk that is sometimes encountered outside the ruin, is “I seek

the key of sleep, and the gate of dream.”

Other times, the cenobite is nowhere to be found, or he inexplicably provides the wrong passphrase. Those who make it through the animate-weapon gauntlet find a portal that leads to the surface of **Nod**.

Lost Valley: Almost two centuries ago, a group of humans settled in this difficult-to-find high valley. The valley is closed off from the surrounding Verge by nearly impassible cliff walls. From outside, the valley isn’t obvious (difficulty 7 for perception and climbing tasks). Secret tunnels and paths grant easier access to Lost Valley, including the Windshear Road, a peak-to-peak path that traces along the spine of the Krakens. The people of the Lost Valley call themselves Janomites, after the largest community there, Janom. Janomites are dark haired and pale skinned, and usually green eyed. They favor reds and blacks in their coats, gloves, and heavy scarves that most wear to keep warm.

The nefar of the Verge leave the Janomites alone, mostly because their existence is considered to be only a story. When Janomites venture into the surrounding lands of the Verge, they do so via secret doors and hidden tunnels. These passages remain secret because Janomites are crafty and tough, but also take the precaution of using charms to wipe the memory of those doors and tunnels from their minds when they leave Lost Valley. **Explorers** rely on watchers from the cliffs to let them back in when they return.

Janom: The central community in Lost Valley is called Janom, a vertical city carved into the cliff sides. Steep, winding stairs connect the various levels. Carved chambers are high and dry, though a waterfall (Windshear Falls) provides Janom and the rest of the valley with water. About 10,000 people call the place home. Most worship a mountain god who is believed to reside “beneath the roots of the mountains.” Janomites are, for the most part, unaware of the Fall. They weren’t especially affected by it; they say their mountain god—Faeton—

Nod, page 78



Giant, page 295

Nulumriel, page 30

Janomite explorer:
level 4, tasks related to
stealth, hunting, and
deception as level 6



Ghost, page 293

Animate weapon: level
3; flies a long distance
each round



SECRET TUNNELS AND PATHS GRANT ACCESS TO LOST VALLEY, INCLUDING THE WINDSHEAR ROAD, A PEAK-TO-PEAK PATH THAT TRACES ALONG THE SPINE OF THE KRAKENS.



JANOMITES ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, UNAWARE OF THE FALL.

Shudgha: level 8, Speed defense as level 5 due to size; spear attacks inflict 12 points of damage; troll healing



Orc, page 308

Goblin, page 297

Issair: level 5, religious knowledge as level 7; carries artifact that grants user siphoned abilities from another creature for three days (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

Seraph of virtue, page 171



Giant spider, page 297



Vampire lord, page 325

Spider centaur: level 6; attack inflicts 6 points of damage plus 6 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) on a failed Might defense roll; carries at least one cypher

Seraph of sin, page 172

Troll, page 174

remains very much present, as he always has. Faeton, they say, is the reason Lost Valley has never been found. Janomites leave offerings on particularly-hard-to-reach shrines built on surrounding peaks, or at the bottoms of deep tunnels.

The Lost Valley is ruled by a council of thirteen. No one sits on the council for more than a few years. Though the council keeps order in the valley, almost as much power is wielded by a priest-sage called Issair. Issair keeps a mountainside chapel where he prays daily to Faeton, practices divine magic, and keeps a secret vault where a *seraph of virtue* is imprisoned. Whether or not Faeton truly watches over Lost Valley is moot, because Issair does the lion's share of watching in secret, using abilities siphoned from his captive seraph, in Faeton's name.

Spider Wood: A portion of Maledra Forest is infested with spiders of all kinds, including *giant spiders*. The nefar mostly stay clear, fearing the rumor of intelligent spiders who build web cities in the treetops. Those who don't listen to the warnings of the shamans are sometimes found at the edge of the forest, encased in webbing and sucked dry of blood, leaving the carcass as dry as fall leaves.

A team of salvagers out of the Ruinscape once entered the Spider Wood looking for a particularly potent venom for use in a magical ritual. They escaped the woods, saying they'd encountered creatures that were half spider and half humanoid—*spider centaurs*. These creatures seemed willing to deal with the humans, but the two sleen members of the party were instantly seized and devoured.

Troll Hills: Trolls hunt throughout the Verge, but congregate in the hills near Koryban Lake. Other nefar stay away, having learned that the trolls regard this territory as their own. Figures carved in stone and shaped somewhat like trolls can be found half-buried throughout the hills, and a central ruin is considered sacred and taboo by the trolls in equal measure. Though they squabble among themselves, the trolls band together to deal with intruders. About

three years ago, the trolls gathered under the banner of *Shudgha*, a chief of particular strength and savagery. Her mighty force marched on Somorrah to the southeast. If not for a vigorous defense, the city would have fallen. Defeated, Shudgha and her remaining troll soldiers retreated to the hills, but swore to try again. (Somorrans refer to this attack as the Troll War.)

Baissril Keep: Baissril Keep is a ruin, though not especially ancient. A few decades ago, a group of wealthy merchants struck off into the Verge to escape Nulumriel's grasp. They constructed a keep called Baissril. They built it above a series of subterranean caverns inhabited by *orcs* and *goblins*, but the Baissril builders cleared the nefar out. For several years, Baissril enjoyed lucrative trade with various cities in the Nightland with goods hunted, stolen, and farmed from various parts of the Verge, as well as from mining operations beneath the keep. Then Baissril went dark, though no one knows why. Nefar moved back into the caverns a few years later.

Vault of Lithostros: Southwest of the Cerulean peaks lies an abandoned mine once worked by tarans. The workings include several chambers, many tunnels, and a vault door on which the name "Lithostros" is carved in ancient script. The door is sealed. Bones of tarans, nefar, humans, and sleen are everywhere, as of from successive waves of habitation, apparently each ending in slaughter. Some hypothesize the vault door swings open at widely spaced intervals, and whatever is kept within escapes for a brief time, wreaking havoc. A few rare histories in Corso name Lithostros, describing it as a *vampire lord*.

Bleak Cave: Some bibliomancers speak in hushed whispers of the Bleak Cave, a hidden school taught by a *seraph of sin* called Manumet. Invitations arrive on white paper, letters marked in blood. Those who accept are magically whisked away to the subterranean complex. Here they learn the art of curses and other foul magic from Manumet. At the end of the course, whoever scores lowest is slain by other students as part of the graduation ceremony.

Athsayor: This large city—nearly as large as any other in Nod's shadow—once pushed back the uncivilized border of the Verge. Even after the Fall, Athsayor remained for almost a decade. Then the

Delirium descended on the city. When it finally withdrew to the **Eye of Elanehtar**, the city seemed emptied of life. When curious nefar from a nearby Red Hands tribe investigated, they found the inhabitants were still there, but had retreated to the basements, sewers, and catacombs beneath the city, where they had . . . changed. Only a few of these nefar escaped—the others were torn limb from limb and consumed while still alive. The populace of Athsayor have, for the most part, become **ghouls**. Since then, contact with the ghouls has been sporadic. Sometimes a lone ghoul or small group is found living under the shadow of Nod in the Nightland; other times a ghoul sorcerer takes control of a small tribe of nefar. But most of the ghouls remain in Athsayor, assiduously preparing for something they refer to as “The Great Dying.”

Stairs of Oblivion: An ancient structure in the Aravan Range appears as a set of massive stairs descending the side of a large peak. A more recently constructed fortress inhabited by a group calling itself the Order of Souls keeps watch on the stairs. If anyone ascends the stairs from the bottom step to the top during the dark of the moon (the moon called Door, not Nod),

they are transported to **Soulrest**. Creatures in Soulrest seem to be able to use the stairs to leave according to a somewhat more forgiving schedule. Sometimes the Order of Souls sends small groups up the stairs to monitor the situation in Soulrest, which has utterly unraveled. The former guardian of Soulrest—the **Hellmaw**—sometimes emerges in the Afterworld to hunt, leaving Soulrest unguarded. The stairs’ endpoint in Soulrest is within the domain of the **Rakshasa Queen**.

Prior to the Fall, the Order of Souls was charged with tracking down stray souls, ghosts, and other spirits that had overstayed their welcome in the world. But since Soulrest has devolved into chaos, the Order has lost its way. The **Lord of Swords** leads the order. That title previously belonged to a woman named Mardala. She was slain in ritual challenge by the new Lord of Swords. The new lord seems more interested in harvesting the living and sending their souls to Soulrest than protecting the Afterworld from the spirits of the slain. Some whisper that the new Lord of Swords can summon the Hellmaw, and wields the power of death itself.

Delirium, page 18

Soulrest, page 84

Eye of Elanehtar, page 68

Hellmaw, page 164



Ghoul, page 294

Rakshasa Queen, page 87

Lord of Swords: *level 8 (level 4 without divine shifts); health 32; Armor 3; long-range death magic attack inflicts 13 points of damage and ignores Armor from divine shifts; carries two random cyphers*

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Making of a Chief (Liberation): Kolraga, the young orc who has been given control of the Red Hands, has word that her parents, long thought dead, reside in prison cages in the Nightland city of Somorrah. Things stand at a cusp—Kolraga could order all the Kaskan nefar to rise up and march on Somorrah to avenge her parents, and possibly break them free. Or she could be persuaded to try a diplomatic route. At this point, her decision can still be influenced, but that window is rapidly closing. Will Kolraga start her reign as a brutal warlord, or something rarely seen among nefar: a creature of statecraft?

Firestorm (Law): The Fire King, his offers for tribute sneered at by Nulumriel, has laid down an ultimatum: deliver a vast ransom in riches, or Corso will go up in volcanic fire. Nulumriel laughs in his face once more, calling his bluff. But the Fire King may not be bluffing. Rumor suggests he led a caravan from the Ruinscape back to the Verge, carrying with him an extreme cypher, a shard of fallen Elanehtar potentially large enough to back up his claim.

Lost (Understanding, Liberation, Ruin): A group of seventeen humans, every one of them green eyed, was captured by Shwalg nefar. They are being held in Drukelm. The humans have no memory of where they come from, other than that they come from “someplace secret.” The Shwalg torture them, and have killed more than a few already. Liberating the humans requires either breaching Drukelm in secret and effecting their rescue, or finding out from what realm the humans come and trading that knowledge for their release.

Reclaim the Keep (Restoration): Descendants of some of the merchants who founded Baissril Keep hire mercenaries for a journey across the Verge to the keep. There they intend to explore the ruin, ascertain what became of the original founders, clear out any nefar squatters or other creatures that have since come to inhabit the place, and begin the process of returning the keep to its former status.

CHAPTER 6

NOD



The moon of Nod attracts dreams. Dreams unfold everywhere on and within Nod, though not all dreams come to the moon; many stay safely confined within the imagination of their dreamers. Across and beneath its changing landscape, imaginary kingdoms bloom, flower, and decay in mere minutes. Fantasies are teased, fulfilled, or denied. Celebrations rage endlessly across vast, changeable palaces, while children cry alone in forgotten cellars.

To dream is risky, especially in the Nightland, because the unwary dreamer might find their dream taking place on the moon. This may not seem bad when a dreamer visits a treasured memory from youth, a fantasy finally come to fruition, or a celebration that belongs to another dreamer. However, dreamers on Nod face the likelihood of their dreams being invaded by nightmares (in the form of **nodlings** and **night horrors**). Especially unlucky dreamers are sometimes physically pulled into the land of sleep. Nod is littered with leftover nightmares from a thousand million

dreamers. Many psychic entities of malign power come to heel at the command of the King of Nod, but not all. Dreamers who are physically pulled to Nod may become trapped there, and never wake.

NOD'S ORIGIN

Nod is the reason the Nightland exists. It is a manifestation of a curse writ shockingly large across the sky. Everyone knows that. But whose curse, and why, is not understood.

Nod, as a place of nightmares and dreams, existed before the Fall, but not as a physical moon. Bibliomancers believe that it was a realm in the Aether, like Soulrest or even Elanehtar. Something about Elanehtar's manifestation and destruction summoned Nod into the world. Most believe it has to do with a curse mouthed by the **King of Nod** centuries earlier, a curse of eternal darkness and night, long held in abeyance. That curse finally blossomed without the divine power of the gods to suppress it. It's possible that not even the Dream King realized the form his ancient curse would take.

King of Nod, page 80

Nightmare, page 167

Nodling, page 167

Night horror, page 167



A few suggest it's not a curse that summoned Nod, but merely an aftereffect of Elanehtar's fall. Like a dinghy pulled along in a larger ship's slipstream, the fall of Elanehtar may have towed Nod out of the Aether. Unlike the home of the gods, however, the King of Nod managed to arrest his realm's plummet by leashing the dreams of every living thing in the Nightland. How this works, no one in the Afterworld knows. The King of Nod remains silent on the subject.

TRAVELING TO NOD

A creature can exist on Nod either physically or as a psychic construct—a dream. For most purposes, there is no difference. Even if a creature's physical body sleeps in the Nightland, whatever happens to its dream on Nod happens to the creature itself. If a psychic construct is slain on Nod, its physical body actually dies. If a psychic construct finds treasure on Nod, when it physically wakes, that treasure transitions to the waking world.

Most creatures wish to *avoid* traveling to Nod, especially physically. To prevent

a visit, Nightland natives consume small quantities of dream dust. Dream dust usually prevents physical crossover, though not psychic transference. But those who have recently taken dream dust enjoy a sort of psychic invisibility to the nightmares of Nod. Nodlings and night horrors are drawn to those without such protection.

But some—mostly bibliomancers, as well as members of the [Guild of Sleep](#)—do wish to travel to Nod. Sorcerers search for secrets contained in fading dreams and nightmares of their foes. Guild of Sleep operatives oppose the King of Nod himself. Avoiding dream dust is the first step, but doing so isn't sufficient to assure physical transfer, especially at the time and place of a traveler's choosing.

The favored way to travel to Nod is via a spell called Sleep's Sweet Path. Though

Guild of Sleep, page 92



**THE FAVORED WAY TO TRAVEL TO NOD IS
VIA A SPELL CALLED SLEEP'S SWEET PATH.**



THE KING OF NOD SECURES HIS DIVESTED GODHOOD IN A MASK IN A VAULT IN THE HEART OF HIS PALACE. THE MASK CONTAINS TEN DIVINE SHIFTS.

simple enough to cast, the spell usually physically transfers a traveler onto the steps of the Dream King's palace. However, if a sorcerer is psychically strong enough and succeeds on a difficulty 8 Intellect task, they can steer the transfer to some other portion of Nod.

Another route to Nod is via the physical [Gate of Dream](#) located in the [Verge](#), which is a quest unto itself. Using the Gate of Dream has the advantage of delivering the traveler to any location they choose on Nod without the risk of landing on the Dream King's stairs.

TRAVELING ACROSS NOD

Given how locations are not fixed on Nod, traveling to known locations is more about concentration than navigation. A traveler must spend about an hour traveling (less, if moving quickly) and succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect task to find most locations. Some locations might be harder to find; for instance, a specific dream of a particular person might be difficulty 7. Having been to a location before or having an object taken from that location provides an asset to the task. Travelers who fail can retry, but must spend Effort on additional attempts. They also face the potential of getting lost in a dangerous dreamscape.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF NOD

Most plants and animals encountered on Nod are recognizable to travelers visiting from the Afterworld: birds, fish, trees, and grasses are mostly of the usual sort, though they have a misty, half-focused quality to them. A few native creatures of Nod, in addition to wandering nodlings and night horrors, are also sometimes observed.

[Dreamwasps](#), looking more like drifting fuzz balls than living things, mimic cottonwood seeds blowing across the plains. [Rannic](#) are leafy plants with mouths that sing wondrous and terrible songs. [Winged elephants](#) fly overhead, rarely touching down. The [faceless](#) are remnants of people permanently pulled into Nod, who now wander endlessly through the changing dreamscapes.

KING OF NOD'S PALACE

The King of Nod's palace is as changeable as the surrounding landscape, but given the power of its creator, usually remains as a castle of many metallic spires and domes. The front gate is reachable by a grand stair stretching for more than half a mile (1 km), set with statues of the gods, recognizable as victims of the last Fall. The statue of Verecocho has been slightly defaced, in that someone has placed an overly large comical hat on his head, and replaced his magical staff with a decanter of ale. The King of Nod is instantly aware of anyone who sets foot in his palace, and usually greets those who reach the entrance at the top, in the company of two [giants](#).

King of Nod: Whether in dream or in the Afterworld, the [King of Nod](#) is the most cordial man you'll ever meet. Quick with a smile, hospitality, and an invitation to a seat at a feast in the palace dining hall, the Dream King seems the soul of kindness. He asks guests to call him by his "true" name, Usket (he's lying). But he has an agenda—many, in fact. Ancient rivalries, long-standing feuds, and threats to the moon of Nod are issues he never dismisses entirely.

Most troubling to the king is his ongoing war with the bibliomancers, especially those of the [Guild of Sleep](#) in [Corso](#). The King of Nod claims they seek to steal his realm, or smash it to the ground where Elanethar hit. He says the Guild of Sleep is backed by Nulumriel, a dragon who the dead gods had exiled into the Aether before the Fall. If he discovers a visitor is a spellcaster, his demeanor shifts to outrage as he sics his giants on the intruder.

Regardless of all else, the King of Nod is a dream predator. Unless visitors impress upon him their usefulness or strike some bargain, the king attempts to trap them forever on Nod by seating them at the Feast Neverending, letting them browse in the Library of Memory, or offering an opportunity to be one of his Agents of Sleep.

The King's Secret: The King of Nod jealously guards the fact that he was one of the gods who should've died when

Gate of Dream, page 75

Verge, page 72



Giant, page 295

King of Nod ("Usket"):
level 10, tasks related
to dreams and sleep as
level 12

Guild of Sleep, page 92

Corso, page 24

Dreamwasp: level 1,
Speed defense as level 3
due to size; sting inflicts
2 additional points of
Intellect damage (ignores
Armor) if target fails a
Might defense roll

Rannic: level 3, Speed
defense as level 1; song
can increase or decrease
difficulty of all tasks of
dreamers within short
range

Winged elephant: level 5,
Speed defense as level 3
due to size; health 40

Faceless: level 3, regain
3 points of health per
round unless reduced to
0 health with a silver or
horn weapon



Elanehtar fell. His true name is Rapheus, god of Sleep. Rapheus was known for riding a flying, black-skinned elephant. Rapheus would've died, and his realm of Nod perished like Elanehtar, had he not at the last moment divested himself of his divinity. The King of Nod keeps his divested godhood in a secure vault in the heart of his palace. The vault contains ten divine shifts bound in a mask. The king fears that if he should reclaim that spark, Nod will finish its Fall, and him with it. Unfortunately, claiming his divested divinity is the only way he can imagine returning Nod to the Aether. So Nod remains stuck. Rapheus fears that one day Nulumriel or the Guild of Sleep may discover his secret.

Feast Neverending: A table, so long as to defy understanding, dominates this chamber. A sumptuous feast is laid out on silver platters, heaped in golden bowls, and poured into crystal decanters. Chairs line the table, each unique, because each is from a completely different dream. Here and there, people sit, eating and drinking. But except for those recently arrived, few seem glad. After taking the first delicious bite or sip, they are cursed to eternally eat. Evading the curse requires a difficulty 8 Intellect

defense roll per dish sampled. The King of Nod can release someone cursed to remain at the table, unless he himself becomes trapped there.

Library of Memory: Shelves so high that their tops scrape the clouds fill this roofless chamber. Books line the shelves, both common and rare beyond the price of kingdoms. Dreamers browse the stacks, as do a few of the faceless (though the Librarian shoos the latter out when he notices them). General information is easy to find, especially if one asks the Librarian (a green-skinned man with the head of a water buffalo) for help. Obscure information and information generally thought to be secret can also be found here, but requires the browser to spend a few hours wandering the stacks and to make an Intellect roll whose difficulty is equal to the level of the information sought. On a failed roll, the browser becomes so wrapped up in research that his mind empties, and his body dies. All that the browser once knew becomes recorded in a book in the Library of Memory, titled with the former browser's name.

Agents of Sleep: The King of Nod has many agents active in the Afterworld. Some willingly serve the king, while others

Librarian: level 4, knowledge of the Library of Memory contents as level 8; able to dissolve into a swarm of flapping, flying books to escape threats

were press-ganged. Either way, all carry a parasitical dream cyst curled in their minds, like a benign psychic tumor. Agents learn that if they do not take on the tasks in the real world sent in their dreams, the cyst will hatch into a clutch of worms that will feast on their mind.

OTHER NOD SITES OF INTEREST

Many amazing sites come and go with the dreams of those who visit Nod while they sleep. Other places are more permanent in nature, including the following.

Tower of Wishes: Constructed of dark stone and reaching for the sky, this tower is doorless, windowless, crooked, and sways in even the least breeze. According to the lore of Nod, the Tower of Wishes contains every wish ever made that hasn't yet been fulfilled. The tower moves, but persistent dreamers always stumble upon it. If the seven **guardians** of the tower are defeated (or bypassed by answering their riddles), one can make a wish at the tower's base. Even if that wish has already been granted, it comes true, at least for a little while. Wishes that come true in a dream have

a way of being impermanent. The seven guardians have the bodies of people, but the heads of various beasts and birds.

House of Horror: Everyone who sees this building sees something different, but frightening. A place where something horrible happened, a place they fear to visit, or a location of which they are most afraid. A group of people viewing the House of Horror never can agree on what lies before them. One dreamer might see Nulumriel's tower in Corso, another the Museum of Inquisition in Mehergan, and still another a version of the King of Nod's palace.

The appearance of the House of Horror also informs the **night horrors** that inhabit the house. A viewer's fear might shape a nightmare into Nulumriel, a torturer, or even the smiling King of Nod. A successful negotiation with a likeness requires the performance of a service or the payment of a cypher. But if successfully managed, the night horror provides a rare gift in return: a token effective against the creature it replicates. This token most often lowers the target's effective level by three steps for a few minutes, but could grant some other useful effect.

Night horror, page 167

Tower of Wishes guardian: level 7; attacks those who fail to correctly answer a posed riddle

The three children lost on Nod might be the niece and two nephews of a PC or someone close to a PC.

ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Mask of Dream (Ruin or Restoration): The dream mask that once belonged to Rapheus, god of Sleep, is kept in a vault in the king's palace. If the mask is stolen, whosoever wears it can for a time claim the power of Rapheus, and become divine. But doing so risks all of Nod crashing down on the Nightland.

Lost Dreams (Salvation): Three young siblings in the Nightland fell into an enchanted sleep after reading a storybook purchased in Corso. A bibliomancer called to lift the curse fell into a similar sleep, but not before relaying the news that the children's dreams are lost on Nod. If the siblings (and the bibliomancer) are not awakened soon, their bodies will wither and die.

Sleep Slayers (Law): Killers of unknown origin have found a way into Nod. The Dream King is willing to grant a treasure from the Vault of Lost Treasures to anyone who can stop these mysterious killers from murdering dreamers on Nod. Instead of leaving dream corpses that dissolve normally, the killers leave behind body-shaped holes, which, against all dream logic, persist on Nod and eat away at the moon's integrity and stability.

Orders in the Night (Liberation): A noble wakes from a terrible nightmare with a directive from the King of Nod—steal a book from the Guild of Sleep in Corso, or die the next time she sleeps.

Once a bargain is struck, the House of Horror disappears and can't easily be found on Nod again.

Vault of Lost Treasures: A cave mouth carved into a mountain that looks like a gargantuan skull hides a vault of dark metal (level 10). It is not guarded. Inside is a vast trove—all the treasure in the Afterworld that was once owned but is now lost. Treasures buried under landslides, lost to shipwrecks, or otherwise forgotten are found here, or at least their likenesses are. If a particular treasure—say, an artifact lost on the First Deep—is ever recovered in the world, the likeness in the vault burns away in blue flames. Likewise, if an object is removed from Nod for more than a day, it also burns away in blue flames. These flames draw the scrutiny of the King of Nod.

Five Gates of Sleep: Five Gates of Sleep (level 11) are scattered across the moon of Nod: Bone, Jade, Horn, Iron, and Winter. Each has different properties. Most allow a dreamer to escape, or pass into Nod, if the gate has an endpoint located in some other realm or in the Afterworld. Some gates have prerequisites, while others require a dreamer to make certain sacrifices to pass.

Most of the Five Gates of Sleep have guardians but they vary by day and situation. The most common guardians are night horrors.

Gate of Bone: A psychic avatar (a dream) that passes through the Gate of Bone finds itself still on Nod, but now clothed in its physical body. If the newly clothed-in-flesh dream had a physical body located somewhere else, that body disappears. The same happens to a free-willed spirit of a slain creature wandering Nod, or to any dream with the seeming of a living creature. A spirit or dream that passes through the gate is resurrected in the living flesh, or gains it for the first time. The Gate of Bone also reverses the process of *Necromigration* practiced in *Crysech*.

Gate of Jade: One who sacrifices a cypher before passing through the Gate of Jade is completely healed of all injuries, diseases, and curses when they step through on the other side. Those who do not make such a sacrifice become unmoored from Nod's gravity and fall toward the world. After a three-minute-long fall, victims crash with lethal velocity somewhere in the Nightland, unless somehow saved.

Gate of Horn: This gate connects Nod and Soulrest. To pass through unmolested, a traveler must answer three questions from *Sererdin*, a skeletal being wearing a green steel breastplate. The questions are generally simple enough ("Who are you?", "Why do you seek to pass through the Gate of Horn?"). But every so often, a difficult (level 9) question is posed that probably requires the traveler to leave, do some research, and come back with the answer. Alternatively, the traveler can fight *Sererdin* or attempt to slip past. If the traveler manages the latter, *Sererdin* follows, and tracks the traveler to his final destination, leaving the Gate of Horn briefly unguarded.

The endpoint for the Gate of Horn shifts randomly around Soulrest, making it the safest way to enter, because no Lord of Hell is likely to be waiting to collect visitors.

Gate of Iron: The Gate of Iron is unguarded. Travelers who know better should avoid it. Passing through it delivers the traveler to the center of Nod, where they are imprisoned in a dungeon from which few escape, not even gods. Time moves *much* slower in the dungeon than in the Afterworld. The King of Nod uses the Gate of Iron to dispose of particularly troublesome entities. Several dozen creatures are currently ensconced in the dungeon, and at least two are gods who, like the King of Nod, managed to avoid being culled in the Fall. If the name of an imprisoned creature is called out at the mouth of the Gate of Iron, it is freed from the dungeon.

Gate of Winter: Carved of ice, the Gate of Winter delivers travelers to any location they name. But not directly. First they must traverse an icy glacier in blizzard conditions, requiring a couple of difficulty 7 Might and Intellect tasks to not freeze to death and not get lost, respectively. (The icy glacier is part of a winter realm located in the Aether.) While out on the ice, travelers may face various additional challenges, including attacks by *ice elementals*. Those who survive a crossing of 60 miles (100 km) and who can find a second icy arch are finally delivered to the location they requested upon first entering.

Sererdin: level 9; Armor 3; if an attack would reduce Sererdin's health to 0, it does so only if the attack rolled is a 17 or higher; otherwise, Sererdin's health is reduced to 1

Necromigration, page 34

Crysech, page 34



Ice elemental (as earth elemental, substitute ice for earth), page 290

SOULREST



Empusa, page 158

Erinyes, page 159

Raver, page 169

Rakshasa, page 168

Seraph of sin, page 172

Gate of Horn, page 83

*Stairs of Oblivion,
page 77*

*The Stairs of Oblivion's
endpoint is controlled
by the Rakshasa Queen,
but the Gate of Horn's
endpoint shifts randomly
around Soulrest.*

Soulrest is a twisted reflection of the Afterworld. The realm formed long before the first Fall during a primordial congruence with the world. Because of that congruence, Soulrest is also the realm of the dead. Sometimes it is referred to as “Hell,” though that reference is ancient. Souls that lose their tie to flesh in the world of the living are drawn here. They are called along spiritual paths through the Aether that mortal creatures are unable to sense or follow.

Because Soulrest is an imperfect echo, familiar locations of the Afterworld are sometimes duplicated here, but malformed and twisted. The reflection of Corso, normally bustling with citizens along its lamp-lit streets in the Afterworld, is instead an abandoned ruin of braided buildings that sears the eyes in Soulrest, with a few wailing, partly dismembered souls. Other familiar terrain features of the Afterworld, such as forests, mountains, and lakes may seem bent, misted, partly animate, or shattered to pieces.

Amid the half-familiar expanses are littered unfamiliar ruins, a world built on reflections

of lost empires that predate the Afterworld by thousands of years. And everywhere, *things* flutter, whisper, and creep at the edges of awareness, tempting the living and the dead alike to give up, lie down, and fade. Which might be preferable to what passes for judgment in Soulrest since the Fall.

The most commonly encountered threats in Soulrest are manifest souls in service to a Lord of Hell, *empusa*, *erinyes*, *ravers*, *rakshasas*, and *seraphs of sin*.

TRAVELING TO SOULREST

A few permanent gates provide access to Soulrest, including the *Gate of Horn* on Nod and the *Stairs of Oblivion* in the Aravan Range in the Afterworld. Of course, dying is a foolproof way to gain access, but most spirits have no agency after they're drawn to the realm of the dead naturally.

A few spells grant access if cast during the dark of the moon Door. The most widely available spell, *Death Walk With Me*, sends the spirit to Soulrest, not the unconscious body. Like psychic constructs of dreamers on Nod, what happens to the living soul



in Soulrest is similarly visited upon the unconscious body in the Afterworld. On the other hand, if the unconscious body can be awakened, the soul is drawn back to the world of the living.

THE AETHER

The Aether is a mystical realm where Elanehtar once resided, and where Soulrest still remains. Through the Aether, an intangible realm of conception, even more distant realms can be reached. But remnants of Elanehtar, including seraphs, still drift within the Aether. Sometimes they fall into the Afterworld like shooting stars. The Aether is the interstitial space that separates the Afterworld from other realms and dimensions. Accessing it to travel as one wills is extraordinarily difficult. Even bibliomancers, with all their spells, must wait until the moon called Door is in the sky, when spells allowing access to the Aether work best. During the dark of the moon of Door, the barriers thin the most, and powerful entities of other realms sometimes find their way to the Afterworld.

The concept of the Aether is bandied about the Afterworld, but few really understand it, even bibliomancers and dragons. Perhaps some of the dead gods did. If so, that didn't help them avoid the Fall. What's known for a certainty is that the Aether once connected the world, the divine domain of Elanehtar, and the dreamland of Nod, and still serves as a bridge to the spirit realm of Soulrest. It's generally believed that if one could discover the means to access it, the Aether would serve as a road to other worlds, too. Worlds where gods yet live, where the term "dragon" means something quite different, and where craft and industry have replaced the art of magic and bibliomancy. Worlds with esoteric names like Grynoldor, Warvorren, and Nimormor.

THREE JUDGES

For the last thousand years or so, Soulrest was the realm of the Three Judges: the gods Hecali, Samiel, and Etanernal. They set the formidable beast known as the [Hellmaw](#) to guard the realm from interference by the living, as well as the dead who wished

Hellmaw, page 164



AS AN ECHO, “DEAD CAVAZEL” CONTAINS REFLECTIONS OF POWERFUL ARTIFACTS, WEALTH, WORKS OF ART, AND KNOWLEDGE THAT NO LONGER EXISTS IN THE LIVING WORLD.

to escape their fate. Though the Three Judges mostly resided in Elanehtar, they saw to it that souls were properly judged. The qualities the soul had accumulated in life were carefully measured. The results determined the spirit’s final fate in Soulrest.

When the Three Judges perished, that system utterly failed. Now when souls come to Soulrest, they are likely to be consumed by the Hellmaw, torn to shreds by the fury of an erinyes, hollowed out by a raver, or conscripted into one of the undead armies forming under the banners of the self-styled Lords of Hell.

SOULS IN SOULREST

Souls that are drawn naturally to Soulrest upon the death of the body are, generally speaking, without free will. When they first manifest, they are the ideal physical version of themselves, but mentally dazed

and forgetful. Any free-willed creature that comes across a manifest soul in Soulrest can command it with a successful Intellect roll; the difficulty is set by the level of the spirit (normally 1) or the level of the entity that last commanded—or judged—the spirit. Now that the Lords of Hell fight for control, they view spirits as a resource to be harvested and commanded.

Souls killed in Soulrest come back to “life” after ten hours, even if the remains are burned. One way to keep a soul from re-manifesting is to completely consume the remains (which is how the Hellmaw manages it).

LORDS OF HELL

Powerful spirits, former servitors of the Three Judges, ravers, dragons who found passages into Soulrest from the Afterworld, and at least a few entities from much

Soul, typical: level 1; upon destruction, the soul completely regenerates within ten hours unless eaten



stranger realms separated by the Aether have claimed sections of Soulrest for themselves. Many of these usurpers believe that whoever gains control of Soulrest will be granted full divinity. (They believe this because it is one potential interpretation of the [Prophecy of Restoration](#).) They fight tooth and nail against each other, though sometimes they broker brief ceasefires to ally against the Hellmaw.

Rakshasa Queen: The [Rakshasa Queen](#) rules a grim fortress built of bones and ice that rests in the northern half of what appears to be a twisted reflection of Corso. As a former servant of Samiel, the Rakshasa Queen retains a vestigial ability to attract and command souls by mere proximity. So in addition to the majority of [rakshasas](#) who remain in her service, a legion of [skeletons](#) and [zombies](#) in antique armor also serve her.

When the Rakshasa Queen released the Hellmaw, she thought it would come under her control. She was wrong, and barely escaped with her existence. Yet she still wears the beast's chain of binding as a belt, confident that one day she will learn the chain's secret and gain the power to control all of the Hellmaw.

The Rakshasa Queen strives constantly against all the Lords of Hell, but she seems most eager to bring low the King of Nod. The Rakshasa Queen believes he might be a god in hiding. She hypothesizes that killing the Dream King might confer upon her a hidden trove of divine energy.

The [Stairs of Oblivion](#) endpoint lies in the Rakshasa Queen's control, because she had it ripped from where it once was located, and transported to her fortress.

The Skin: The warped, burning reflection of the realm of Cavazel is the domain of the elder raver called the Skin of Etanernal (or often, simply "the Skin"). The streets are like dungeon corridors beneath a haze of burning souls, and the Skin is like a storm that constantly pelts the souls trapped in those lanes under a torrent of foul curses.

It's normally difficult to determine which god any raver descends from, but not so for the Skin of Etanernal. Etanernal was once one of the Three Judges, and measured what was good and deserving in souls. He once sent those spirits to realms within Soulrest of peace, joy, and contentment. That's done. Lesser ravers serve the Skin,

and sometimes take on the seeming of the gods they once clothed, but only under the Skin's influence.

Despite the danger, crazed salvagers and greedy bibliomancers from the Afterworld have been known to creep into the elder raver's domain. As an echo, "Dead Cavazel" contains reflections of powerful artifacts, wealth, works of art, and knowledge that no longer exists in the living world. Those who get away with a prize say their foray was well worth the risk. Those who are caught are eaten by [ravers](#), and likely think differently.

Neveri Rising: Entities of immense malignancy were imprisoned in Soulrest before the last slate of gods claimed the realm for their own purposes. One of these—called a [neveri](#)—was recently unearthed from an alien ruin at the center of what would be Lake Wulan in the living world. In Soulrest, it's a vast crater in which a floating blob 1 mile (1.6 km) in diameter writhes, oozing pus, fluids, and the odor of a thousand graves. Constantly extruding new sections of skin, mouths, eyes, spines, clawed hands, and whipping tendrils, the neveri grows a bit larger each day as it draws souls, shambling undead, ravers, erinyes, and other foolhardy denizens of Soulrest to it. No one knows what—if anything—it hides at its core, what epoch it comes from, or what it ultimately wants—unless its goal is to absorb all of Soulrest. When it was first unearthed, it was only about 10 feet (3 m) in diameter.

The neveri sometimes implants portions of itself in victims rather than absorbing them. These victims are controlled by the neveri to seek out larger groups of souls, undead, or other victims (even victims in the Afterworld), and lure them back to the main mass.

Prophecy of Restoration, page 98

Rakshasa Queen: level 9, persuading spirits and undead to her will as level 11; wears the Hellmaw's leash as a chain belt that grants her the power to force the Hellmaw to lose an action (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

Raver, page 169

Rakshasa, page 168

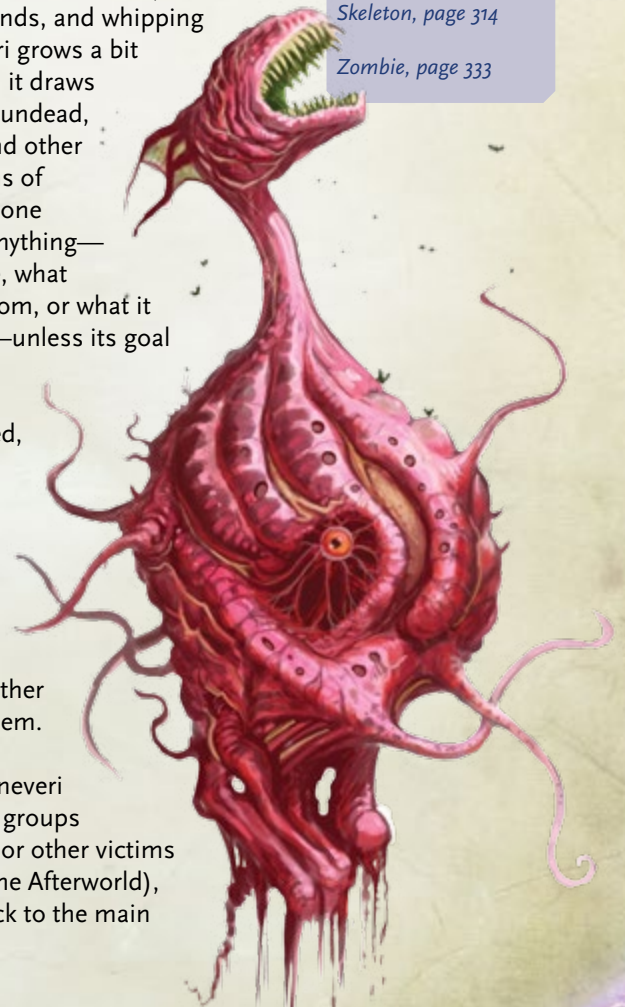
Stairs of Oblivion, page 77

The neveri and the Hellmaw have tussled on a couple of occasions, but neither has so far gained the advantage over the other.

Neveri, page 305

Skeleton, page 314

Zombie, page 333



Shanndra: level 9 (level 6 without divine shifts); health 40; Armor 4; wears All-Soul; Depletion: 1 in 1doo

Soul, free-willed: level 3; Armor 2; sword and bow attacks inflict 4 points of damage; upon death, the soul completely regenerates within ten hours unless eaten

Ustranad: level 9 (level 7 without divine shifts granted by Skysplitter); health 50; Armor 5; long-range flame attacks inflict 20 points of damage

Erinyes, page 159

Shanndra the Soul Savior: Constructed on the echo of the Krakens mountains north of the neveri's pit is a gleaming citadel visible for miles. This citadel is home to **Shanndra**, the so-called Soul Savior, and thousands of **free-willed souls** who continually labor to increase the citadel's size and strength. Unlike the other Lords of Hell, Shanndra claims to have the best interests of mortals and their eternal souls as her first priority. In fact, she says she is a new god and claims for herself the dominion of Souls. Certainly her abilities are godlike, at least in some ways. On the other hand, she has a long way to go before they equal those of the gods before the Fall.

Shanndra had to invade Soulrest, carve out a place for herself, and do so without the aid of seraphs, ravers, erinyes, empusas, rakshasas, or other denizens of the hellscape. She had the aid of a sorcerer named Ustranad (Shanndra's partner, at least until he left her). Shanndra wields the All-Soul. The All-Soul is an amber-hued gem, which Shanndra wears upon her brow like a crown jewel. The jewel lays bare all evil intentions of every creature for miles. For

creatures shown to harbor evil intentions, the difficulty of all tasks is increased by two steps. In addition, souls that come within range of the All-Soul's emanation gain agency and free will, regardless of any commands or judgments given to them before. More than one army of souls, commanded by a rival Lord of Hell, has gone over to Shanndra as they approached her citadel. In return, Shanndra outfits and arms them to fight by her side.

Ustranad the Tempest: Ustranad's keep resides on a high peak that overlooks much of Soulrest. **Ustranad** is served by a company of one thousand loyal warrior souls that are immune to the All-Soul (a gift from Shanndra before their estrangement), as well as a legion of **erinyes** who pledged themselves to his war after witnessing his command of the flames of rage and betrayal. Ustranad schemes how best to bring down the other Lords of Hell, and with his command of arcane magic stolen from other realms, he just might have the power to do it. The relic called Skysplitter, shaped like two demonic horns, is fused to his head.



ACCORDING TO PROPHECY

Chain the Guardian (Restoration): Killing the Hellmaw may be impossible. But binding it so that it returns to the task of keeping souls safe within Soulrest (rather than eating them) would mark the beginning of a return to peace and hope in the land of the dead. But gaining the chain, claimed by the Rakshasa Queen as her own, may prove just as much of a challenge.

Redeem Etanernal (Salvation): Even dead gods deserve peace, and none know more torment than Etanernal, whose animate remnants—an elder raver called the Skin—works to undo everything the wise and peaceful god once stood for. Destroying the Skin will redeem Etanernal's memory, and help calm the echo-realm of Soulrest.

Break the Sky (Love): Shanndra and Ustranad came to Soulrest together, seeking the All-Soul. They found it in the ancient reflection of Cavazel. But they also found an implement of a hell god from some forgotten previous fall, which Ustranad claimed: Skysplitter. Granting him more than mere power, Skysplitter infused him with malice, a hellish demeanor, and an urge to claim power for himself equal to any Lord of Hell. Splitting from Shanndra, he formed his own realm. Though a hidden part of him craves the way things were, his soul has become corrupt, and the two remain estranged.

Death to Dream (Ruin): The Rakshasa Queen seeks dragons, champions, destroyers, and other powerful mercenaries to take on a task that will pay dividends in divinity. She promises a divine awakening to anyone who kills the King of Nod and brings his mask to her. Those who consider accepting the offer are plagued with dreams of Nod falling on the Nightland, but some consider godhood worth any sacrifice.



ORGANIZATIONS

The Afterworld is host to powerful, influential organizations despite the collapse of the temples and mortal clergy that served the old gods. In the vacuum they left, new groups arose. This section describes the most prominent groups as well as the benefits enjoyed by members. If a player character joins one of these organizations, they can take the benefit rather than a skill the next time they have the opportunity to gain a new skill.



ORDER OF RECONCILIATION

Nulumriel built the Order of Reconciliation from the shattered ranks of holy warriors and disillusioned priests in the wake of the Fall. Members are called Reconciliators, a term meant to imply a transition to a new relationship with the world, where gods no longer matter. Reconciliators generally hold that their organization provides leadership in a time of unrest, does good works, culls evil, and protects the Afterworld from false gods. Reconciliators believe those claiming

to *be* gods are worse than mere charlatans. They say such claims risk a new apocalypse, one that could well see the end of mortals. Ironically, they might not be wrong.

Given that the dragon Nulumriel is known to be the Order of Reconciliation's sponsor, many view the organization with suspicion. In fact, many Reconciliators actually do a lot to protect the average person from evil. Naysayers suggest that if the organization was truly pledged to protect people from evil, they would start by throwing the slavers out of Corso. But that's never going to happen while Nulumriel remains in power.

Still, Reconciliators are often called upon to take up difficult quests on behalf of various traders, nobles, salvagers, and even lone petitioners who manage to get a Reconciliator's attention. A Reconciliator adheres to a code that includes protection of the innocent, prosecution of false divinity, and loyalty to the empress of the Nightland. Those within the ranks usually don't see any of these goals as contradictory.

The group has headquarters in Corso, in the [Tower of Reconciliation](#). Those pledged to Reconciliation roam the Nightland, often as traveling warriors and bibliomancers dedicated to the cause. Such bands are led by a Knight of Reconciliation.

PC Reconciliators: Given their divine nature, is it possible for a PC to be a [Reconciliator](#)? Yes—at least, it is before a PC's divine spark is Awakened. Beginning

Nulumriel, page 30

*Tower of Reconciliation,
page 29*

*Knight of Reconciliation,
page 165*



A RECONCILIATOR ADHERES TO A CODE THAT INCLUDES PROTECTION OF THE INNOCENT, PROSECUTION OF FALSE DIVINITY, AND LOYALTY TO THE EMPRESS OF THE NIGHTLAND.



play as a Reconciliator could be an interesting and rich arc for a character, requiring that the PC open her eyes and face the truth of her own divine legacy.

Member Benefits: People both respect and fear a Reconciliator. In addition, after a period of training and in lieu of taking a new skill, a Reconciliator can attempt to detect the largest concentration of divine energy (cyphers or divine shifts) within short range as an action. If a character with divine shifts gains this ability, he also gains the ability to shield his own divine shifts from discovery by other Reconciliators.

Of course, if a character with divine shifts is ever discovered as a member, that character is prosecuted as a heretic and burned.



THE ADHERENCE

Loyal to the memory of the old gods, Adherents believe that those deities will return if their devotion and worship remains strong in the face of adversity. Considered to be crazy cultists by the average Afterworlder, Adherents do their best to keep their affiliation a secret from strangers.

Members pray at least once a day to one or more of the old gods, often with the aid of a prayer token such as a wheel or beads on a string, though these are usually disguised as objects with a different purpose. Knowledge of the old gods is strong among Adherents,

because the organization prioritizes religious education. The Adherence charts small groups to find and preserve caches of religious iconography, cyphers, and other paraphernalia from a better, vanished time. Instead of destroying such treasures, like the Order of Reconciliation does, the Adherence outfits its temples and its most prominent members with them to further promote their agenda.

Adherents keep their headquarters in the city of Somorrah in the [Temple of Adherence](#). Other Adherents are secretly distributed around the Nightland in cells, designed to limit the amount of information any one group has about the others. Otherwise it would take little time for the group's primary enemy—the Order of Reconciliation—to destroy the entire extended organization.

The Adherence is primarily focused on the return of the old gods. They tend to see activity such as the discovery of cyphers and word of new gods as omens of the old gods' return. The idea of new gods is anathema to many. However, some Adherents are open to the concept of new gods arising, if it seemed those gods were in a position to take on the duties and responsibilities of the prior divine generation.

Member Benefits: Becoming a member has the downside of making a character automatically a heretic in the eyes of Reconciliators. However, an Adherent can choose to gain an asset on any non-combat task when they feel as though the task is working directly toward preserving the memory of the old gods and preparing the way for their return. (The player and the GM can decide whether a particular situation warrants the asset.) This ability must be chosen in lieu of a new skill.

*Temple of Adherence,
page 48*



A Sleeper who has the Premonition ability and uses the Guild of Sleep member benefit has an asset to the attempt to learn a fact about a designated topic.



Premonition, page 57

Corso, page 24

Commorancy, page 28

GUILD OF SLEEP

The Guild of Sleep believes that dreams hold all the collective knowledge of the Aether, if one could track them all down. Those who once described themselves as bibliomancers now proudly bear the designation of Sleeper. Being a Sleeper also means having at least some ability to wield arcane power or cast spells. Training involves learning lucid dreaming, where the dreamer takes control of their dream and directs events according to their own desires. Often, that desire leads a Sleeper into another creature's dream, or into the real land of dreams, called Nod.

The King of Nod has taken a special dislike to the Guild of Sleep. In fact, the

guild is secretly at war with the king. Since Nod rose, sifting the lands of dream has become dangerous for those who have lucid dreams. The King of Nod sets his stable of nightmares loose upon anyone who sees too much of his realm. It's obvious he is hiding some secret—perhaps where the body of the former god of Dreams lies? For their part, Sleepers rally spells, enchantments, and dream-crafted war machines of their own to send against the king. The group has recently developed a ritual spell that strengthens psychic constructs—avatars sent into dreams—when they are sent on special missions on Nod.

The Guild of Sleep is headquartered in [Corso](#), in a structure called the [Commorancy](#).

Member Benefits: After a period of training and in lieu of taking a new skill, a member can gain the ability to learn one random fact about a creature or location that is pertinent to a designated topic after spending at least one night dreaming about it.



PART 3

CHARACTERS



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GMING DEITIES



What does it mean to play as a god? This chapter provides the GM with a variety of ways to approach dealing with the divine heritage of players.

From one perspective, being a potential god-in-the-making with the possibility to become something even more significant is simply a mechanical component of a PC. Instead of choosing another special ability from a character's type list, they choose a replacement ability from the **dominion** list (and get a **divine shift** to go with it), and they're good to go. And if that's the way you want to play it in your game, you can.

However, another way to play a divine character is for a PC to embrace the idea of becoming something greater than mortal, with concerns that are larger, too. That doesn't mean that a *character* needs to do so immediately—in fact, they may rail against fate for thrusting them into the role of a fledgling god. But as play continues, they may ultimately realize that for the sake of the world, divinity is a role they must try to accept. Other PCs may be eager to grab

the divinity offered to them, depending on their personalities.

But being a rising god in the Afterworld is often concerned with more than gaining mastery over newfound divinity. It can be about redeeming a world fallen into evil and darkness. A road map is available to those who take on this task, in the form of the Seven Prophecies. Likewise, the Seven Prophecies can inspire adventures, and even guide a player's choice of character descriptor, if they wish.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION IN GODS OF THE FALL

To create a *Gods of the Fall* character, a player builds a familiar statement that describes them at first tier. However, an additional divine clause is added.

The full statement takes this form: "I am a [fill in an adjective here] [fill in a noun here] who [fill in a verb here], god of [fill in a dominion here]."

A character might not choose a dominion until second tier, after they've had time

Dominion, page 138

Divine shift, page 105



to absorb the world and their fledgling character. Alternatively, you could ask your player to choose their dominion at first tier, before they've unlocked divine abilities. Choosing a dominion at first tier is useful for guiding a player's selection of type, focus, and descriptor. For instance, a PC's dominion could steer them to certain ability choices as they build their character (toward being a god of Secrets, for instance, or making other selections to become a god of Justice).

Thus: "I am an *adjective noun* who *verbs*," or "I am an *adjective noun* who *verbs*, god of *dominion*."

For example, a character might say, "I am a Rugged champion who Controls Beasts, god of Wolves," or "I am a Charming shaper who Focuses Mind Over Matter, god of Secrets."

The only new bit here for those familiar with the Cypher System rules is *dominion*. The dominion is a character's divine sphere of influence. A dominion is also a divine path a character pursues as they gain tiers. A first-tier character doesn't have any actual dominion abilities, but they have **Awakened**

to the possibility of acquiring them. Unless you have your own plan based on the story you want to tell, you could give your players the choice between their dominions when they first build their characters, or let them wait to see how things shake out as their characters achieve higher tiers.

For example, you might decide to run a game where PCs have no clue that you have divine aspirations in store for them. In this instance, you'd probably have them create a regular character straight out of the *Cypher System Rulebook*, without any mention of dominions or godly abilities. At least, not until they begin to suspect their true destiny, as revealed by your ongoing games and just possibly, one or more initial interactions with the Seven Prophecies.

THE SEVEN PROPHECIES

The *Book of Fate* contains a record of the Seven Prophecies that were made before the Fall by **Sudhara**, god of Destiny. Copies of the Book of Fate appear from time to time in private libraries, on the shelves of

Book of Fate, page 96

Sudhara, page 180

Awakening, page 136

*Order of Reconciliation,
page 90*

magical academies, on the front stoops of noble estates, and in other odd places. No one knows who is distributing the books, and no one wants to know. As soon as the **Reconciliators** hear of another appearance of a Book of Fate, or of anyone openly discussing the Seven Prophecies, they show up with the intent to put to the fire both the Book and anyone who might have read the tome.

When Sudhara made the Seven Prophecies over a century ago, given the relative peace the world enjoyed, the predictions didn't seem to have any significance. The prophecies speak mainly of righting injustices. Then after the Fall, when injustices abounded (the Fall arguably being the worst injustice of all), no gods remained to right them.

Adherence, page 91

Nulumriel, page 30

However, with the rise of the PCs and other gods, the Seven Prophecies may have found their proper time, and their proper agent: the player character. The PC's divine character could help move the world closer to a state of grace, or at least relieve it from the loss of hope it currently suffers from. More terrors, dangers, and cruelties afflict people now than ever before. Fate—as personified by the GM—has a big role to play in determining which, if any, of the Seven Prophecies the PCs have an opportunity to fulfill.

In fact, some PCs may want to use one or more of the prophecies as a character personality attribute if a particular prophecy speaks to them, and describes the kind of god the character aspires to be. A PC that feels drawn to the Prophecy of Law presumably wants to be lawful, honorable, and bound by oaths and duty. In this way, the prophecy serves as a roleplaying prompt. A character may even decide to choose the Lawful descriptor (though they certainly don't have to). Additional guidance for character **descriptors** that complement each of the **Seven Prophecies** is provided in Chapter 11: Character Descriptor and Focus.

Descriptors, page 124

*Seven Prophecies
and Complementary
Descriptors, page 128*

The prophecies are not binary decision points. A character might help fulfill parts of many prophecies during her career. Likewise, their fulfillment lies along a continuum of completion. If the PCs do not completely fulfill a particular prophecy, perhaps some other group of rising gods will do so. Or perhaps no one will. Fate is fickle.

Kasmandar, page 27

PROPHECY OF LAW

The reign of lawless dictators who believe might makes right, who pursue personal fortune over law, and who allow whim to dictate duty will be thrown down.

The Prophecy of Law could refer to nearly any community governed by a greedy ruler who worries more about the state of their coffers and extent of their influence than what is best for the people who supposedly look to them for protection. Corrupt city officials, city watch members in the pocket of criminals, and even crooked merchants who cheat their customers might all be considered ideal targets for someone who wants to fulfill the Prophecy of Law.

Adherents who study the Book of Fate suggest that the Prophecy of Law ultimately refers to **Nulumriel** and her unjust rule of the Nightland. Only someone as powerful as a god could ever hope to face and dethrone her. If one were to do so, all would consider the Prophecy of Law fulfilled.

PROPHECY OF LIBERATION

The enslavement of the innocent to the will of others will be abolished. Those who are kept shall be made free. Shackled minds will discover the hidden truth.

The Prophecy of Liberation is simple and to the point, and doesn't need much interpretation. It refers to anyone who owns a slave, or even treats those in their employ as virtual slaves. Of course, it likely also refers to anyone held against their will, whether a spouse held in an abusive relationship, a child kidnapped for ransom, someone wrongfully imprisoned, someone held in thrall by lies, or possibly even those who won't recognize themselves as being worthy.

Adherent scholars suggest that the Prophecy of Liberation ultimately targets the various slaver guilds that exist in the Afterworld. Given their breadth of operation, money, and influence, only someone with divine favor has a chance of emancipating all the slaves. If someone were to finally break the slave trade, the Prophecy of Liberation would be fulfilled. Breaking the slave trade probably means taking down the **Kasmandar** Slave Company, the most prominent slaver organization in the Afterworld.

PROPHECY OF UNDERSTANDING

Agents of willful ignorance, lies, and repression of discovery will be overthrown. Knowledge and its open pursuit will blossom.

Determining the identity of an agent of ignorance is a bit more difficult than identifying someone who keeps a slave. Is the lamplighter who mindlessly spreads gossip about the made-up infidelities of innocent third parties an agent? Maybe. If so, to overthrow him requires something defter than a sword, if the second part of the prophecy is to be followed, which seems to demand that minds be opened, not heads removed. That said, no one would likely argue that killing incontrovertible liars who start wars or order the deaths of their enemies might be the only way to allow knowledge and open pursuit of truth to blossom.

Adherent scholars suggest that the various sects of book-burners might be the ultimate target of the Prophecy of Understanding. Others believe that's just a stop along the way, and that to fulfill this prophecy, someone would have to open a network of schools and universities where learning and wisdom are celebrated. Another way to fulfill the prophecy is to learn the true reason Elanehtar fell. Rumors suggest that reason is contained in an ancient object buried in the Fifth Deep of the **Ruinscape**—the **Annihilation Seed**.

PROPHECY OF SALVATION

The memory of the dead shall be honored, their deeds celebrated, and their final rest hallowed against intrusion and disruption. Those without hope will be granted another chance at redemption.

To honor one's ancestors is a common tradition in the Afterworld. One might fulfill the spirit of this prophecy by making sure the final requests of those who have passed were honored. Providing a respectful burial, not digging up the dead once interred, and similar considerations could be interpreted as following Salvation's precept. Similarly, dealing with ghosts and other unquiet dead who are sent to their final rest would also be considered to be doing as the prophecy decrees. An extreme view of this

commandment might lead one to declare all the **reanimated** in **Cryserech** to be targets of a final burial.

However, given the uncertain situation in Soulrest, it seems clear the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy would require someone of unparalleled power to enter Soulrest and permanently deal with the **Hellmaw** and the despots of the dead that have set themselves up in the absence of the **Three Judges**.

Reanimated, page 34

Cryserech, page 34

Hellmaw, page 164

Three Judges, page 85



Ruinscape, page 52

Annihilation Seed, page 66



PROPHECY OF RESTORATION

That which has been destroyed will be remade. That which has been thrown down will be restored. That which has been lost will be found.

The Prophecy of Restoration, on first reading, seems to be a particularly open-ended prophecy. Someone seeking to fulfill this prophecy in small ways could do so using a wide variety of strategies. Someone who repairs broken things might be said to be a prophet of Restoration. Someone else who defends the reputations of those thrown down could claim this prophecy as their own, as could a tracker who locates lost articles or people.

That said, Adherent scholars believe there is a deeper, grander meaning to this prophecy. They believe that to truly fulfill the Prophecy of Restoration, someone would have to raise Elanehtar back into the heavens, or create a replacement divine realm that serves as the home for new gods. Not an easy undertaking by any estimation, but perhaps easier than another interpretation, which has it that the Prophecy of Restoration can be fulfilled only if the old, dead gods are resurrected.

Raver, page 169

Seraph of Sin, page 172

Baron Uttama, page 40

PROPHECY OF LOVE

Those without affection will find solace. Those without care will find healing. That which has not known desire will change their heart for love.

As with Restoration, the Prophecy of Love is open to many interpretations, any of which might be correct. Giving affection to those in need of it, from simple embraces to those more passionate, is in keeping with the prophecy. To some, that may seem simplistic. But partners, lovers, and wedded couples who meditated together daily on the underlying meaning of this prophecy would find their union maintained in greater happiness.

The other easy interpretation is that of healing. Anyone who provides relief from pain and cures from disease and other maladies could be considered a prophet of Love.

But what of changing the heart of the lovelorn? Would doing so make them better people? The ultimate fulfillment of the Prophecy of Love could only come about if a creature as heartless as a **raver**, as brutal as a **seraph of sin**, or as soulless and unfeeling as **Baron Uttama** himself were to find love, and be changed for the better by that experience.

PROPHECY OF RUIN

That which desires not peace, but mayhem; not understanding, but exploitation; and not prosperity, but destruction shall have its day. Without darkness there can be no light.

Also called the Shadow Prophecy, Ruin is not generally considered to be a prophecy that needs prophets. Historically, those who show too much interest in the Prophecy of Ruin are shunned. PCs who choose to be agents of the Prophecy of Ruin might consider doing so in secret. How could other characters trust someone secretly pledged to knocking down all the things that everyone has spent so much time raising up? Coming up with a reasonable rationale for being a shadow agent might be a miracle in its own right.

In fact, many hold that of all the prophecies, the Shadow Prophecy is the one that's *already fulfilled*. The Fall was its result. But some caution that as bad as things are, things could become much worse. These doomsayers see the Prophecy of Ruin as a warning. Without those to guard against such things, all that the prophecy implicitly promises could come true, which is the end of all life and all hope, forever.

USING THE SEVEN PROPHECIES

Players might regard the Seven Prophecies as overarching, high-minded goals to strive for, or perhaps even as character prompts. However, you as the GM can fashion specific storylines designed to allow your characters to fulfill one or more of the prophecies in part or in whole.

FULFILLMENT EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

Each significant location described in Part 2: The Setting comes with a section—According to Prophecy—describing encounter suggestions keyed to one or more of the Seven Prophecies. You're free to develop those actual encounters, or ignore them. But if you're going to include the Seven Prophecies in any fashion, give the players positive feedback whenever they achieve any prophecy-related goal. Feedback lets players know that they're on the right track, provides a sense of accomplishment, and motivates them to continue seeking further instances of the story arc you've created.

The best feedback is to award experience points (XP). In addition to awarding XP for **GM intrusions**, **discovering new things**, and as **GM awards**, you can also (or instead) award XP any time you think the PCs have achieved some portion of any of the Seven Prophecies. Generally speaking, an award of about 4 XP is appropriate for each character when a prophecy-related adventure has been successfully fulfilled.

For instance, if the PCs bring to justice a band of brigands that have long plagued a region, they may have fulfilled an aspect of the **Prophecy of Law**, at your option, so they're each due 4 XP.

You could simply hand the PCs their prophecy fulfillment XP award. Alternatively, you could make such awards a part of their godly growth in the narrative, at least for particularly great successes. Taking down a band of brigands probably doesn't warrant this treatment, but releasing a compound of slaves to freedom might. The XP award might take the form of any of the following.

Feedback	Description
Book	If any PC has a copy of a Book of Fate, the page listing the relevant prophecy is updated to record the PCs' deeds.
Dream	The PCs share a dream that symbolically demonstrates a portion of the prophecy being fulfilled, such as a beam of light bearing aloft a scroll of laws accompanied by angelic singing, and so on.
Omen	A star falls, lightning strikes from the clear sky, an eclipse (or flash in the Nightland) occurs, and so on.
Visitation	An entity claiming to be a prophet of the associated prophecy appears and congratulates the PCs. This is often a seraph of virtue , but not always.



GM Intrusion, page 219

Discovering New Things, page 219

GM Awards, page 220

Prophecy of Law, page 96

Seraph of virtue, page 171

Nod, page 78

SATISFYING END GAMES

Many campaigns run for a set period and come to an end when an overarching goal is achieved. If you wish to run such a campaign for *Gods of the Fall*, there are several possible grand goals divine PCs could achieve in order to conclude a campaign arc.

PROPHECY FULFILLED

The campaign ends on a high note when the PCs accomplish one of the major fulfillments noted for one of the Seven Prophecies. Those major fulfillments are:

- 1) Removing Nulumriel from power (Law).
- 2) Emancipating all the slaves (Liberation).
- 3) Discovering why Elanehtar fell (Understanding).
- 4) Destroying—or chaining—the Hellmaw (Salvation).
- 5) Restoring Elanehtar (Restoration).
- 6) Turning the heart of a powerful evil creature to good (Love).
- 7) The final prophecy (Ruin) offers a different way to go for GMs wishing to experiment with running evil campaigns, or with campaigns that deal with temptations to the dark side.

Delirium, page 18

Soulrest, page 84

NEW FOUNDING

Rather than raising Elanehtar, the PCs might create a new heaven for their own pantheon and other friendly avatars and demigods they've met during the course of the campaign. How they might do so is something the GM can concoct, but suggestions include the following.

- 1) Uncover a particularly large shard of shattered Elanehtar (an extreme cypher, as it were). Such a shard is probably held by some powerful enemy wishing to accomplish the opposite. The PCs can empower it with a divine ceremony, a portion of their own divine power, and see it rise and condense into existence in the **Aether**.
- 2) Find the **Annihilation Seed** in the Fifth Deep, figure out its actual origin, deal with it or destroy it, and use the emancipated power to form a new heaven.
- 3) Colonize or take control of another realm of the Aether that would otherwise continue to threaten the Afterworld, and claim it in the name of the new divine pantheon.

Arch of Heaven, page 70

Cavazel, page 52

Tower of Verecocho, page 43

Aether, page 85

Annihilation Seed, page 66

ELIMINATE NOD

The PCs could deal with the moon of **Nod**. This could take the form of figuring out how to strike it from the sky (and so lift the curse of darkness under which the Nightland suffers), kill the King of Nod who hunts the dreams of Nightland natives, or move Nod to a different orbit. It's possible the PCs might accomplish the latter by managing to shift the entire moon back into the Aether.

GET VENGEANCE

If the PCs find the Annihilation Seed, they might learn who or what precipitated the Fall (and all the previous falls). If so, stopping that which is responsible once and for all would be a fantastic way to draw the campaign to a close.

REDEEM LIFE

This is an open-ended finale. The value of human life in the Afterworld is at an all-time low when the PCs begin. A campaign spent righting wrongs, saving lives, getting justice, and toppling evil despots from their thrones is a fine legacy. Perhaps the most significant life-redeeming capstone the PCs could accomplish would be to find a way to calm the **Delirium**. Even better, they end the war in Hell and set up new Judges in **Soulrest**, so the promise of the Afterlife returns to one of peace, rather than damnation.

REBUILD MIGHTY WORKS

Many things that were once sustained by divine power failed when Elanehtar fell. The **Arch of Heaven**, the empire of **Cavazel**, the **Tower of Verecocho**, and many other locations are now mostly abandoned ruins. If the PCs put forth their divine will, perhaps they could see one of these mighty works born anew, which would serve as a symbol of hope for the people of the Afterworld.

NO SET ENDGAME

Of course, you don't need a grand finale. A series of fun adventures is also a fine way to play *Gods of the Fall*. If the characters don't manage to achieve any of the Seven Prophecies, strike Nod from the sky, or chain the Hellmaw, they've probably done something else equally enjoyable. The goal is fun.

DIVINE STORY ARCS

Some PCs may relive memory fragments that feel like their own experiences, but aren't. They are memories adrift in the Aether, passed down from divine beings that came before the PCs. These flashes could prompt the PCs to undertake quests related to their own story arcs. Other times, such memories could point toward adventures related to fulfilling a portion of one or more of the Seven Prophecies.

In addition, you could flesh out the following campaign arcs. The points presented are not meant to be the entirety of your campaign, but sprinkled in as additional encounters or adventures at each tier. In this way, several story arcs can be simultaneously pursued.

THE NIGHT BEAST AWAKENS

Integrate the following adventure hooks into your campaign to create The Night Beast Awakens story arc.

TIER 1

Introduce PCs to the Afterworld with the *Rite of Spring* adventure.

During the adventure wrap-up, the PCs discover a strange mark—a stylized two-headed wolf symbol—seared on the inner wall of the keep or tattooed on some of the bodies of defeated attackers.

PCs can seek sages or perhaps consult their own knowledge of history (difficulty 6 Intellect task) regarding the symbol. They discover the symbol was used by an apocalyptic cult called the Final Clave. Odd, since the Final Clave was stamped out decades ago by Nulumriel. The Final Clave rose to power in the immediate aftermath of the Fall by promising that the gods would return—but only after rituals of mass sacrifice were undertaken.

If PCs choose to pursue it, they discover a hidden religious cell of Final Clave **cultists** infesting an abandoned chapel to Verecocho in Corso, stealing innocents off the street, and sacrificing them in the name of something called “the Night Beast.” The cultists answer to a cult leader named **Vistaran**. If PCs destroy the cult, they can prevent many future sacrifices of innocent people. Vistaran wears a wolf tooth amulet, and claims it is the source of his knowledge. But once the PCs defeat Vistaran and his cell, they reach a dead end.



TIER 2

A **Tranquil** assassin finds the PCs and tries to kill them when they least expect it. **Assassins** don't normally provide any clue about who put a hit out on a target, but in this case, the assassin has instructions to leave the PCs' corpses marked with the two-headed wolf symbol of the Final Clave. The assassin doesn't know the significance of the mark.

If PCs have the interest and the means, they could choose to confront the Tranquil's guild master in **Cryserech**, called **Naimish**, to learn more. In return for a gift, flattery, or some other consideration (possibly the recognition that, like himself, the characters partake in the divine), Naimish may provide the PCs with information about who hired the Tranquil—something he never would normally do. But even Naimish is unsettled by those who put out hits on the PCs. He says a **rakshasa** with two wolf heads under its hood took out the contract, in the name of the Night Beast. Naimish tried to learn more about this unsettling client, or the significance of the Night Beast, but failed—which, given Naimish's power, is telling.

Rite of Spring, page 182

The Tranquil, page 36



Assassin: page 335

Cryserech, page 34

Naimish, page 36

Cultists: level 2; level 5 for resisting lies and persuasion; knife attacks inflict 3 points of damage

Rakshasa, page 168

Vistaran: level 5; wolf tooth amulet contains only vestige of nimbus that fades within a day

Tanubar Holdfast,
page 54

Golden bower, page 33

Nightfall wolf, page 166



Occultist, page 337

TIER 3

PCs hear unconfirmed tales of hounds, horses, and horrifically, *people* giving birth to two-headed wolf pups, which then scamper off into the night.

Either as fruit of their own investigations (if any) or as something overheard, PCs learn that a **golden bower** called Arbaran, located in the northeastern reaches of the Nightland, has been wiped out by brigands. What's particularly interesting from the PCs' perspective is that the brigands supposedly employed a pack of two-headed wolves to kill their victims.

PCs could choose to personally investigate Arbaran. As they draw close, they are menaced by **nightfall wolves**. In addition, the ravaged golden bower of Arbaran is now occupied by ten **occultists** of the Final Clave, busy sacrificing the former Arbaran farmers in bloody rituals in the name of the Night Beast. True believers to the last, they view the PCs either as more sacrifices or (if the PCs reveal their divinity) as rivals to the Night Beast who must be destroyed. In the aftermath, PCs learn a name that could prove useful: Night Lord Jalmudra, highest servant of the Night

Beast. Supposedly, Jalmudra can *sometimes* be found in **Tanubar Holdfast**, posing as a merchant named Ferarya.

Even if PCs immediately travel to Tanubar, they don't find Ferarya, though other salvagers who sell in the Tanubar market say that Ferarya sometimes comes up from the Deeps with interesting artifacts.

TIER 4

PC investigation or surveillance of Tanubar in hopes of turning up Ferarya or Jalmudra finally pay off (or PCs otherwise learn that Ferarya has opened a stall in the Tanubar market). Unfortunately, they discover Ferarya isn't actually there. But they do find an occultist named Garisha. Unlike other occultists in the Final Clave, Garisha has started to lose the faith. If menaced, she will explain all she knows to the PCs.

Garisha's Story: Lord Jalmudra found and released a creature in the Third Deep he calls the Night Beast. The Night Beast is a god-killer, possibly responsible for killing the gods of an earlier age. As powerful as the Night Beast is already, it's still not as powerful as it will eventually become, whereupon it will bring an end to the





EVEN IF THE PCs NEVER CLAIM THAT THEY ARE RISING GODS, THE NEWS STILL BEGINS TO SPREAD AROUND THE AFTERWORLD.

world for gods and mortals alike. Jalmudra continues to empower it with human sacrifices conducted by Final Clave cultists in cells spread all across the Afterworld. Finding them all would be difficult. But there might be another way. When Jalmudra released the Night Beast, he also found an ancient divine artifact, the **Lyre of Slumber**. Its music has the power to make the Night Beast go quiescent.

Garisha tells the PCs where they can find the cult headquarters. There they can not only find Jalmudra, but also find the Lyre of Slumber held in a protected vault. The headquarters should be located in some suitably grand ruin or setting chosen by the GM. Threats are prolific, and include nightfall wolves, occultists, and Jalmudra himself, who is a **rakshasa** with three divine shifts.

TIER 5 OR 6

At some point the PCs face the **Night Beast**. They might track it down as it leaves a swath of destruction in its wake across the Verge, Ruinscape, or Nightland, or they could draw it to themselves using some kind of ritual they research (or perhaps the Lyre of Slumber, which retains a connection). Or maybe they're led to it via omen, or something specific to your campaign. If the PCs can defeat the Night Beast, it counts as a sixth-tier **divine labor**. It also counts toward the fulfillment of one of the Seven Prophecies, if not the complete fulfillment of one (such as Salvation).

NPC REACTIONS TO PC CLAIMS OF DIVINITY

If even one or two NPCs become convinced of the PCs' divinity, they begin to preach the PCs' godhood far and wide. In fact, a handful of ragtag disciples of the new gods begin to follow or recognize the PCs and make those claims on the PCs' behalf, regardless of the situation or whether the PCs want their status to be made public. Even if the PCs never claim they are rising gods, the news still begins to spread.

As has been suggested elsewhere, the average person will not take a claim of divinity at face value. The following reaction suggestions provide the GM with NPC roleplaying prompts as well as campaign guidance.

SIMPLE DISBELIEF

The average Afterworld NPC reacts to news of new gods by laughing it off and going on with their day. Most people are preoccupied and have their own problems and plans. They don't have time to spend pondering the likelihood that gods, gone so long that they've mostly lost relevance, are returning. If the claim is not pressed, most NPCs will continue with their day and put the news out of their minds. If the claim is pressed (or if the NPC has laughed off the same claim previous times), NPC attitudes may shift from disbelief to antagonistic or fearful rejection.

ANTAGONISTIC OR FEARFUL REJECTION

It's one thing to be perceived as joking about the gods' return. It's another thing entirely to seriously claim the dead gods are coming back, or that new gods are rising. People have built lives for themselves in the Afterworld on the foundation of such an event never occurring. Asking people to change their minds about something so fundamental can trigger a subconscious reaction. Many see the claim as an attack on their relationship with the world, and thus, themselves. People react to attacks, real or imagined, with fear or antagonism.

Even if PCs demonstrate divine abilities, a disbeliever's first reaction is to assume a trick. After all, magic is common. PCs who show divine ability are first presumed to be doing sorcery. While sorcery is potentially wondrous, everyone knows it's not born of divine inspiration.

NPCs who react in this fashion may denounce the PCs, run, or even attack them. More worryingly for PCs is when these NPCs form mobs. Dealing with a mob is almost impossible. Frightened NPCs are

Lyre of Slumber, page 180

Rakshasa, page 168

Night Beast,
gargantuan two-headed
wolf: level 12, Speed
defense as level 7 due
to size; two bite attacks
(one per head) per turn
each inflict 15 points of
damage; howl causes all
within long range who
fail an Intellect defense
roll to lose access to three
divine shifts (if any) for
one minute.

Divine labor, page 142

*Ragtag disciples might
take the form of half-mad
level 1 NPCs who were
beggars or otherwise
down on their luck before
being converted to the
truth of PC divinity.*

*An angry mob doesn't
really have game stats,
but if needed, treat it as a
level 5 amorphous entity
with 100 health. Only
attacks that affect a large
area affect a mob.*

Order of Reconciliation,
page 90

also likely to send for the **Reconciliators**. Reconciliators waste no time with those claiming to speak for (or be) gods. They simply kill such claimants as an example to future imposters.

WATCHFUL HOPE

If PCs (or their NPC disciples) are persuasive enough, or if the PCs are seen to stand up to evil and make a positive difference using divine abilities, some begin to question their own assumptions. What if the PCs really are who they claim? An NPC who reaches this stage is likely to offer aid to PCs on the run from Reconciliators or a crazed mob. They want to believe; they just need a reason to do so.

EXUBERANT CELEBRATION

If the PCs save a village, accomplish several difficult tasks, or convert dozens or hundreds of people, an exuberant celebration soon follows. Feasting, dancing, and religious awe are the order of the day, and PCs who wish to participate are provided full honors. Such a celebration could expand a divine pantheon's reach, but PCs not already a target of ravers, dragons, and Reconciliators are likely to become so afterward.

SETTING DIFFICULTY RATINGS FOR PC GODS

Running a game of *Gods of the Fall* is like running a regular Cypher System game in many ways. Everything presented in *Running the Cypher System*—the importance of the GM, the rules versus the story, setting difficulty ratings, and all the rest—are things you should familiarize yourself with.

Got it? Good. Because next we turn our attention to the unique needs of a *Gods of the Fall* campaign. If you're like most GMs, you probably don't normally run campaigns designed to raise your PCs to godhood. But even if you have, we have advice and tools to make your job easier for this particular setting.

Pay attention to special mechanical considerations when it comes to preparing appropriate challenges for characters who possess divine shifts, especially when setting difficulty ratings for PC gods with access to divine shifts.

With divine shifts and other mechanics at play, situations eventually arise where it will be impossible for low-level foes—like goblins—to hurt a PC god. That's okay. There are different ways you can handle it. One way is to allow the god to wade through the goblins easily—it happens in stories scribed in old religious tomes all the time. Perhaps such a battle need not even be played out mechanically. Alternatively, use a GM intrusion to represent some unusual threat, like the goblins toppling a huge boulder or producing a cypher that can hurt the god PC. And of course, the goblins might not be able to hurt the hero, but what about the poor victims the goblins have captured? Of course, don't raise goblins—or their equivalent—to a serious threat all the time; otherwise, you cheapen a PC's godhood.

Conversely, the PCs might find themselves in a situation where they can't hurt a more powerful NPC or divine creature, at least not in a straight fight. A more-powerful being might not fall to brute force, but defeating them, for the moment, might only require that the PCs interrupt an evil ceremony, sacrifice, or messenger. Other divine creatures have specific weaknesses that, if discovered, can be exploited.

All that said, sometimes you want the PCs to engage in a fight where they feel

NON-DIVINE PC OPTION

GMs who wish to play in the Afterworld with regular player characters, rather than those touched by a divine spark, are free to do so. Simply instruct the players to create characters out of the *Cypher System Rulebook* suitable for a fantasy setting. If you want to use the types presented here, instruct them to ignore the dominion options provided when they create characters. In addition, put aside most of the material found in *this* chapter, except perhaps as additional content to provide color and inspiration for your campaign. Even without a divine dominion, PCs are powerful and potentially epic individuals who might one day challenge the rising NPC gods around them. Adventures of all kinds beckon mortals in the Afterworld toward glory, wealth, fame, and power.



*Running the Cypher
System, page 366*

challenged, but not overwhelmed. That's when the fine art of setting that task difficulty is important. But given how the PC divine shifts (and some NPC and creature divine shifts) distort the normal range, doing so could be challenging to GMs the first few times. We have advice.

DIVINE SHIFTS AND NPCs

NPC gods (and certain special creatures) get divine shifts. Often, divine shifts add to the given creature's total level. For example, a level 5 god of Volcanoes has three divine shifts. When she attempts to burn her way into a level 7 crypt, the NPC does so easily because in this circumstance, her divine shifts give her the equivalence of a level 8 creature. Likewise, her attacks are as a level 8 creature, and defending against her attacks requires that a PC makes a difficulty 8 defense roll, and so on.

However, many creatures and NPCs in this book are presented with divine shifts that enhance only a specified quality, not every task or the overall level of the creature. For these creatures, divine shifts make things harder for the PCs only within the specified realm. For example, if an NPC has three divine shifts that enhance their ability to mentally dominate others, the shifts apply only to that type of attack, not to defenses or other actions.

DIVINE SHIFTS AND REALLY IMPOSSIBLE TASKS

In *Gods of the Fall*, difficulty caps at 15 instead of 10. Difficulty 10 is labeled impossible, but that label is for mortals. For gods, thanks to divine shifts, impossible means something different.

Think of each difficulty above 10 as being one more step beyond impossible. Although a GM would say there's no chance that a mortal could leap 100 feet (30 m) from one rooftop to another, for a god, that might just be difficulty 11. Picking up a massive stone statue isn't something normal characters could do, but for a god of Strength, it might be difficulty 12.

This means divine NPCs can go up to level 15. Levels above 10 represent opponents that only a god would consider taking on: the Hellmaw (level 13); Nulumriel, Empress of the Nightland (level 13); or a Godkiller drifting through the Aether (level 14).

SETTING DIFFICULTY RATINGS BY PC TIER

As described in the *Cypher System Rulebook* under **Balancing Encounters**, the concept of a balanced encounter itself is not a philosophy embraced by the Cypher System. The Cypher System is about fun, not about matching creatures of a particular level to PCs of a particular tier.

That said, an issue can arise for PCs in *Gods of the Fall* if the challenges the PCs face are too easy. The *Cypher System Rulebook* provides guidelines for dealing with this issue. But those guidelines don't necessarily assume that the PCs in question have divine shifts bolstering their raw power level. The following table is provided to supplement the guidance found in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. You could use it to adjust selected difficulties based on PC tier (which presumes the number of divine shifts the PC likely possesses based on their tier). Do *not* adjust the difficulty for every creature or NPC the characters face; otherwise, why be a god in the first place? It's up to you whether the adjustment is due to divine shifts or simply because the challenge you've fashioned is particularly tough.

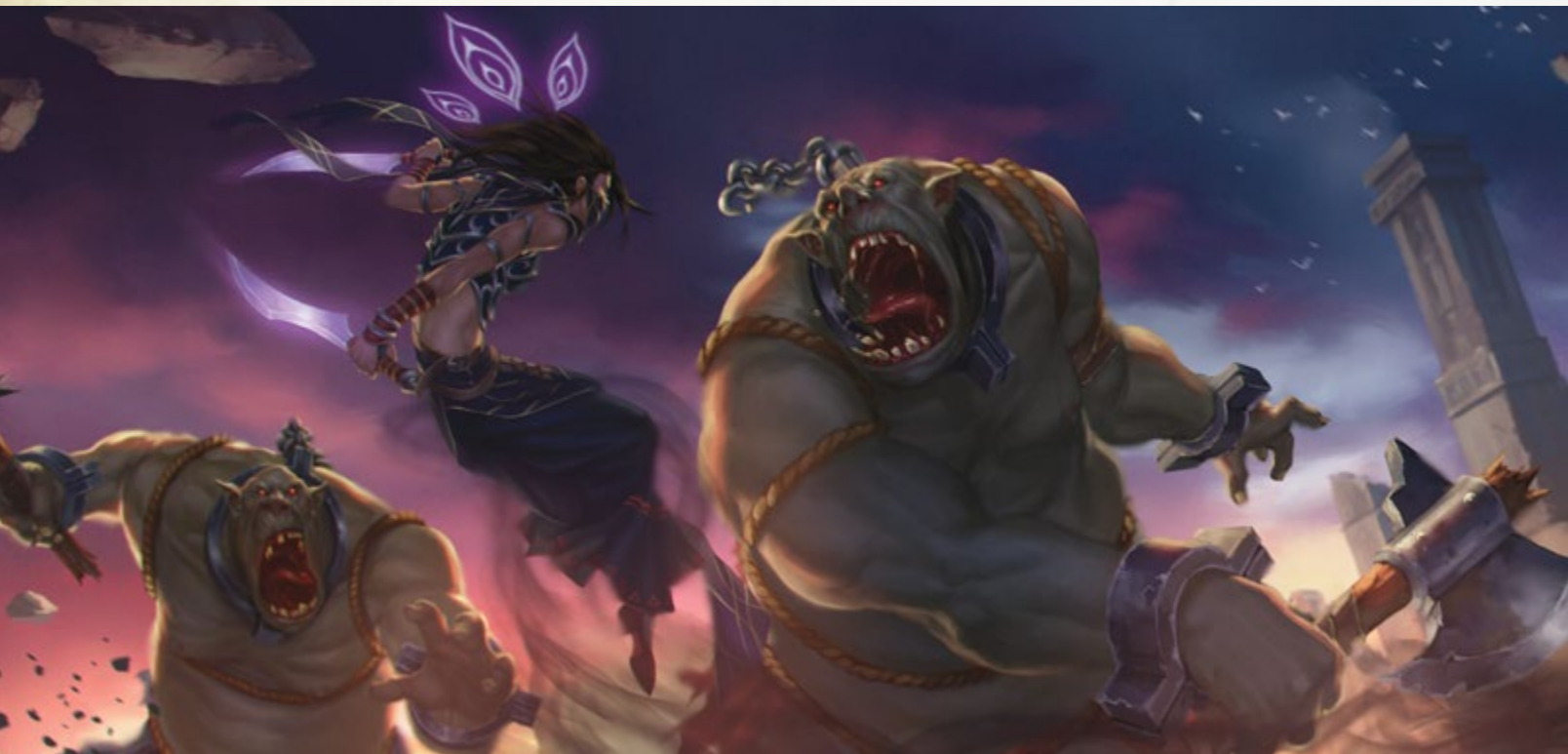
PC Tier	Creature Difficulty/ Level Adjustment
1	—
2	+2 to +3
3	+3 to +4
4	+4 to +5
5	+5 to +7
6	+6 to +9



Balancing Encounters,
page 402



CHARACTER TYPE



Shaper, page 111

Destroyer, page 115

Savior, page 120

Awakening, page 136

Even at first tier, PCs begin to awaken their divine potential.

Despite the grandiose term of “god,” PC abilities—while impressive—are not on the same scale as that of a truly omniscient and all-powerful being.

A player character’s type determines their place in the Afterworld and their relationship with others, and is a scaffolding for the kind of god they might end up becoming. An Afterworld character can choose from four character types: champion, **shaper**, **destroyer**, and **savior**. Dominions are new to the Cypher System, and a character’s choice of type influences—but does not restrict—the divine dominion a character may choose to pursue. If a character begins to **Awaken** to the memory that she was once a god of War, Conflict, Justice, or some similar martial dominion, she might choose champion as her type. If the character would rather pursue a divine dominion associated with memories of being a god of Travel, Hunting, Vengeance, Thievery, or a similar dominion, the character should consider choosing a destroyer as her type. And so on. However, any type is a viable choice, and shouldn’t restrict a character’s choice of dominion.

CHAMPION

Champions are lords of combat. They face challenges head on, without fear. If something challenges a champion, the champion responds with greater force, demonstrating to everyone that drawing out an awakening god of War, god of Bloodshed,

SKILLS

As described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*, no definitive list of skills exists. If your character decides they want to become skilled at riding golden bulls, then they can attempt to become trained in that task (with your GM’s permission).

However, there are a few additional skills unique to the Afterworld that your character may also want to consider, including knowledge of **sorcery**, knowledge of the **Aether**, knowledge of **Soulrest**, and even knowledge of **Elanehtar** and the gods that once resided there, as well as many others.



or god of Justice is something that only the foolish attempt, and then only once.

Individual Role: Champions are physical, action-oriented people. They're more likely to overcome a challenge using force than by other means, and they often take the most straightforward path toward their goals.

Group Role: Champions usually take and deal the most punishment in a dangerous situation. Often it falls on them to protect the other group members from threats. This sometimes means that champions take on leadership roles as well, at least in combat and during other times of danger.

Societal Role: Champions pursuing a divine dominion are more than mere soldiers or mercenaries; they have the potential to be the greatest of leaders or generals. Champions who reach a high-enough tier may even

receive the prayers and approbation of mortal warriors, guards, and soldiers hoping for spiritual direction in wartime.

Advanced Champions: As champions advance, their skill in battle—whether defending themselves or dishing out damage—increases to impressive levels. At higher tiers, they can often take on groups of foes by themselves or stand toe to toe with anyone, even gods.

Background Connection: Your type helps determine the connection you have to the setting. Roll a d20 or choose from the list on page 108 to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. You can also create your own fact. Note that many of the backgrounds provided here are from a time before your character began to Awaken.



CHAMPION, SHAPER, DESTROYER, AND SAVIOR ARE THE FOUR TYPES AVAILABLE TO AFTERWORLD PLAYER CHARACTERS.

CHAMPION STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	10
Speed	10
Intellect	8

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.



Warrior, page 22

Flavors, page 50

Vault of Lithostros, page 76

Raver, page 169

Lord of Swords, page 77

Sea of Clouds, page 70

Trella juice, page 189

BUILDING YOUR CHAMPION

A champion is constructed primarily from the **warrior** type described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. The champion gains the option to choose most, but not all, of the warrior ability choices, plus some derived from select abilities of other types and **flavors** described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*.

At second and higher tier, a champion can always choose an ability from a lower tier instead of adding one from the current tier, and can replace one lower-tier ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Finally, a champion has the option to choose dominion abilities at each tier after the first, as noted below.

The full text of *Cypher System Rulebook* abilities is not replicated here. Please refer to the *Cypher System Rulebook* for details on your ability choices. At each tier, a chart is provided that includes champion abilities available at that tier, plus abilities available from other sources, if any.

FIRST-TIER CHAMPION

You gain the abilities noted for a first-tier warrior, except as follows.

- All champions have the Extra Edge ability.
- All champions choose from the special abilities presented in the First-Tier Champion Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the warrior list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not first-tier warrior abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The champion chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so warrior

CHAMPION BACKGROUND CONNECTION

Roll Background

1	You fought in an arena in the Nightland, but escaped. Some of your friends and enemies fight there yet.
2	Your first memories are walking out of the Vault of Lithostros , covered in blood.
3	You accidentally killed a close friend or sibling in a wrestling match, not knowing your own strength. You left in disgrace.
4	A raver ate your parents, and tried to eat you. You've been training ever since, for the day when you will face that raver again.
5	The Lord of Swords trained you. Since you left his demesne, you learned that someone else challenged and killed him, taking on the mantle of Lord of Swords.
6	You trained in an isolated chapterhouse on an isle in the Sea of Clouds . The cenobites think of you as a brother, but you're a stranger to all others.
7	You dream of combat unending. At first they were like nightmares, but now you've begun to enjoy them.
8	You have no memory of anything before your eighth birthday, when you woke battered and bruised in an orphanage.
9	You have no formal training; you've always instinctively been able to take care of yourself in a fight.
10	You served as a bodyguard to a powerful criminal who now owes you their life.
11	You were a Reconciliator, in service to Nulumriel, until the tasks required began to sicken you.
12	You were captain of the City Watch in one of the Nightland metropolises.
13	When you consume too much ale or strong spirits, you have a hard time avoiding tavern brawls, which led to a series of bad outcomes, even though you usually won.
14	You were away over the sea, working as an assassin for a foreign power. Now you're back, though with one last contract to discharge.
15	Your friend is crippled and can't travel, but the breadth of his scholarship on a variety of topics is without peer.
16	You are addicted to trella juice , but are trying to kick the habit.
17	Your sibling is a famous bard who travels with a well-known troupe around the Afterworld.
18	The one who trained you gave you a sealed book on your graduation, telling you to open it only when all hope was lost.
19	You have lived a full life, with a career and a family. Your family has since died of old age while you stayed young, as if cursed. Now you seek a new path.
20	You're an avatar that fled the Fall and have been in hiding until recently, when you judged it safe enough to show yourself.

abilities such as Overwatch, Pierce, and Quick Draw are not available.

FIRST-TIER CHAMPION ABILITIES

Choose 3 abilities + Extra Edge

Bash

Control the Field

Extra Edge • Preselected

No Need for Weapons

Physical Skills

Practiced in Armor

Swipe

Thrust

Trained Without Armor

Closed Mind (Tier 1 Magic flavor)

Danger Sense (Tier 1 Stealth flavor)

Terrifying Presence (Tier 1 speaker)

SECOND-TIER CHAMPION

You gain the abilities noted for a second-tier warrior, except as follows.

- All champions choose from the special abilities presented in the Second-Tier Champion Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the warrior list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not second-tier warrior abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The champion chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the warrior ability Reload is not available.
- All champions have the option to awaken a **dominion ability** at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two second-tier abilities instead of one.

SECOND-TIER CHAMPION ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Chop

Crush

Mighty Blow

Skill With Attacks

Skill With Defense

Successive Attack

Bloodlust (Tier 2 Combat flavor)

Quick Recovery (Tier 2 explorer)

Wreck (Tier 2 explorer)

THIRD-TIER CHAMPION

You gain the abilities noted for a third-tier warrior, except as follows.

- All champions choose from the special abilities presented in the Third-Tier Champion Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the warrior list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not third-tier warrior abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The champion chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so warrior abilities such as Deadly Aim, Spray, and Trick Shot are not available.
- All champions have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three third-tier abilities instead of two.

First-tier warrior, page 24

First-tier speaker, page 45

Closed Mind, page 57

Danger Sense, page 51

Terrifying Presence, page 46

Second-tier warrior, page 25

Bloodlust, page 60

Quick Recovery, page 41

Wreck, page 41



Dominion ability, page 138



*Third-tier warrior,
page 26*

*Ignore the Pain,
page 41*

Inner Defense, page 52

Stone Breaker, page 42

THIRD-TIER CHAMPION ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Experienced With Armor

Expert Cypher Use

Fury

Lunge

Reaction

Seize the Moment

Slice

Ignore the Pain (Tier 3 explorer)

Inner Defense (Tier 3 Stealth flavor)

Stone Breaker (Tier 3 explorer)

FOURTH-TIER CHAMPION

You gain the abilities noted for a fourth-tier warrior, except as follows.

- All champions choose from the special abilities presented in the Fourth-Tier Champion Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the warrior list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fourth-tier warrior abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The champion chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the warrior abilities Momentum and Snipe are not available.
- All champions have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two fourth-tier abilities instead of one.

FOURTH-TIER CHAMPION ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Capable Warrior

Experienced Defender

Feint

Minor to Major

Opening Gambit

Tough As Nails

Ambusher (Tier 4 Stealth flavor)

Increased Effects (Tier 4 explorer)

FIFTH-TIER CHAMPION

You gain the abilities noted for a fifth-tier warrior, except as follows.

- All champions choose from the special abilities presented in the Fifth-Tier Champion Abilities chart, drawn mainly

from the warrior list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fifth-tier warrior abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The champion chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the warrior ability Arc Spray is not available.

- All champions have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three fifth-tier abilities instead of two.

FIFTH-TIER CHAMPION ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Adroit Cypher Use

Greater Skill With Attacks

Improved Success

Mastery With Armor

Mastery With Defense

Parry

Hard Target (Tier 5 Combat flavor)

SIXTH-TIER CHAMPION

You gain the abilities noted for a sixth-tier warrior, except as follows.

- All champions choose from the special abilities presented in the Sixth-Tier Champion Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the warrior list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not sixth-tier warrior abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The champion chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the warrior ability Shooting Gallery is not available.
- All champions have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two sixth-tier abilities instead of one.

SIXTH-TIER CHAMPION ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Finishing Blow

Magnificent Moment

Slayer

Spin Attack

Weapon and Body



*Fourth-tier warrior,
page 27*

Ambusher, page 53

*Increased Effects,
page 42*

*Sixth-tier warrior,
page 28*

SHAPER

You master magical abilities outside the experience, understanding, and conception of others. You might choose to focus your magic on the mind, fire, force, winter, or some principle, or you might generalize. However you decide to develop your magic, that choice informs the course of your awakening divinity; will you aspire to be a god of Fire, of the Sea, of the Storm, of Secrets, or something else entirely?

Individual Role: Shapers are usually thoughtful, intelligent types. They often think carefully before acting and rely heavily on their magical abilities.

Group Role: Shapers are not powerful in straightforward combat, although they often wield abilities that provide excellent combat support, both offensively and defensively. They sometimes possess abilities that facilitate overcoming challenges. For example, if the group must get through a locked door, a shaper might be able to destroy it or teleport everyone to the other side.

Societal Role: Because a shaper's abilities are most like those of the vanished gods, a shaper is sometimes viewed with awe or fear, depending on the situation. A shaper awakening a divine dominion actually is akin to the vanished gods, of course, so that fear is not unjustified. And as a shaper grows more confident in their awakened divine dominion, they will gain disciples who proclaim the might and glory of their chosen sphere of influence.

Advanced Shapers: Even at low tiers, shaper powers are impressive. Higher-tier shapers can accomplish amazing deeds that reshape matter and the environment around them.

Background Connection: Your type helps determine your connection to the Afterworld. Roll a d20 or choose from the following list to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. You can also create your own fact.

More so than the other types, a shaper's potential dominion might come down to their choice of focus. For instance, a shaper who chooses Bears a Halo of Fire as their focus is almost certainly awakening the powers of a god of Fire, the Sun, or Volcanoes, or is perhaps even angling to be a patron god of Fire Elementals.

Nulumriel, page 30

Bleak Cave, page 76

Zathamus, page 45

SHAPER BACKGROUND CONNECTION

Roll	Background
1	Your sister, ten years your elder, was a shaper. Her tomes and belongings came to you when she disappeared.
2	More by accident than choice, you saved the life of one of Nulumriel's servitors. She says she owes you a favor.
3	You graduated from the Bleak Cave , where a seraph of sin teaches forbidden magic.
4	Despite your magic, thanks to your reckless streak, your debts continue to mount.
5	You bear the skull and tome mark of the evil shaper Zathamus , having served as his apprentice.
6	Your father is the lord of a holdfast in the Ruinscape.
7	You hail from another world. You somehow fell through the Aether and now find yourself in the Afterworld.
8	A cell of the Adherence cult taught you magic, believing you were a reincarnation of a dead god. You never believed—at least, not then.
9	Your best friend is also a shaper. You and she readily share discoveries and secrets.
10	You grew up on stories of mighty warriors and grand battles, but never really developed the strength or stamina to do anything but study from dusty tomes.
11	You were lost for four years in an ancient structure located in the Ruinscape. You don't remember much, but your hair turned completely white.
12	You learned your magic by making a pact with a nameless entity that sometimes appears in your dreams. It promises that it will collect the debt you owe it someday.
13	You recently inherited a small keep and a comfortable sum of golden stars.
14	Whenever you consume too much wine, you lose control of your magic, which manifests as a small goblin trickster.
15	You were a bandit for many years when things were bad, but have turned your back on that life.
16	You've led a fulfilling life as a semi-famous artist and a shaper-in-training for many years.
17	You accidentally summoned a raver when conducting an experiment in your room above an inn. You escaped, but everyone in the inn was slain.
18	Though Nulumriel has outlawed such groups, you belong to a secret lodge of shapers.
19	You carry a magical talisman that you believe is cursed. Whenever you cast it away, it shows up again in your possession within a few days.
20	You're an avatar that fled the Fall and have been in hiding until recently, when you judged it safe enough to join society.

NATURE OF MAGIC

Mortals, gods, shapers, sorcerers, bibliomancers, and even barnsweeps who know a single charm to keep away lice draw their magic from the same transcendental and inscrutable source that underlies all existence. Gods access this magic at a higher level than mortals, and are thus able to achieve effects even more miraculous than spellcraft. Mortals access magic at a lower level, but can still achieve amazing things. Those who access magic by sifting spells from dreams are members of the Guild of Sleep. Practitioners who access magic by brute force of will are called sorcerers. And those who access magic by prizing it out of books call themselves bibliomancers.



Adept, page 29



SHAPER STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	7
Speed	9
Intellect	12

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.

BUILDING YOUR SHAPER

A shaper is constructed primarily from the **adept** type described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. The shaper gains the option to choose most, but not all, of the adept ability choices, plus some abilities derived from select abilities of other types and flavors described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*.

At second and higher tier, a shaper can always choose an ability from a lower tier instead of adding one from the current tier, and can replace one lower-tier ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Finally, a shaper has the option to choose dominion abilities at each tier after the first, as noted below.

The full text of *Cypher System Rulebook* abilities is not replicated here. Please refer to the *Cypher System Rulebook* for details on your ability choices. At each tier, a chart is provided that includes shaper abilities available at that tier, plus abilities available from other sources, if any.

FIRST-TIER SHAPER

You gain the abilities noted for a first-tier adept, except as follows.

- All shapers have the Magic Training ability.
- All shapers choose from the special abilities presented in the First-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the adept list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not first-tier adept abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The shaper chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the adept ability Erase Memories is not available.

FIRST-TIER SHAPER ABILITIES

Choose 3 abilities + Magic Training

Distortion

Far Step

Hedge Magic

Magic Training • Preselected

Onslaught

Practiced With Light Weapons

Push

Resonance Field

Scan

Sculpt Flesh

Shatter

Ward

Knowledge Skills (Tier 1 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

SECOND TIER SHAPER

You gain the abilities noted for a second-tier adept, except as follows.

- All shapers choose from the special abilities presented in the Second-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the adept list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not second-tier adept abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The shaper chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the adept ability Reveal is not available.
- Alternatively, instead of choosing a special ability from the Second-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, shapers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. (They can't choose both a type ability and dominion ability at this tier.) If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose one second-tier ability from the Shaper Abilities chart instead.

SECOND-TIER SHAPER ABILITIES

Choose one ability or dominion ability

Adaptation

Cutting Light

Flash

Hover

Mind Reading

Retrieve Memories

Stasis

Concussive Blast (Tier 2 Magic flavor)

Extra Skill (Tier 2 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

Force Field (Tier 2 Magic flavor)

THIRD-TIER SHAPER

You gain the abilities noted for a third-tier adept, except as follows.

- All shapers choose from the special abilities presented in the Third-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the adept list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not third-tier adept abilities, they are tagged in the chart.
- All shapers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two third-tier abilities instead of one.

THIRD-TIER SHAPER ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Adroit Cypher Use

Barrier

Countermeasures

Energy Protection

Fire and Ice

Sensor

Targeting Eye

Fling (Tier 3 Magic flavor)

First-tier adept, page 30
Knowledge Skills, page 61
Second-tier adept, page 32
Concussive Blast, page 58
Extra Skill, page 62
Force Field, page 58
Third-tier adept, page 33
Fling, page 58
Champion, page 106
Destroyer, page 115
Savior, page 120
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Dominions, page 138

SHAPER ABILITIES VS. DOMINION ABILITIES

Unlike the straightforward abilities of a **champion** or a **destroyer**, a shaper utilizes magic to impress their will upon the world. Magic is a force that defies physics, supersedes common sense, and surpasses mortal imagination. And though mortals can wield it, so did the gods. Thus, shapers (as well as **saviors**) are already a step closer to divinity than other creatures. And it is why at some tiers (second, fourth, and sixth), a shaper must choose between a divine ability and a shaper ability instead of gaining both. That said, a shaper still gains the advantage of divine shifts, assuming he's achieving the required **Obligations** at second tier and beyond, even if a shaper ability is chosen at a particular tier instead of a **dominion** ability.



When a shaper uses *Exile*, the target is sent into the Aether.

Aether, page 85



Fourth-tier adept, page 34

Specialization, page 62

Fifth-tier adept, page 35

FOURTH-TIER SHAPER

You gain the abilities noted for a fourth-tier adept, except as follows.

- All shapers choose from the special abilities presented in the Fourth-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the adept list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fourth-tier adept abilities, they are tagged in the chart.
- Alternatively, instead of choosing a special ability from the Fourth-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, shapers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. (They can't choose both a type ability and dominion ability at this tier.) If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose one fourth-tier ability from the Shaper Abilities chart instead.

FOURTH-TIER SHAPER ABILITIES

Choose one ability or dominion ability

Exile

Invisibility

Matter Cloud

Mind Control

Projection

Rapid Processing

Regeneration

Reshape

Slay

Wormhole

Specialization (Tier 4 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

FIFTH-TIER SHAPER

You gain the abilities noted for a fifth-tier adept, except as follows.

- All shapers choose from the special abilities presented in the Fifth-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the adept list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fifth-tier adept abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The shaper chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the adept abilities Create or Knowing the Unknown are not available (although they are available as dominion abilities at this tier).
- All shapers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described

in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two fifth-tier abilities instead of one.

FIFTH-TIER SHAPER ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Absorb Energy

Concussion

Conjuration

Divide Your Mind

Dust to Dust

Master Cypher Use

Teleportation

True Senses

SIXTH-TIER SHAPER

You gain the abilities noted for a sixth-tier adept, except as follows.

- All shapers choose from the special abilities presented in the Sixth-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the adept list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not sixth-tier adept abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The shaper chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the adept abilities Control Weather, Earthquake, and Usurp Cypher are not available (although they are available as dominion abilities at this tier).
- Alternatively, instead of choosing a special ability from the Sixth-Tier Shaper Abilities chart, shapers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. (They can't choose both a type ability and dominion ability at this tier.) If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose one sixth-tier ability from the Shaper Abilities chart instead.

SIXTH-TIER SHAPER ABILITIES

Choose one ability or dominion ability

Move Mountains

Traverse the Worlds

Relocate (Tier 6 Magic flavor)

DESTROYER

You fearlessly face the unknown, sometimes for the mere joy of exploring exotic places and discovering new things, other times to bring down quarry or acquire something valuable. Your prey might be a ravaging beast, a child-stealing criminal, a scheming dragon, or merely someone with the bad luck to have a bounty on their head. You prefer to fight at a remove with ranged weapons or from ambush to achieve your ends, as is appropriate for an aspiring god of the Hunt, Archery, Thieves, or perhaps even of Assassination.

Individual Role: Although destroyers are often well studied so they know all the habits of their prey or the possible dangers a distant area might offer, they are first and foremost interested in action. They face grave dangers and terrible obstacles as a routine part of life.

Group Role: Sometimes destroyers work alone, especially those who specialize in assassination. Far more often they operate in teams with other characters. The destroyer frequently leads, blazing the trail. However, they're also likely to stop and investigate anything intriguing they stumble upon.

Societal Role: A destroyer awakening to a divine dominion is more than a simple tracker or explorer. In time, a destroyer has the potential to become a paragon of the Hunt, of Stealth, or of Night.

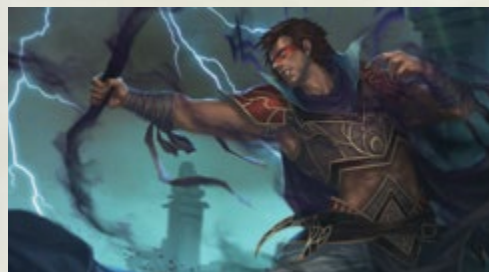
Advanced Destroyers: Higher-tier destroyers gain more skills, some combat abilities, and a number of abilities that allow them to deal with danger. In short, they become more and more well-rounded, able to deal with any challenge.

Background Connection: Your type helps determine the connection you have to the setting. Roll a d20 or choose from the list on page 116 to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. You can also create your own fact.



*Sixth-tier adept,
page 36*

Relocate, page 59



DESTROYER BACKGROUND CONNECTION

Roll	Background
1	You were in the Tranquil . You left, and now have a price on your head.
2	Your mother was slain by a mysterious assailant when you were a child, leaving you a moderate fortune and a thirst for revenge.
3	A successful thief, you've burgled many locations, but now worry you've triggered some kind of curse—a shadow sometimes follows you, getting closer each time it appears.
4	You were forced out of a position of authority by allegations of corruption, which you deny.
5	Your parents belong to the Adherence , a much-maligned cult that keeps faith in the old, dead gods. You've endured and suffered much for their belief.
6	You received the highest commendation possible when you served as a scout during several small wars.
7	You led a small team of thieves, until the Hidden Hand discovered your exploits, forcing you to disband or die.
8	You apprenticed with a shaper, but she died in the Delirium , leaving you to forage on your own.
9	Your childhood friend has assumed a major role in the government of a Nightland nation opposing the rule of the dragon.
10	You taught your skills to those who could pay for the last seven years.
11	You were imprisoned for crimes of theft and larceny, but maintain you were justified in what you did.
12	You took a bounty to assassinate an unnamed target, only to discover that target was your lover.
13	Your brother says he dreams of becoming the god of Secrets and the Night.
14	You (secretly) remain as an agent in good standing of the Tranquil.
15	You found a map that provides directions to one of the odd buried structures of the Ruinscape.
16	Your greatest discovery so far was stolen by your arch-rival.
17	Your parents were cruel and sadistic, and despite their influential positions, you fled home at an early age.
18	You're a semi-famous guide, about which bards have begun to sing tales for drinks.
19	You've befriended a myrfalcon (a giant falcon) that sometimes appears to check up on you.
20	You're an avatar that fled the Fall and have been in hiding until recently, when you judged it safe enough to join society.

The Tranquil, page 36

Adherence, page 91

Hidden Hand, page 41

Delirium, page 18

Myrfalcon (giant falcon): level 5; flies a long distance each round



Explorer, page 38

DESTROYER STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	10
Speed	9
Intellect	9

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.

BUILDING YOUR DESTROYER

A destroyer is constructed primarily from the **explorer** type described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. The destroyer gains the option to choose most, but not all, of the explorer ability choices, plus some abilities derived from select warrior abilities and flavors.

At second and higher tier, a destroyer can always choose an ability from a lower tier instead of adding one from the current tier, and can replace one lower-tier ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Finally, a destroyer has the option to choose dominion abilities at each tier after the first, as noted below.

The full text of *Cypher System Rulebook* abilities is not replicated here. Please refer to the *Cypher System Rulebook* for details on your ability choices. At each tier, a chart is provided that includes explorer abilities available at that tier, plus abilities available from other sources, if any.

FIRST-TIER DESTROYER

You gain the abilities noted for a first-tier explorer, except as follows.

- All destroyers have the Stealth Skills ability.
- All destroyers choose from the special abilities presented in the First-Tier Destroyer Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the explorer list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not first-tier explorer abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The destroyer chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so explorer abilities such as Endurance, Muscles of Iron, and No Need for Weapons are not available.

FIRST-TIER DESTROYER ABILITIES

Choose 3 abilities + Stealth Skills

Block

Danger Sense

Decipher

Extra Edge

Fleet of Foot

Physical Skills

Practiced in Armor

Practiced With All Weapons

Surging Confidence

Trained Without Armor

Erase Memories (Tier 1 adept)

Goad (Tier 1 Stealth flavor)

Overwatch (Tier 1 warrior)

Pierce (Tier 1 warrior)

Quick Draw (Tier 1 warrior)

Spin Identity (Tier 1 speaker)

Stealth Skills (Tier 1 Stealth Flavor) • Preselected

Travel Skills (Tier 1 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

SECOND TIER DESTROYER

You gain the abilities noted for a second-tier explorer, except as follows.

- All destroyers have the Sense Ambush ability.
- All destroyers choose from the special abilities presented in the Second-Tier Destroyer Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the explorer list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not second-tier explorer abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The destroyer chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so explorer abilities such as Enable Others, Quick Recovery, and Wreck are not available.
- All destroyers have the option to awaken a **dominion** ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three second-tier abilities instead of two.

SECOND-TIER DESTROYER ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + Sense Ambush + dominion ability

Escape

Eye for Detail

Hand to Eye

Investigative Skills

Range Increase

Skill With Defense

Stand Watch

Travel Skills

Extra Skill (Tier 2 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

Find an Opening (Tier 2 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

Get Away (Tier 2 Stealth flavor)

Reload (Tier 2 warrior)

Sense Ambush (Tier 2 Stealth Flavor) • Preselected
Surprise Strike (Tier 2 Stealth flavor)

THIRD-TIER DESTROYER

You gain the abilities noted for a third-tier explorer, except as follows.

- All destroyers choose from the special abilities presented in the Third-Tier Destroyer Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the explorer list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not third-tier explorer abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The destroyer chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so explorer abilities such as Ignore the Pain and Stone Breaker are not available.
- All destroyers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three third-tier abilities instead of two.

THIRD-TIER DESTROYER ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Controlled Fall

Experienced With Armor

Expert Cypher Use

Resilience

 First-tier explorer, page 39

Erase Memories, page 31

Goad, page 51

Overwatch, page 25

Pierce, page 25

Quick Draw, page 25

Spin Identity, page 46

Stealth Skills, page 51

Travel Skills, page 41

Second-tier explorer, page 41

Extra Skill, page 62

Find an Opening, page 51

Get Away, page 51

Reload, page 26

Sense Ambush, page 52

Surprise Strike, page 52

Dominions, page 138

 Third-tier explorer, page 41



Deadly Aim, page 26

Evanesce, page 52

Flex Skill, page 62

From the Shadows, page 52

Subterfuge, page 53

Trick Shot, page 26

Fourth-tier explorer, page 42

Daring Escape, page 52

Debilitating Strike, page 53

Preternatural Senses, page 53

Feint, page 27

Psychosis, page 48

Snipe, page 27

Momentum, page 27

Specialization, page 62

Tumbling Moves, page 53

Run and Fight

Seize Opportunity

Skill With Attacks

Think Your Way Out

Wrest From Chance

Deadly Aim (Tier 3 warrior)

Evanesce (Tier 3 Stealth flavor)

Flex Skill (Tier 3 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

From the Shadows (Tier 3 Stealth flavor)

Subterfuge (Tier 3 Stealth flavor)

Trick Shot (Tier 3 warrior)

FOURTH-TIER DESTROYER

You gain the abilities noted for a fourth-tier explorer, except as follows.

- All destroyers choose from the special abilities presented in the Fourth-Tier Destroyer Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the explorer list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fourth-tier explorer abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The destroyer chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so explorer abilities such as Capable Warrior, Runner, and Tough as Nails are not available.
- All destroyers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two fourth-tier abilities instead of one.

FOURTH-TIER DESTROYER ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Expert

Increased Effects

Read the Signs

Daring Escape (Tier 4 Stealth flavor)

Debilitating Strike (Tier 4 Stealth flavor)

Preternatural Senses (Tier 4 Stealth flavor)

Feint (Tier 4 speaker)

Psychosis (Tier 4 speaker)

Snipe (Tier 4 warrior)

Momentum (Tier 4 warrior)

Specialization (Tier 4 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

Tumbling Moves (Tier 4 Stealth flavor)

FIFTH-TIER DESTROYER

You gain the abilities noted for a fifth-tier explorer, except as follows.

- All destroyers choose from the special abilities presented in the Fifth-Tier Destroyer Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the explorer list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fifth-tier explorer abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The destroyer chooses only from the abilities on the





chart, so explorer abilities such as Jump Attack, Mask, and Take Command are not available. (Mask is available as a dominion ability at this tier.)

- All destroyers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three fifth-tier abilities instead of two.

FIFTH-TIER DESTROYER ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Adroit Cypher Use

Mastery With Defense

Parry

Physically Gifted

Vigilant

Arc Spray (Tier 5 warrior)

Assassinate (Tier 5 Stealth flavor)

Multiple Skills (Tier 5 Skills and Knowledge flavor)

Riposte (Tier 5 Stealth flavor)

Uncanny Luck (Tier 5 Stealth Flavor)

SIXTH-TIER DESTROYER

You gain the abilities noted for a sixth-tier explorer, except as follows.

- All destroyers choose from the special abilities presented in the Sixth-Tier Destroyer Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the explorer list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not sixth-tier explorer abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The destroyer chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the explorer ability Spin Attack is not available.
- All destroyers have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three sixth-tier abilities instead of two.

SIXTH-TIER DESTROYER ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Again and Again

Greater Skill With Attacks

Mastery With Armor

Wild Vitality

Exploit Advantage (Tier 6 Stealth flavor)

Shooting Gallery (Tier 6 warrior)

Spring Away (Tier 6 Stealth flavor)



Fifth-tier explorer, page 42

Arc Spray, page 27

Assassinate, page 53

Multiple Skills, page 62

Riposte, page 53

Uncanny Luck, page 53

Sixth-tier explorer, page 43

Exploit Advantage, page 53

Shooting Gallery, page 28

Spring Away, page 53

SAVIOR

You soothe souls with words and deeds. You change the world with your actions, serving as an example to some, and a fierce opponent to those who work against your ideals. You influence people to do what you want by merely suggesting it, or by example. Such authority is exactly what could be expected of an aspiring god of Health, Healing, Wealth, or Cities—or for those with a different way of looking at things, of Lies, Rebellion, or Riot.

Individual Role: Saviors are smart and charismatic. They like people and, more important, understand them. This helps saviors get others to do what needs to be done, or at least, what the savior wants them to do.

Group Role: The savior is often the face of the group, serving as the person who speaks for all and negotiates with others. Combat and action are not a savior's strong suits, so other characters sometimes have to defend the savior in times of danger.

Societal Role: A savior awakening to a divine dominion is more than a simple political or religious leader (or con artist or criminal), though they may begin their careers in that fashion. As a savior's abilities grow, they have the potential to draw thousands to their cause, proclaiming them as their god, a god whose words redeem a mortal's soul, or damn it.

Advanced Saviors: Higher-tier saviors use their abilities to control and manipulate people as well as aid and nurture their friends. They can talk their way out of danger and even use their words as weapons.

Background Connection: Your type helps determine the connection you have to the setting. Roll a d20 or choose from the list below to determine a specific fact about your background that provides a connection to the rest of the world. You can also create your own fact.

Order of Souls, page 77

Soulrest, page 84

Society of Moneylenders, page 39

Somorraah, page 45

Baron Uttama, page 40

Central Market, page 27

Zenia, page 136

SAVIOR BACKGROUND CONNECTION

Roll	Background
1	You are the seventh child of the seventh child of two generations of traveling minstrels.
2	Your twin disappeared seven years ago, but sometimes you still see their face in your dreams, mocking you.
3	As a former member of the Order of Souls , you know where at least one portal to Soulrest (where dead souls go) is located.
4	You have a hard time admitting that your temper got you expelled from the Society of Moneylenders .
5	You can remember only as far back as about a week ago, when you opened your eyes in a Nightland bar.
6	You dream of a powerful creature in the guise of a tiger almost every night. Though it is sometimes frightening, you eventually decided it was your spirit guide leading you to a great destiny.
7	You grew up in extreme poverty, among criminals. You still have some connections with those in the old neighborhood.
8	You accidentally killed a mugger who accosted you in the street for your coins on your eighteenth birthday. You hid the body, but worry your deed will one day catch up with you.
9	As the child of a diplomat, you've always enjoyed the finest things, including an enviable education.
10	You saved a child from drowning who turned out to be related to an important political figure in Somorraah .
11	Having once done Baron Uttama a favor, he still owes you.
12	You grew up on a farm, happy and content, until raiders murdered everyone but you.
13	Among your collection of souvenirs garnered from the Central Market in Corso is a coin stamped with the face of the old god Zenia , who sometimes talks to you.
14	You married young. Now your ex-spouse is your bitterest rival, and you still can't understand how it happened. (But you suspect a curse.)
15	A dragon stole away your betrothed.
16	You know of a secret route into the Eye of Elanehtar, which was given to you by a hooded woman in a tavern.
17	You put money into a local business, and still enjoy a modest income from that investment.
18	You provided care for a lame creature of a kind you'd never seen before, saving its life. Now you're worried it's responsible for a recent spate of disappearances.
19	A rival has accused you of theft and guile, which has tarnished your reputation among your peers.
20	You're an avatar that fled the Fall and have been in hiding until recently, when you judged it safe enough to show yourself.

SAVIOR STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	8
Speed	9
Intellect	11

You get 6 additional points to divide among your stat Pools however you wish.

BUILDING YOUR SAVIOR

A savior is constructed primarily from the **speaker** type described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. The savior gains the option to choose most, but not all, of the speaker ability choices, plus some abilities derived from select abilities of other types and flavors described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*.

At second and higher tier, a savior can always choose an ability from a lower tier instead of adding one from the current tier, and can replace one lower-tier ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Finally, a savior has the option to choose dominion abilities at each tier after the first, as noted below.

The full text of *Cypher System Rulebook* abilities is not replicated here. Please refer to the *Cypher System Rulebook* for details on your ability choices. At each tier, a chart is provided that includes savior abilities available at that tier, plus abilities available from other sources, if any.

FIRST-TIER SAVIOR

You gain the abilities noted for a first-tier speaker, except as follows.

- All saviors have the Enthrall ability.
- All saviors choose from the special abilities presented in the First-Tier Savior Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the speaker list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not first-tier speaker abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The savior chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so speaker abilities such as Spin Identity and Terrifying Presence are not available.

FIRST-TIER SAVIOR ABILITIES

Choose 3 abilities + Enthrall

Aggression
Encouragement

Enthrall • Preselected

Erase Memories
Fast Talk
Interaction Skills
Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons
Understanding

Healing Touch (Tier 1 Works Miracles focus)

Magic Training (Tier 1 Magic flavor)

Mental Link (Tier 1 Magic flavor)

Speaker, page 44

First-tier speaker, page 45

Healing Touch, page 179

Magic Training, page 31

Mental Link, page 57

A savior who chooses the Works Miracles focus and takes Healing Touch as a type ability always restores 6 points to a creature instead of rolling 1d6.





*Third-tier speaker,
page 47*

Gambler, page 52

Inner Defense, page 52

*Saviors who take the
Gambler ability refer to it
as Bend Fate.*



*Second-tier speaker,
page 46*

Enable Others, page 41

Reveal, page 33



*Fourth-tier speaker,
page 48*

Expert, page 42

Outwit, page 53

*Saviors who take
Anticipate Attack
refer to it as Aura of
Glory. When the ability
is active, the savior
gleams of divine glory.*

SECOND-TIER SAVIOR

You gain the abilities noted for a second-tier speaker, except as follows.

- All saviors choose from the special abilities presented in the Second-Tier Savior Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the speaker list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not second-tier speaker abilities, they are tagged in the chart.
- All saviors have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two second-tier abilities instead of one.

SECOND-TIER SAVIOR ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Babel
Impart Ideal
Practiced in Armor
Skills
Speed Recovery
Unexpected Betrayal
Enable Others (Tier 2 explorer)
Reveal (Tier 2 adept)

THIRD-TIER SAVIOR

You gain the abilities noted for a third-tier speaker, except as follows.

- All saviors choose from the special abilities presented in the Third-Tier Savior Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the speaker list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not third-tier speaker abilities, they are tagged in the chart.
- All saviors have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three third-tier abilities instead of two.

THIRD-TIER SAVIOR ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Accelerate
Blend In
Discerning Mind
Expert Cypher Use
Grand Deception
Mind Reading
Oratory
Telling
Gambler (Tier 3 Stealth flavor)
Inner Defense (Tier 3 Stealth flavor)

FOURTH-TIER SAVIOR

You gain the abilities noted for a fourth-tier speaker, except as follows.

- All saviors choose from the special abilities presented in the Fourth-Tier Savior Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the speaker list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fourth-tier speaker abilities, they are tagged in the chart. The savior chooses only from the abilities on the chart, so the speaker ability Feint is not available.
- All saviors have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two fourth-tier abilities instead of one.

FOURTH-TIER SAVIOR ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Anticipate Attack
Confounding Banter
Heightened Skills
Psychosis
Quick Wits
Read the Signs
Suggestion
Expert (Tier 4 explorer)
Outwit (Tier 4 Stealth flavor)

FIFTH-TIER SAVIOR

You gain the abilities noted for a fifth-tier speaker, except as follows.

- All saviors choose from the special abilities presented in the Fifth-Tier Savior Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the speaker list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not fifth-tier speaker abilities, they are tagged in the chart.
- All saviors have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose three fifth-tier abilities instead of two.

FIFTH-TIER SAVIOR ABILITIES

Choose 2 abilities + dominion ability

Adroit Cypher Use

Experienced With Armor

Flee

Font of Inspiration

Foul Aura

Skill With Attack

Stimulate

Take Command (Tier 5 explorer)

SIXTH-TIER SAVIOR

You gain the abilities noted for a sixth-tier speaker, except as follows.

- All saviors choose from the special abilities presented in the Sixth-Tier Savior Abilities chart, drawn mainly from the speaker list, but occasionally from alternate types and additional flavors. Where those abilities are not sixth-tier speaker abilities, they are tagged in the chart.
- All saviors have the option to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, as described in chapter 12. If you choose not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, choose two sixth-tier abilities instead of one.

SIXTH-TIER SAVIOR ABILITIES

Choose one ability + dominion ability

Battle Management

Inspiring Success

Shatter Mind

True Senses

Word of Command

Thief's Luck (Tier 6 Stealth flavor)



Fifth-tier speaker, page 49

Take Command, page 42

Sixth-tier speaker, page 49

Thief's Luck, page 53

Saviors who take Flee refer to it as Hellish Screech.



CHAPTER 11

CHARACTER DESCRIPTOR AND FOCUS



Descriptors, page 64

Lawful, page 126

Chaotic, page 125

Humble, page 126

DESCRIPTORS

The *Cypher System Rulebook* details fifty descriptors. You can choose from any of the descriptors there, regardless of type, or from one of the new descriptors presented in this chapter.

The *Cypher System Rulebook* selection of descriptors is robust and likely suitable for most players. That said, descriptors like **Lawful**, **Chaotic**, **Beneficent**, **Humble**, and so on provide those players with an opportunity to create a divine character with traits they might not be able to replicate using the *Cypher System Rulebook* alone, because they were designed with a divine character in mind. And of course, the racial descriptors—sleen and taran—are new to the setting.

NEW DESCRIPTORS

Beneficent

Chaotic

Gluttonous

Humble

Lawful

Wary

RACIAL DESCRIPTORS

Sleen

Taran

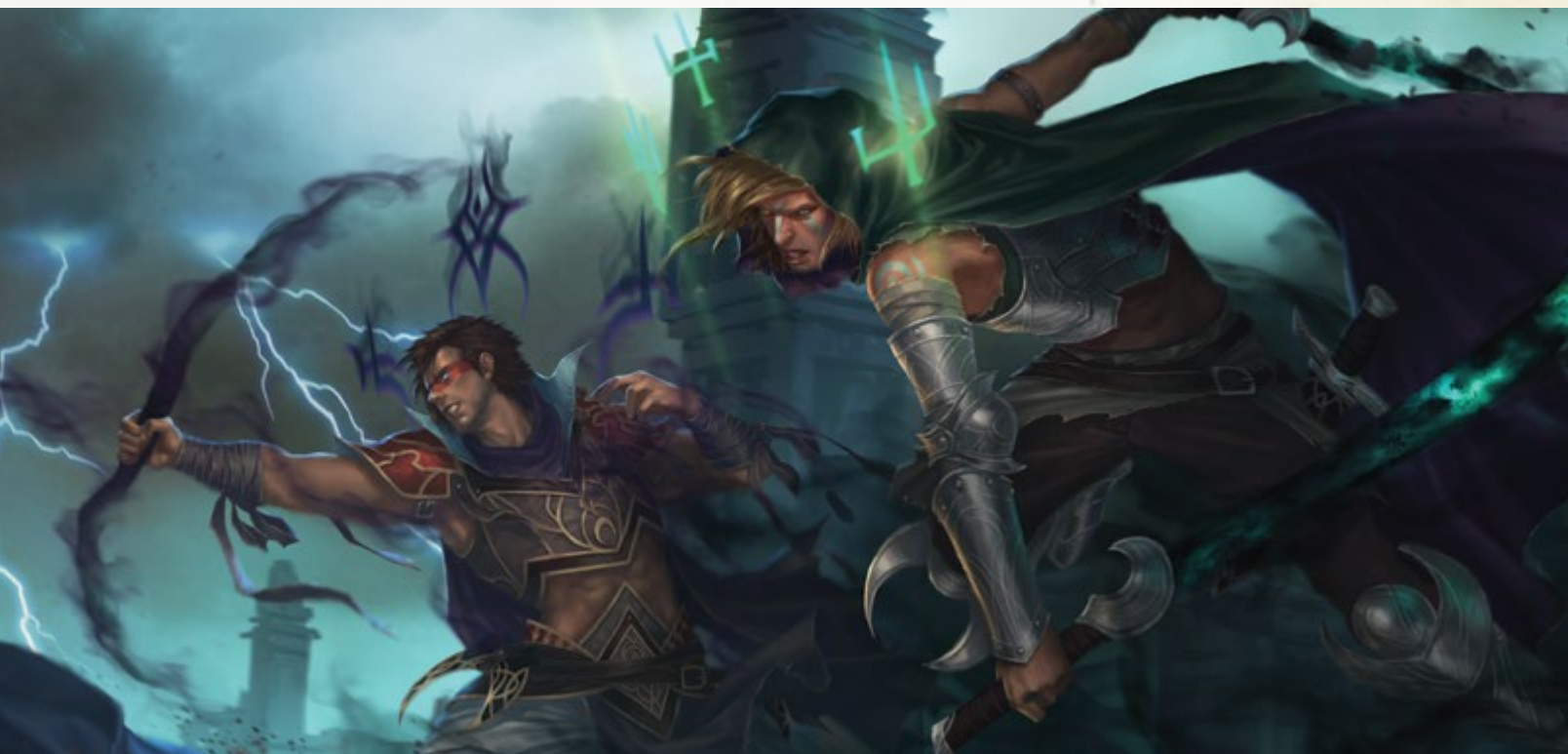
BENEFCENT

Helping others is your calling. It's what you live for. Others delight in your outgoing and charitable nature, and you delight in their happiness. You're at your best when you're aiding people, either by explaining how they can best overcome a challenge, or by demonstrating it yourself.

You gain the following characteristics:

Generous: Allies who have spent the last day with you add +1 to their recovery rolls.

THE CYPHER SYSTEM RULEBOOK DETAILS FIFTY DESCRIPTORS. YOU CAN CHOOSE FROM ANY OF THE DESCRIPTORS THERE, REGARDLESS OF YOUR TYPE, OR FROM ONE OF THE NEW DESCRIPTORS PRESENTED IN THIS CHAPTER.



Altruistic: If you're standing next to a creature that takes damage, you can intercede and take 1 point of the damage yourself. If you have Armor, it does not provide a benefit when you use this ability.

Skill: You're trained in all tasks related to pleasant social interaction, putting other people at ease, and gaining trust.

Helpful: Whenever you choose to help another character, that character gains the benefit as if you were trained even if you are not trained or specialized in the task being attempted.

Inability: While you are alone, the difficulty of all Intellect and Speed tasks is increased by one step.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure: From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. Even though you didn't know most of the other PCs beforehand, you invited yourself along on their quest.
2. You saw the PCs struggling to overcome a problem, and selflessly joined them to help.

3. You're pretty sure the PCs will fail without you.

4. You believe that to fulfill one of the **Seven Prophecies**, you must join the other PCs.

CHAOTIC

Danger doesn't mean much to you, mainly because you don't think much about repercussions. In fact, you enjoy sowing surprises, just to see what will happen. The more unexpected the results, the happier you are. Sometimes you are particularly manic, though for the sake of your companions, you restrain your actions that you *know* will lead to disaster.

You gain the following characteristics:

Tumultuous: +4 to your Speed Pool.

Skill: You are trained in Intellect defense actions.

Chaotic: Once after each 10-hour recovery roll, you can reroll a die roll of your choice if you don't like the first result. When you do, regardless of the outcome, the GM presents you with a **GM intrusion**.

Inability: Your body is a bit worn from occasional excesses. The difficulty of your

Seven Prophecies,
page 95

Before the Fall, the god of Chaos had no proper name. He, she, or it was simply called Chaos, and it was the job of the other gods to banish it.



GM Intrusion,
page 219

*A humble god can accomplish far more than a humble mortal.
~Afterworld saying*

Might defense tasks is increased by one step.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. Another PC recruited you while you were on your best behavior, before realizing how chaotic you actually were.
2. You have reason to believe that being with the other PCs will help you gain more control over your episodes of erratic behavior.
3. Another PC released you from some kind of captivity, and to thank them, you volunteered to help them on their quest.
4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.

GLUTTONOUS

You appreciate the value of money, fine food and drink, and other pleasures. Why feign moderation? Life is short. Of course, you recognize that pursuing pleasure to the exclusion of *all* else will eventually lead to a pleasure-less existence, and probably a short one. But you're willing to push things to the edge for the sake of one more gold coin, glass of wine, or night with a cheery companion.

You gain the following characteristics:

Skill: You are trained in persuasion.

Skill: You are trained in tasks related to the exchange of money, including haggling.

Skill: You are trained in stealth and tasks directly related to theft.

Skill: You are specialized in eating and keeping down copious amounts of food and drink, which also counts as being trained in resisting the effects of poison.

Inability: Years of overdoing it have taken their toll. The difficulty of Might defense rolls is one step higher for you.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You overstayed your welcome at a rich friend's home, and needed someplace to go.
2. Your greed can be sated only by taking on dangerous tasks in return for great rewards.
3. You dreamed that by becoming a god in the PC's pantheon, you could one day rise above your petty greed. That, or enshrine it as a divine attribute.
4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.

HUMBLE

You're not flashy or bold, because for you, humility is the greatest virtue. Which means you are quiet, watchful, and don't often directly gainsay others. On the other hand, you're not afraid to do what's right, or act boldly when necessary. It's just that afterward, it's not in your nature to claim responsibility for saving the day. When others celebrate, you prefer to seclude yourself and meditate on the next challenge.

You gain the following characteristics:

Quiet but Talented: You get 4 additional points to divide among your stat Pools.

Cautious: You're trained in Intellect defense actions.

Soft-spoken: When you apply Effort when making a roll of any kind, you must spend 1 extra point from your Intellect Pool.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. Against your initial inclination, you accepted an invitation to join the team.
2. Authorities within the chapterhouse or similar organization to which you belonged asked you to help the PCs out with an important task.
3. The solution to a problem came to you, and it was so elegant that you had to share it, even though that meant breaking your seclusion.
4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.

LAWFUL

You live by a code. It might be your own set of rules, rules handed down to you by a chapterhouse to which you once belonged, or the law of whatever realm you inhabit. The important thing is that you're not governed by passions, but by your steadfast confidence that to follow the law is to live in grace.

You gain the following characteristics:

Justified: You are an enthusiastic upholder of the law. You are trained in any non-combat task when you are engaged in an activity that directly upholds the law.

Skill: You are trained in tasks related to knowing and understanding the laws of the land.

Inability: You can't abide law-breaking, especially when you're the culprit, however

unjust those laws might be. While engaged in any activity that breaks a law, the difficulty of all Intellect-based tasks is increased by one step.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You heard what the other PCs were up to and knew they could use your expertise.
2. You gathered a group after long consideration of everyone's qualifications to accomplish a lawful task.
3. You agreed to provide money toward the upkeep of a chapterhouse and find yourself in need of coin.
4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.

SLEEN

Sleen are slender humanoids with sinuous bodies covered in mottled scales. Their heads and tapering tails are distinctively serpentlike, and forked tongues flicker from their mouths. They're regarded as sneaky and magical, and are popularly conceived of as a collection of thieves, sorcerers, or both. Sleen do not have a homeland, but instead live among humans, alone or in small conclaves, getting by selling spells, thieving, and sometimes, adventuring.

Long ago, sleen ruled an empire that encompassed the world. But the mental abilities and machines they relied upon failed, and their empire crumbled. Or so sleen legends claim. Modern sleen point to the ancient structures found in the **Ruinscape** as evidence of their primordial world-spanning empire. However, sleen admit among themselves that many things in the Ruinscape defy their understanding, and some describe an even more convoluted origin.

Sleen revered the divine pantheon before its Fall, primarily gods with dominions that included Magic, Secrecy, and Thievery.

You gain the following characteristics:

Crafty: +2 to your Intellect Pool.

Long-Lived: Your natural lifespan (unless cut short) is five hundred years.

Skill: You are trained in tasks related to one of the following: casting spells (or curses), stealth, or any three knowledge tasks.

Inability: The difficulty of your Might tasks is one step higher.

Additional Equipment: You have a light weapon—a dagger—that you can easily conceal on your person (it provides an asset to such tasks of concealment).

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You found the PCs lost in the back alleys of a large city you call home, showed them to safety, and joined them.
2. You want to learn more of your craft, and the PCs offered to take you where ancient knowledge could be retrieved.
3. Your conclave was burned out by a rival group, and you gathered the PCs along the way as you prepare your vengeance.
4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.

Typical sleen starting age for PCs is thirty-five years of age.

You can choose to be a sleen without taking this descriptor and still gain the appearance and cultural background of a sleen.

Ruinscape, page 52



Tarans hold the Cerulean Peaks to be sacred ground. The largest taran settlements are found there, but tarans may originally come from another realm entirely, someplace lost in the Aether.

Cerulean Peaks, page 71

Sea of Clouds, page 70

Aether, page 85

Because tarans are trained in perception and find all Intellect tasks one step more difficult, they don't find perception any easier or harder than other creatures.

You can choose to be a taran without taking this descriptor and still gain the appearance and cultural background of a taran.

SEVEN PROPHECIES AND COMPLEMENTARY DESCRIPTORS

Some characters could choose to define themselves in whole or in part by one of the Seven Prophecies. A few complementary descriptor suggestions are provided below. However, a character could choose nearly any descriptor and still aspire to fulfill one or more of the prophecies.

Prophecy

Law
Liberation
Understanding
Salvation
Restoration
Love
Ruin

Descriptor

Lawful, Driven, Skeptical
Wary, Brash, Perceptive
Inquisitive, Learned, Intelligent
Beneficent, Honorable, Strong-Willed
Dispassionate, Kind, Creative
Humble, Spiritual, Impulsive
Chaotic, Cruel, Doomed

TARAN

Tarans are hulking humanoids who stand between 7 to 9 feet (2 to 3 m) tall on average. In addition to their size, tarans are distinguishable from humans by their lack of eyes; tarans sense by vibration, scent, and smell. Most are warriors or hunters, as sturdy and hard as the **Cerulean Peaks** where most of their kind still lives. They're

also as intractable as those same peaks, fiercely proud, and certain that they are descended from gods even older than those who fell with Elanehtar. Tarans who come to the lands where humans dwell do so as mercenaries, criminals, or slaves destined for a short life of brute labor. Humans often denigrate taran intelligence, but as tarans tell it, that's only because humans are intimidated by taran stature.

Tarans worshipped a single patron god of their species called Lelana, the Grandmother of the Skies. Lelana was said to be more than 50 feet (20 m) in height. According to taran stories, Lelana survived the Fall and lies sleeping at the bottom of the **Sea of Clouds**.

Mighty: +4 to your Might Pool.

Alternate Senses: You are not hindered in darkness or by effects that would blind other creatures.

Skill: You are trained in Might defense actions.

Skill: You are trained in perception tasks.

Inability: The difficulty of all your Intellect tasks is one step higher.

Additional Equipment: You have a heavy weapon of your choice.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. You found the PCs wandering in the mountains and led them to safety.
2. The PCs wanted you to provide some extra muscle to their endeavor.
3. You were released from slavery by the PCs, and joined them.
4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.



WARY

You're not the trusting sort. You keep an eye out for your enemies, which include all those who've done you wrong, but just as important, those who you've wronged in order to accomplish your goals. Becoming a divine power in a world where the new atheism holds sway requires vigilance against those who are fundamentally opposed to the idea of divine return. Alternatively, you may be a manifestation of the wary watchfulness that anyone born in the era after the Fall would be happy to aspire to. It's those who succumb to routine and apathy who are first to die. That's not going to be you.

You gain the following characteristics:

Quick: +2 to your Speed Pool.

Skill: You're trained in all tasks involving identifying, or assessing danger.

Skill: You're trained in Intellect defense tasks.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose

how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. The other PCs didn't believe your story about something stalking them, but you were proved right. They asked you to join them out of gratitude.

2. You trailed the PCs, and when you saw they were no danger, introduced yourself.

3. One or more of the PCs saved your life once, and you feel like you need to return the favor.

4. You believe that to fulfill one of the Seven Prophecies, you must join the other PCs.

FOCI

The *Cypher System Rulebook* details more than seventy foci. You can choose from the **Fantasy** genre foci, of course, but you should also take a look at the **Superheroes** genre foci. Many of those can be **customized**, with your GMs help, to suit *Gods of the Fall*. That said, foci listed

Wary characters can come across as a little cartoonish if they overplay their suspicions. A little wariness goes a long way.



Foci, page 90

Suggested Foci for a Fantasy Game, page 239

Suggested Foci for a Superhero Game, page 268

Customizing foci, page 91

FOCI APPROPRIATE FOR GODS OF THE FALL

* new foci in this book

Abides in Stone	Fights With Panache	Performs Feats of Strength
Awakens Dreams	Finds the Flaw in All Things*	Rages
Bears a Halo of Fire	Focuses Mind Over Matter	Revels in Trickery*
Blazes With Radiance	Fuses Flesh and Steel	Rides the Lightning
Builds Robots	Grows to Towering Heights	Sees Beyond
Carries a Quiver	Howls at the Moon	Separates Mind From Body
Casts Spells	Hunts Nonhumans	Shepherds Spirits
Channels Divine Blessings	Hunts Outcasts	Siphons Power
Commands Mental Powers	Hunts With Great Skill	Slays Monsters
Consorts With the Dead	Infiltrates	Solves Mysteries
Controls Beasts	Leads	Speaks Curses*
Controls Gravity	Lives in the Wilderness	Speaks for the Land
Crafts Illusions	Looks for Trouble	Stands Like a Bastion
Crafts Unique Objects	Masters Defense	Throws With Deadly Accuracy
Defends the Weak	Masters the Swarm	Travels Through Time
Employs Magnetism	Masters Weaponry	Walks With the Night*
Entertains	Metes Out Justice	Wears a Sheen of Ice
Exists in Two Places at Once	Moves Like a Cat	Wields Two Weapons at Once
Exists Partially Out of Phase	Murders	Works Miracles
Explores Dark Places	Needs No Weapon	Works the Back Alleys
Explores Deep Waters	Never Says Die	
Fights Dirty	Operates Undercover	



as being part of other genres are also fine choices with the proper customization.

You can also choose one of the foci presented here. As with descriptors, the foci presented in the *Cypher System Rulebook* will be suitable for many players. But this book provides a few divine stereotypes not easily pulled from the foci presented there such as Revels in Trickery, Speaks Curses, and so on.

FINDS THE FLAW IN ALL THINGS

You can see the weak points in objects, in people, and even in the way people think, plan, and dream. Those flaws are always apparent, even when you don't want to see them. If you don't hold your tongue, you risk leaving a trail of angry and embittered people in your wake. Your burden of knowledge makes it difficult to stay in relationships long, so you cherish those who you call friends, even their flaws (though you try not to call those out too often). Some believe that your ability is the power of fate, and that one day, you will find the flaw in reality itself, and transcend.

You probably wear finely made clothing, snug enough not to snag or catch on objects in your environment, but loose

enough that you can apply your knowledge of weak points in objects and people with minimum expenditure of strength.

Connection: Choose one of the following.

1. Pick one other PC. Through a quirk of fate, you cannot sense that character's flaws.
2. Pick one other PC. You recently discovered that if they stand near you when you attempt to use your abilities to sense the flaw in others, your abilities sometimes don't work. Other times, they seem to work better than ever. You're not sure what's going on.
3. Pick one other PC. When you first met, you told them exactly how much of a failure they were as a person, laying bare all their worst fears and doubts. You've since apologized, but they must decide how to react to you.
4. Pick one other PC. This character has a treasured item that was once yours, but that you lost in a game of chance.

Additional Equipment: You have an artifact—a magic quill that can paint a simple rune on objects and creatures to make them invisible to your ability to sense their flaws for one year (Depletion: 1 in 1d20).

Finds the Flaw in All Things GM Intrusions:

You recognize a flaw in yourself. You blurt out a flaw in an ally, angering them. Someone with a grudge over something you pointed out finally tracks you down.

Flaw Abilities: If you wish, you can swap an ability gained from your type for the following.

Find the Flaw: If an opponent has a straightforward weakness (takes extra damage from fire, can't see out of their left eye, and so on), the GM will tell you what it is. If you also have the **Sharp-Eyed** descriptor and its associated **Find the Flaw** ability, you have an asset on the first action you take against a target when you exploit the straightforward weakness identified by Find the Flaw. Enabler.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The display of your ability leaves a creature confused and even a little frightened. The difficulty of defense actions to resist the creature's attacks decreases by one step for one minute.

Major Effect Suggestion: An important item on the target's person is destroyed.

Tier 1: Perfect Submission (1+ Intellect point). You know exactly where to grab, prod, or apply pressure to a creature to keep its undivided attention. For as long as you take no physical actions or movements except to hold the submission, the other creature can take no physical actions, even over multiple rounds. If the creature is attacked, the effect ends. You can affect creatures up to twice as large as you. To affect creatures three, four, or more times larger than you, you must apply increasing levels of Effort. For instance, to affect a creature three times larger than you, you must apply two levels of Effort. Action.

Tier 2: Reckoning. If you attack an opponent who you have observed in combat (against another creature or against yourself) for at least one round, the difficulty of your next attack is reduced by one step. On a successful hit with this Reckoning-enhanced attack, you inflict 2 additional points of damage. Enabler.

Tier 3: Fly in the Ointment. The difficulty of all tasks related to detecting falsehoods and disguises, and recognizing fallacies, flawed arguments, and bad plans is reduced by two steps. Enabler.

Tier 4: Flaw of Worldly Works (5 Intellect points). You see where objects are most likely to break. The difficulty of any task that would normally depend on brute force (but

which you accomplish with an apparently light touch) is decreased by three steps. Examples include opening a barred door or a locked container with a deft touch instead of smashing it, shifting a heavy object without lifting it, opening a hole in a solid barrier by finding a keystone, and so on. Enabler.

Tier 5: Flaw of Mortal Flesh (6+ Intellect points). You recognize where flesh fails. With a swift and sudden attack, you strike a foe in a vital spot. If the target is level 3 or lower, it is killed outright. For each two levels of Effort you apply, you can increase the maximum level of the target by 1. Action.

Tier 6: Flaw in Everything (3 Intellect points). You see flaws in everyone and everything, so much that you usually veil your flaw-finding eye. However, sometimes you raise that veil, if for just a moment. Usually, you see the flaw in others, but sometimes you see the flaw in yourself. When you do, roll a d6. On any even result, the task you're attempting is modified by two steps in your favor. On a roll of 1, the task is modified by one step to your detriment. Enabler.

REVELS IN TRICKERY

Whether you're a performer, thief, sorcerer, warrior, or simple wanderer, you delight in charming, fooling, confounding, and surprising others. Some of your tricks are meant to delight and entertain. Others are useful for getting out of tight corners and confusing your foes. Even if you're a good-hearted trickster, you've likely accidentally hurt or confused your friends, so you try to avoid making them the target of your antics. But some say you're destined to betray everyone and everything, though you regard prophecy and the concept of fate itself as just another trick.

You probably wear a garment with several concealed pockets from which you can produce hidden coins and other oddments of guile.

Connection: Choose one of the following.

1. Pick one other PC. You're jealous of their finery.
2. Pick one other PC. You suspect that they are cursed, but you don't know if you should be more afraid for them or of them.



Sharp-Eyed, page 83

Find the Flaw, page 83

"Fly in the ointment" is an idiomatic expression for a thing that spoils something otherwise valuable.

Revels in Trickery
GM Intrusions: *The dupe becomes enraged when he realizes you've tricked them. A victim of a previous trick tracks you down for a past transgression. You are recognized by an official for some previous shenanigan.*

Perhaps if you perform tricks for them, you'll discover their true nature.

3. Pick one other PC. You once tricked them so completely that they attacked and hurt you, thinking you were a foe. You've healed, but both of you are still wary of each other.

4. Pick one other PC. You tricked them into thinking you are someone that you are not, and now it's been so long, you're not sure if you should reveal the truth.

Additional Equipment: Disguise of your choice and 10 moons (silver coins).

Minor Effect Suggestion: Your foe loses track of you and moves just out of immediate range before realizing its error.

Major Effect Suggestion: Your foe is confused by your antics. On its next turn, it attacks one of its allies instead of you before realizing the truth.

Tier 1: Legerdemain (1 Speed point). You can perform small but seemingly impossible tricks. For example, you can make a small object in your hands disappear and move into a desired spot within reach (like your pocket). You can make someone believe that they have something in their possession that they do not (or vice versa). You can switch similar objects right in front of someone's eyes. Action.

Opportunist. You have an asset when you attack a creature that has already been attacked at some point during the round and is within immediate range. Enabler.

Tier 2: Impersonate (2 Intellect points). You alter your voice, posture, and mannerisms, whip together a disguise, and have an asset on an attempt to impersonate someone else, whether it is a specific individual (Yanir of the city watch) or a general role (a city watch person). Action to initiate.

Wit or Menace. Choose whether you're trained in pleasant social interactions (including persuasion) or negative social interactions (including coercion and intimidation).

Tier 3: Poke and Run (3 Speed points). When you attack a creature that has eyes, the difficulty of the attack is increased by one step. If you hit, the creature has trouble seeing for the next hour, and you can move or attempt to hide as part of the same action. Tasks the creature performs that rely

on sight (which is most tasks) are modified by one step to its detriment during this period. Action.

Tier 4: Calm (3 Intellect points). Through jokes, song, or other art, you prevent a foe from attacking anyone or anything for one round. Action.

Tier 5: Trap Trick. You are trained in creating simple traps, especially varieties of deadfalls and snares using natural objects from the environment. You can create a trap in under a minute. When you lay a trap, decide whether you want to hold the victim in place (a snare) or inflict damage (a deadfall). Next, attempt an Intellect-based task with a difficulty of 3 (for a snare) or a difficulty equal to the number of points of damage you want to inflict (for a deadfall). For example, if you want to inflict 4 points of damage, that's a difficulty 4 task, though your training reduces the difficulty.

On a success, you create your trap, which is considered level 3 for the purposes of avoiding detection before it is sprung and for a victim trying to struggle free (if a snare). If you are trained in stealth, disguise, or similar tasks, the trap is considered level 4 for these purposes; if you are specialized, level 5. A minute's worth of actions.

Tier 6: Fake-Out (8 Intellect points). You're not really hurt at all! Choose to regain full points in one Pool, ascend one step on the damage track, throw off a condition (including a curse, sleep, turned to stone, or other ongoing effect), or change a failed die result to a natural 20 (20 still might not be enough to succeed if the difficulty is higher than 6, and you can't change the result if you roll a natural 1, unless you also have **Wrest From Chance**). Once you use this ability, it is not available again until after you make a ten-hour recovery roll. Enabler.

SPEAKS CURSES

You can speak abominable curses into being and inflict them on those who deserve to be punished. Animals tend to shrink from you or react violently, and greenery wilts. You call down curses, yes, but sometimes you wonder if the core of your power is wrapped up in some dead god's curse on you.



*Wrest From Chance,
 page 42*

Sometimes the things that a character with the Speaks Curses focus utters spawn additional, unintended curses, which are drawn from the Eye of Elanehtar like a horrific echo. These unintentional curses rarely affect the speaker, but they sometimes affect those around the speaker.

You probably wear garish clothing that tends to draw attention to yourself, because those who would consider that a reason to give you trouble deserve a curse in return.

Connection: Choose one of the following.

1. Pick one other PC. For some reason you can't explain, your curses cannot harm that character.
2. Pick one other PC. You recently discovered that if they stand near you when you use your first-tier Cursed Ink ability, they too become covered in tattoos. This doesn't harm them, and anyone who tries to touch them or strike them with a melee attack suffers 1 point of damage that ignores Armor (but the other PC doesn't gain +1 to Armor). They must remain within short range of you to retain the effect.
3. Pick one other PC. They find your curses to be ethically questionable and must decide how to react to your constant use of magical obscenity around them.
4. Pick one other PC. Something about them makes cursing harder. When they stand near you, your curses cost 1 additional Intellect point.

Additional Equipment: You carry an amulet made of fused black metal mined in Soulrest that inspires the curses you speak. Whoever holds it (if you willingly give it into their possession) is immune to your curses.

In addition, if you wish, you can swap an ability gained from your type for the following.

Curse of Baleful Blistering (1 Intellect point). You curse a creature within short range, inflicting it with boils and pustules. If the target takes a forceful action (such as attacking another creature or moving farther than an immediate distance), the pustules burst, dealing 2 points of damage that ignore Armor, and the effect ends. If the target cannot hear you and understand your language (or intent), the difficulty of your curse attack is one step higher. Action.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The target becomes subject to your Baleful Blistering curse.

Major Effect Suggestion: An important item on the target's person falls to ash.

Tier 1: Cursed Ink (1 Intellect point). Your skin is imprinted with an all-body tattoo of your design for up to ten minutes. The design is visible only if you're wearing clothing that reveals some portion of your

skin. Regardless of whether others can see it, it automatically inflicts 1 point of damage (ignores Armor) to anyone who tries to touch you or strike you with a melee attack. While the Cursed Ink is active, you also gain +1 to Armor. Enabler.

Tier 2: Curse of Disability (2 Intellect points).

You curse a creature within short range, and inflict one of the following disabilities:

- The difficulty of all tasks is increased by one step for one minute.
- The target's speed is halved.
- The target can take no action for one round.
- The target deals 2 fewer points of damage (minimum 1 point) for one minute.

If the target cannot hear you and understand your language (or intent), the difficulty of your curse attack is one step higher. Action.

Tier 3: Curse of Mouthless Muttering

(3 Intellect points). You curse a creature within short range, erasing its mouth. Its mouth does not return until it inflicts damage on you, until you release it from its curse, or for one day, whichever occurs first. In addition to losing speech (if it had a language), it loses the ability to perform any mouth-related attacks. The difficulty of all other tasks is modified by one step to its detriment. If the target cannot hear you and understand your language (or intent), the difficulty of your curse attack is one step higher. Action.

Tier 4: Crown of Burrowing Worms

(5 Intellect Points). You curse a creature within short range, infesting its head with a mass of scarlet-hued flesh-eating worms. The worms remain until the target inflicts damage on you, until you release it from its curse, or for one day, whichever occurs first.

If successful, the target is stunned for one round and cannot act, and it takes 2 points of damage (ignores Armor).

It is dazed in the following round and cannot act, during which time the difficulty of its tasks is increased by one step, and it takes 1 point of damage (ignores Armor). In subsequent rounds, it takes 1 point of damage.

If the target cannot hear you and understand your language (or intent), the difficulty of your curse attack is one step higher. Action.

Speaks Curses GM Intrusions: Your curse finds one of your allies by mistake. Your curse affects you by mistake.

Tier 5: Curse of Incapacity (6 Intellect points). You curse a creature within short range, inflicting upon it all four conditions listed for Curse of Disability at once. If the target cannot hear you and understand your language (or intent), the difficulty of your curse attack is one step higher. Action.

Tier 6: Curse of Eyeless Anguish (5 Intellect points). You curse a creature within short range, erasing its eyes. Its eyes do not return until it inflicts damage on you, until you release it from its curse, or for one day, whichever occurs first. The creature is effectively blind and acts as if in complete darkness when it attacks or when it is attacked, modifying the difficulty of rolls against it by two steps to its detriment. If



Darkness, page 205

Flash, page 33

Barrier, page 33

the target cannot hear you and understand your language (or intent), the difficulty of your curse attack is one step higher. Action.

WALKS WITH THE NIGHT

You have a power over darkness. As a child, when you created shadow monsters from the lantern's light flickering on the wall, the shapes you cast moved and danced as if living things. Now, as you come into the power that might be the spark of divine Awakening, you know that you have nothing to fear in the dark. However, others might have something to fear from you when you walk with the night.

You probably wear dark clothes, cloaks, and even gloves, and possibly a mask the color of gloom and dusk.

Connection: Choose one of the following.

1. Pick one other PC. This character also yearns for the night. You both gain +1 on any die rolls when you collaborate on the same task, fight the same foe, and so on.
2. Pick two other PCs. You think you once saw them doing something illegal at night. You can choose whether or not to share that information. The characters can choose whether it was really them (it could have been neither, one, or both), and they may or may not share that information in return.
3. Pick one other PC. This person always seems to hear you, no matter how stealthy you try to be.
4. Pick one other PC. This person is so loud in everything that you feel obligated to try to help them learn to move more quietly through the world. Whether or not the person is interested is up to them.

Additional Equipment: You carry a large black cloak and a face mask.

Shadow Abilities: If you have other overt abilities (spells, psionic powers, or the like), they make almost no sound, and whatever visual displays they produce are dark and shadowy. These alterations change nothing other than the appearance of the effects. A **Flash** is a silent burst of shadows, a **Barrier** is a mass of shadowy wisps, and so on.

In addition, if you wish, you can swap an ability gained from your type for the following.

Create Shadow (2 Intellect points). You cause shadows to spring up from a spot within short range for up to one minute. The shadows must fit within a 10-foot (3 m) cube. You can choose to simply make bright



light dim or completely dark (blinding any creature within the area that can't see in the dark). You can move the area of shadows up to a short distance each round as part of another action. You can also create a scene from shadows in the area, from something as simple as throwing a shadow on the wall to as complex as spending an action each round to act out a scene. Action to initiate.

Minor Effect Suggestion: The target is also dazed for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment.

Major Effect Suggestion: The target is also stunned and loses its next turn.

Tier 1: Creeping Shadow (1 Intellect point).

If a shadow can pass through a physical barrier, such as under a door or through a crack or keyhole, then so can you, albeit slowly, at a rate of 1 inch (3 cm) per round (minimum of one round to pass through any barrier). You can't act (other than moving) or perceive anything until you pass entirely through the barrier. You can't pass through barriers that are completely sealed against light (or shadow). Action.

Night Eyes: You can see in very dim light as though it were bright light. You can see in total darkness as if it were dim light. Enabler.

Tier 2: Summon Creature of the Night

(2 Intellect points). You summon a single level 3 creature of the night (such as a wolf, a **ghost**, or a **giant spider**) or a horde of small animals (such as bats or rats) to temporarily help you. These creatures do your bidding for as long as you focus your attention, but you must use your action every round to direct them. Creatures are native to the area and arrive under their own power, so if you're in an unreachable place, this ability won't work. In addition, if you're in an area of bright light, the creatures won't stay for longer than a couple of rounds, even if you continue concentrating. Action.

Tier 3: Foreboding Strike (4 Intellect

points). When you attack your foe, darkness momentarily passes before its eyes so that it can't see, reducing the difficulty of your attack by two steps (assuming it's a creature that relies on sight to sense its surroundings). The ability works for whatever kind of attack you use (melee, ranged, energy, and so on). Enabler.

Tier 4: Shadow (4 Intellect points).

For the next ten minutes, you take on some characteristics of a shadow. Your appearance is a dark silhouette. You are trained in sneaking tasks. During this time, you can move through solid barriers, even those that are sealed to prevent the passage of light or shadow (but not energy barriers) at a rate of 1 foot (30 cm) per round, and you can perceive while passing through a barrier or object, which allows you to peek through walls. As a shadow, you can't affect or be affected by normal matter. Likewise, you can't attack, touch, or otherwise affect anything. However, attacks and effects that rely on light can affect you, and sudden bursts of light can potentially make you lose your next turn. Action to initiate.

Tier 5: Nightmare (5 Intellect points).

You fashion a truly horrifying creature of dripping shadow and launch it at your foes. Your creation persists each round while you spend your action concentrating on it (or until you disperse it or it is destroyed). It has one of the following abilities, which you choose each time the nightmare attacks.

Horridify. Instead of making a normal attack, your creation's attack horrifies the target, dropping the target to its knees (or similar appendages). The target takes 3 points of damage that ignore Armor and is stunned for one round, so that it loses its next turn.

Confusion. Instead of making a normal attack, the creation's attack confuses the target for one round. On its next action, the target attacks an ally.

Curse of the Nightcaul. Instead of making a normal attack, the creation's attack causes a film of darkness to cover the victim's eyes like a caul. The target is blinded until it rips off the caul, which inflicts 5 points of damage that ignores Armor.

Tier 6: Become the Night (6 Intellect

points). You can selectively become shadow so that you and your attack this turn ignores your foe's Armor, and even penetrates partly through your foe, dealing an additional 5 points of damage. The ability works for whatever kind of attack you use it with (melee, ranged, energy, and so on). Enabler.

Walks With the Night

GM Intrusions: A foe has a cypher that creates a bright light that could stun you for a round. One of your shadows gains a mind of its own. An ally mistakes your shadowy presence for a foe.



Ghost, page 293

Giant spider, page 297

CHARACTER DOMINION



Unlike the previous chapters written to the players, this section addresses you, the game master (or potential game master), directly. Your players might regard you as the true “god” of *Gods of the Fall*, but they’re incorrect. Yes, the game master (GM) is the architect of the game, but not the sole builder. You’re the facilitator as well as the arbiter. You are both fate and a helping spirit to guide your players to their destiny, while creating an enjoyable experience in the process.

Adherents, page 91



**“GREAT WAS ZENIA, THE EARTHSHAKER;
GREAT WAS ZENIA, THE CLOUDGATHERER;
HIGHEST AMONG THE GODS WAS SHE,
BUT SHE FELL. PRAY THAT SHE RISES
AGAIN, TO REDEEM US, AND PUNISH THE
UNBELIEVERS.”**

~ADHERENT PRAYER

AWAKENING

Even before a character gains any actual dominion abilities, alarming and bizarre dreams haunt them, perhaps even from the time they were a child. Dreams of flying through lightning-lit clouds, of fighting a host of ravers, of blessing the masses, of judging the dead, of inspiring war, of healing the lame, and other miracles. These visions at first seem crazed and disjointed, but over time they grow more cohesive and certain.

By the time the character is a first-tier PC, they know they have been touched by a divine spark. That spark will continue to grow and expand if the character embraces it and their awakening godhood.

ORIGIN OF GODHOOD

No one knows the origin or nature of the divine spark that turns a normal person into a god. But many hypotheses have been advanced. *Adherents* believe that PCs who awaken do so because they are one of the original gods of Elanehtar reincarnated. Others suggest the spark is just another



variety of loosed divine energy, akin to that which condenses into cyphers, that has become bound within someone's soul. A cult in **Somorra** believes that the newly awakening gods are literal children of the old gods, only now coming into their power. **Nulumriel** believes that the new gods are dying echoes, avatars of the original gods having one last go before the end. A couple of songs popular in **Nightland** taverns suggest the new gods aren't new at all, but the old gods who found such perfect disguises in which to hide (for an unnamed reason) that they themselves forgot who they were. Ultimately, it doesn't matter; new gods are awakening, and what they decide will become the truth.

HOW PCs LEARN ABOUT OBLIGATIONS AND DOMINIONS

This chapter lays out the Obligations a PC must achieve in order to unlock various dominion abilities at each tier. But how does a character learn about their Obligations, and the path they must take to achieve them? For

instance, how specifically does a PC find out that they have to choose a dominion as their first-tier Obligation, and design their symbol as their second-tier Obligation?

The process is all part of the Awakening. The details can vary from character to character. Some options are provided here, but as with all things, you might have a different idea for your characters.

OBLIGATIONS

Starting at first tier, a PC's awakened character must meet certain divine Obligations to unlock their dominion. One Obligation is suggested for each tier, though an Obligation can also be met if you decide that some other accomplishment achieved by the PC qualifies as the Obligation for a given tier. Alternatively, you might choose ahead of time additional or different Obligations of your own. Obligations can be thought of as a combination of holy works and philosophical stances any god needs in order to grow in both stature and in worshippers.

Somorra, page 45

Nulumriel, page 30

Nightland, page 22



*Bears a Halo of Fire,
page 98*

Seraph of virtue, page 171



*Dominion benefits,
page 142*



Roll	Potential Means of Obligation Discovery
1	A guide, in the form of an NPC, potentially divine himself
2	An old religious tome, banned by the Reconciliators
3	The PC god has a vision, as part of their Awakening
4	A seraph of virtue saves or visits the PC and explains
5	A version of the PC's future self appears and provides the information
6	An old song provides the information
7	Runes carved on the side of an old temple converted into a chapterhouse
8	An artifact previously the implement of a dead god
9	A parent or older sibling with a secret provides the information
10	A burning bush that speaks, or other divine manifestation, provides the information

Timing for an Obligation isn't vital. A character can meet an Obligation prior to achieving a particular tier or at some later point. For instance, it's not unusual for a character to have accomplished their tier 2 Obligation (choose a symbol) and tier 3 Obligation (banish an evil) while they're still first tier, which means that upon reaching second and third tier, they can immediately gain the associated dominion benefits of those tiers.

On the other hand, a character must meet Obligations to gain the dominion benefits for that tier. For example, a character who achieves fourth tier that hasn't yet worked out their fourth-tier Obligation (dogma) doesn't gain their **dominion benefits** for that tier until they codify their divine philosophy.

TIER 1: CHOOSE DOMINION

Ironically, a PC's initial choice of dominion is the most telling thing about them, while at the same time being the most ephemeral, especially as their dominion relates to game mechanics. The PC's chosen dominion informs their dogma (their tier 3 Obligation), informs the dominion benefits they choose (starting at second tier), and

even more important, might guide them when they decide their type, focus, and descriptor. For instance, if they decide to be a god of Fire prior to making any other choice about their character, it could lead them to choose the **Bears a Halo of Fire** focus.

So the question before you: should you ask your players to choose a dominion when they first create a character? It's your call. You may decide to wait, and reveal by stages to the PCs that their characters might be partly divine. Technically, that means your PCs do not gain access to the Manifest Nimbus dominion tier 1 ability. You might choose to grant the ability anyway during the course of play for purposes of the dramatic reveal, but only sporadically. The character might gain a full nimbus only after they admit to the possibility of being a god, and choose a dominion.

A character's dominion is a journey, not a destination. Selecting it means it's where the PC would like to take their character eventually, but it might not be where they end up. For example, they might begin thinking they're a god of Travel, but end up being a god of Lost Causes.

Unlike other choices like descriptor and type, a character's choice of dominion is a bit looser, and could change—or become more refined—over time and as the result of campaign play. So even if a PC *does* choose a dominion immediately, circumstances may befall them as a result of later adventuring that makes them want to change their dominion. They can do that. There is no uber-god parceling out claimed dominions. So a PC could change their dominion (and associated dogma, if they have previously created one) even if they pursued a different path for several tiers. A god of the Hearth could become a god of Revenge, given the right set of regrettable circumstances.

To sum up, a character is free to make up or pick anything they want as their dominion, though you of course have final say. A PC could be the god of Storms, of the Sea, of Magic, of Poetry, or even of Divination. The PC may discover, during the course of play, that they're not the only up-and-coming deity claiming a particular dominion.

If you like, you can provide dominion options presented here to your players,

DIVINE DOMINION OPTIONS

01–03	Air	27–29	Fire	52–53	Messengers	77–78	Serpents
04–05	Archery	30–31	Goblins	54–55	Moon	79–80	Song
06–07	Assassination	32–33	Good	56–57	Music	81–82	Storm
08–09	Chaos	34–35	Healing	58–59	Nature	83–84	Strength
10–11	Craft	36–37	Home/Hearth	60–61	Night	85–86	Sun
12–13	Death	38–39	Hunt	62–63	Prophecy	87–88	Thievery
14–15	Destruction	40–41	Joy	64–66	Protection	89–90	Trees
16–17	Disease	42–43	Justice	67–68	Revenge	91–92	Trickery
18–19	Dryads	44–45	Knowledge	69–70	Road	93–94	War
20–22	Earth	46–47	Law	71–72	Rulership	95–96	Water
23–24	Evil	48–49	Love	73–74	Sea	97–98	Winter
25–26	Fertility	50–51	Luck	75–76	Secrets	99–00	Wisdom

in whole or in part, as an aid for them in choosing or designing their own dominions. But they can choose something else, too, if you agree.

Alternatively, they could choose (or you could ask them) to roll for a dominion randomly.

You might decide to ask the PCs to coordinate with each other in their group—their pantheon—when deciding upon dominions. While it's fine to have two gods of War and two gods of Fire in one pantheon, it might be a better experience for everyone if you expanded your players' range of influence.

TIER 2: CHOOSE SYMBOL

For a PC's second-tier Obligation, they must choose a symbol that represents them, and carry a likeness of that symbol somewhere on their person. Their symbol can be as

simple or grand as they desire, but should somehow pertain to the dominion they eventually want to claim. For instance, a god of the Storm might choose a lightning bolt as a symbol.

A PC can design their own symbol. If you like, you can provide the symbol options presented here, in whole or in part, to aid players when they create their symbol. Combining simple symbols is also a great way to create new symbols. For example, someone who claims to be a god of Justice might have a fiery sword symbol.

Alternatively, they could choose (or you could ask them) to roll for a symbol randomly. However, if they've already chosen a dominion and they randomly roll a symbol that seems unrelated, tell them to incorporate what they've rolled, or interpret it in such a fashion that it still serves as their symbol.



DIVINE SYMBOL OPTIONS

01–02	Arrow	25–26	Eye	50–51	Mace	75–76	Spear
03–04	Bonds	27–28	Face	52–53	Mask	77–78	Spider
05–06	Book	29–30	Fire	54–55	Mirror	79–80	Star
07–08	Circle	31–32	Fish	56–57	Moon	81–82	Sun
09–10	Claw	33–34	Fist	58–59	Octopus	83–85	Sword
11–12	Cloud	35–36	Gauntlet	60–61	Owl	86–87	Thunderbolt
13–14	Coin	37–38	Hammer	62–63	Rose	88–89	Tree
15–16	Cross	39–41	Hand	64–65	Scale	90–91	Trident
17–18	Cup	42–43	Insect	66–67	Scroll	92–93	Vulture
19–20	Dagger	44–45	Leaf	68–70	Shield	94–95	Wave
21–22	Dove	46–47	Lion	71–72	Skull	96–97	Whip
23–24	Dragon	48–49	Lyre	73–74	Snake	98–00	Wolf



Raver, page 169

Bleak tree, page 31



Goblin, page 297

Witch, 330

TIER 3: CHOOSE FIRST LABOR

To achieve their third-tier Obligation, a PC must banish an evil from the land (or release a force for good from entrapment). A PC could banish something by sending it to a place where it can do no harm, but killing an evil also does the trick. For something to qualify as an “evil,” it must be something that has taken (or ruined) innocent lives purposefully, and which will continue to do so if not stopped.

Generally, you choose what qualifies as a PC’s first labor.

Characters working together as part of a pantheon might have the same first labor, though of course you might decide each PC needs to finish their own first labor (though with the aid of the other players).

Roll Potential First Labor

1	Kill a lesser raver
2	Save a child
3	Use a dominion ability to defeat an evil creature
4	Defeat a group of bandits
5	Chop down a bleak tree
6	Put a slaver out of business
7	Destroy a cursed artifact
8	Burn out a goblin infestation
9	Kill an evil god of level 5 or higher (or a god with an opposing dominion or dogma)
10	Dispatch a witch



A PC GAINS THREE DIVINE SHIFTS AT SECOND TIER. THEY GAIN ONE ADDITIONAL DIVINE SHIFT FOR EACH TIER THEY ADVANCE THEREAFTER.

TIER 4: DEFINE DOGMA

To achieve their fourth-tier Obligation, the player must elucidate their character's philosophy, and relate that philosophy to their dominion. Essentially, a character's dogma is a collection of core tenets that the character strives to live by. The god's dogma is, in turn, the basis for the faith of all who proclaim the character as their god. It is their religious creed, and the foundation for how these followers aspire to emulate their god.

For example, if a PC is a god of Protection, their dogma might be as simple as "Help those in need," full stop. Alternatively, the character might prescribe a set of commandments. Those who eventually end up worshipping the PC (if any) can flesh out the PC's liturgy: the ways in which to worship them, specific prayers in their name, how to call upon their beneficence (or avoid their wrath), and so on. Creating a god's liturgy doesn't fall to the character, unless the character wants it to.

Here are some options a PC can choose from, or build upon.

DOGMA OPTIONS

Be courageous	Do not kill	Promote fairness
Be honest	Do not steal	Protect the defenseless
Bring criminals to justice	Win war at any cost	Revere nature
Bring light to dark places	Eschew magic	Revere the old gods
Bring pain to unbelievers	Gain knowledge	Seek joy and contentment
Cultivate humility	Gamble	Seek revenge
Conduct war honorably	Help the poor	Seek the truth
Do not betray	Kill with honor	Slay the weak
Do not fear	Kill with stealth	Smite foes without pity
Do not give in to envy	Learn magic	Turn the other cheek

LITURGY OPTIONS

Build shrines and temples	Pour out wine in my name
Celebrate storms	Say prayers in my name
Convert unbelievers	Sing psalms in my name
Deliver cyphers to my shrines	Slay a fatted calf in my name
Give coins to the poor	Spill blood in my name
Never speak my name	Spread my faith
Plant trees in my name	Worship me one day out of seven

TIER 5: CONVERT BELIEVERS

A PC might be a god, but they can progress only so far if regular mortals don't believe in them. To meet their fifth-tier Obligation and take their divine spark to its zenith, the character requires the spiritual support that worshippers provide: the character requires followers.

Your PCs could meet this Obligation off stage if you wish, in which case you inform one or more players that a group of believers sprang up in the wake of one of their adventures, praising the character's name and the return of the divine to the Afterworld. Or you could explicitly require that the PCs spend at least some in-game time attempting to proselytize various NPCs as to their divinity in whatever way they choose.

Finally, choosing the **Disciple** dominion ability counts as meeting this Obligation.

Disciple, page 144

Fleet of Sin, page 37

Onslaught, page 31

Telekinesis, page 128

Obligation, page 137

Hellmaw, page 164

Goblin Wood, page 50

TIER 6: CHOOSE DIVINE LABOR

Just as at third-tier, a character must banish an evil from the land to achieve their sixth-tier Obligation. However, the target must be a major evil. Dispatching a single witch won't do. Slaying the Hellmaw or sinking the **Fleet of Sin**, however, would do nicely.

Choose what qualifies as a PC's divine labor from the options provided below, or design one suitable for your own campaign and the struggle facing the Afterworld.

Characters working together as part of a pantheon might have the same divine labor, though of course you could decide otherwise. The nature of the sixth-tier Obligation is considered an epic quest.

GODLIKE BENEFITS

Gods of the Fall characters gain dominion benefits each time they achieve a new tier. Specifically, they gain one or more divine shifts and have the option to choose one dominion ability in place of a tier ability if they meet each tier's **Obligation**.

DIVINE SHIFTS

Gods can do things that other people cannot. They are more powerful than normal PCs. This is partly reflected in a character's acquisition of divine shifts. A PC gains three divine shifts at second tier. They gain one additional divine shift for each tier they advance thereafter. This means that at sixth tier, a character will have seven divine shifts.

Divine shifts are like permanent levels of Effort that are always active. They don't count toward a character's maximum Effort use (nor do they count as skills or assets).

They simply reduce the difficulty of tasks that fall into specific categories, which include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following.

Accuracy: All attack rolls

Dexterity: Movement, acrobatics, initiative, and Speed defense

Healing: One extra recovery roll per shift (each one action, all coming before other normal recovery rolls)

Intelligence: Intellect defense rolls and all knowledge, science, and crafting tasks

Resilience: Might defense rolls and Armor (+1 per shift)

Single Attack: Attack rolls and damage (3 additional points per shift) for a specific melee, ranged, or special ability attack, such as **Onslaught**

Special Ability: Use of a specific ability that's not directly intended for attack, such as **Telekinesis** (allowing you to lift more)

Strength: All tasks involving strength, including jumping and dealing damage in melee or thrown attacks (3 additional points of damage per shift) but not attack rolls

Each shift reduces the difficulty of the task by one step (except for shifts that affect damage or Armor, as specified in the list above).

A PC can assign their divine shifts to their character as desired, except they cannot assign more than three to any one category, ever. Once the shifts are assigned, they can be reset each time a character achieves a new tier, but only if you agree with the reason why a PC wants to do so.

For example, a god of Strength might put their initial three shifts into strength.

DIVINE LABOR OPTIONS

Roll	Potential Divine Labors
1	Bring down Nulumriel or her equivalent
2	Clear a large portion of the Dead Wood
3	Return to life a wrongfully slain child
4	Outlaw slavery in the Nightland
5	Destroy an elder raver
6	Venture into Soulrest and destroy the Hellmaw
7	Destroy a cursed artifact of level 10 or higher
8	Dispatch every goblin in the Goblin Wood
9	Destroy an evil god of level 9 or higher (or a god with an opposing dominion or dogma)
10	Dispatch a dragon

Whenever he lifts something heavy or smashes through a wall, he reduces the task's difficulty by three steps before applying Effort, skill, or assets. Thus, all difficulties from 0 to 3 are routine for them. He smashes through level 3 doors as if they don't exist.

Of course, a character can divide divine shifts between categories. For instance, a god of Trickery might put one divine shift in dexterity, one in accuracy, and one in healing. She's more about being well-rounded than overpowering.

In addition to normal advancement, a PC can increase the number of divine shifts they possess in two other ways: spend 10 XP to gain one divine shift, or continue to gain tiers **beyond sixth tier**.

DOMINION ABILITIES

As a god, a PC gains access to dominion abilities in addition to divine shifts. A dominion is a looser concept than a type, but like a type, it grants a special ability—a dominion ability—at each tier. A PC can choose that dominion ability from the choices offered here.

Dominion abilities have one additional feature that regular special abilities do not share: the cost of a dominion ability can be subtracted from any Pool a character has points in, in any combination. So if a PC has the Earthquake dominion ability that costs 10 Pool points, he can choose to spend 3 points from Speed, 3 from Might, and 4 from Intellect to pay the cost. A character's Edge (if any) within each Pool applies.

TIER 1 DOMINION ABILITY

The PC gains the following ability.

Manifest Nimbus: Creatures and objects touched with a divine spark (or who have divine shifts) manifest a nimbus. A nimbus is usually visible only to other creatures who also have a nimbus. Your nimbus appears as one or more points of brilliant light, possibly glowing runes, that hovers near your head. As you gain divine shifts, the number of points may grow. You may also work with the GM to design a different style of nimbus, such as a shadow, flames, and so on. In this way, PCs and other divinely touched creatures always recognize each other, as well as cyphers and artifacts, and other objects of divine origin.

You can choose to make your nimbus visible to normal creatures, or extinguish

that manifestation, as part of any other action. The nimbus can sometimes serve as an asset for various interaction tasks if you make it visible to non-divine creatures, if the GM decides that is appropriate. However, non-believers may decide to string up the false god then and there. Enabler.

TIER 2 DOMINION ABILITIES

The PC can choose one ability described below. If a character chooses not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, they choose an additional ability described for their type at the same tier instead, in which case it is treated as a dominion ability, including its Pool cost, if any.

Steal Name (2 Pool points): You attempt to discern the common, given name of a person or object within short range. You have an asset on tasks involving that person or object for one hour. Alternatively, you can choose to steal the name of a living creature within short range by lifting it directly from the creature's thoughts. An affected target ceases taking actions for up to one minute as it attempts to recall its name, or for as long as you use your action each round to concentrate on hiding the name from it. If the target is attacked, endangered, or seriously provoked, it stops worrying about its name and acts normally. Action.

Self Aware (3+ Pool points): You know when someone speaks your name somewhere in the Afterworld for the next day, and the general direction and distance to that location, if you succeed on an Intellect task whose difficulty is equal to the level of the speaker. If you apply a level of Effort, you also gain a vision of whoever spoke your name and the speaker's surroundings within a short range. Action to initiate.

Divine Combatant: When fighting a seraph or raver, you are trained in attacks and defense. In addition, you can choose one seraph or raver within immediate range to either bolster with your divine attention, which decreases the difficulty of the target's tasks by one step, or obstruct with your divine disfavor, which increases the difficulty of the target's tasks by one step. You can bolster or show disfavor on only one target at a time. Enabler.

Call Seraph: A level 3 **seraph** of your size is summoned from the Aether. It accompanies you and follows your

Advancing beyond sixth tier, page 147

Seraph, page 170

instructions. You and the GM must work out the details of your seraph, though it has the general characteristics of that creature type, including the ability to fly a short distance each round (though as a level 3 creature, not with enough strength to carry you farther than a short distance at a time, such as across small chasms and similar hazards).

You'll probably make rolls for your seraph when it takes actions. A seraph in combat usually doesn't make separate attacks but helps yours. On your action, if the seraph is next to you, it serves as an asset for one attack you make on your turn. If the seraph is destroyed, it normally reforms over a period of three days from the remnants. If that is prevented from happening, you can call a new seraph after a few days' worth of casting your mind into the Aether. Each time you gain another tier, your seraph gains another level. Enabler.

TIER 3 DOMINION ABILITIES

The PC can choose one ability described below. If a character chooses not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, they choose an additional ability described for their type at the same tier instead, in which case it is treated as a dominion ability, including its

Pool cost, if any. In addition, the character can replace one lower-tier dominion ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Bolster Nimbus (2+ Pool points): You bolster your nimbus, making it visible to all creatures for one minute. When you've raised your divine aura, you can affect creatures of up to level 2 within immediate range in a few different ways. Each level of Effort you apply increases the maximum level of creature you can affect by 1 level.

Awe: Creatures stare with awe at you for one minute, doing nothing until the effect ends or they are attacked or otherwise violently startled out of their fascination with you. Action.

Terror: Creatures become terrified of you for up to one minute, and run away, or cower in fear if they can't run. Action.

Confidence: Allied creatures have an asset on their tasks for up to one minute, as long as they remain within immediate range of you. Action.

Protection: You gain +1 to Armor against all attacks, including the kind of attacks that Armor doesn't normally apply to, for one minute. Action.

Divine Conveyance: A level 4 creature or conveyance appears before you and serves as your mount. Your mount might be a lion, a giant monkey, a giant eagle, an elephant, a self-driving chariot, or something else that you and your GM work out. Your mount comes caparisoned as only the mount of a god should, including barding that provides +1 to Armor. When you do not need your mount, it disperses into the Aether, but will return again within ten minutes of being called.

You'll probably make rolls for your mount when it takes actions. A mount in combat usually doesn't make separate attacks but helps with yours. On your action, if you're mounted, it serves as an asset for one attack you make on your turn. If your mount is killed, its soul and body regenerate within a week, called back to life by your aura. Each time you gain another tier, your conveyance gains another level. Enabler.

Disciple: You gain a level 3 NPC disciple who is completely devoted to you. You and the GM must work out the details of the disciple.

You'll probably make rolls for your disciple when he takes actions. A disciple in combat usually doesn't make separate



attacks, but helps you with yours. On your action, if the disciple is next to you, he serves as an asset for one attack you make on your turn.

If the disciple dies, you gain a new one after at least two weeks and some proselytization. Each time you gain another tier, your disciple gains another level. Enabler.

Omniscience, Lesser (2 Pool points): You gain surface knowledge of an area equal in size to a 10-foot (3 m) cube, including all objects or creatures within that area. The area must be within short range. Your knowledge includes the level of creatures or objects. You also learn whatever facts the GM feels are pertinent about the matter and energy in that area, but not repercussions. For example, you might learn that the wooden box contains a device of metal and crystal. You might learn that the glass cylinder is full of poisonous gas, and that the runes surrounding it on the floor are magical. However, this ability doesn't tell you what the information means. Thus, in the first example, you don't know what the metal and crystal device does. In the second, you don't know if stepping on the floor causes the runes to be activated or what they do. Some magical effects resist or prevent omniscience. Action.

TIER 4 DOMINION ABILITIES

The PC can choose one ability described below. If a character chooses not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, they choose an additional ability described for their type at the same tier instead, in which case it is treated as a dominion ability, including its Pool cost, if any. In addition, the character can replace one lower-tier dominion ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Command the Hosts (6 Pool points): For ten minutes, you can command a seraph or raver within short range. If none are in range when you use this ability, one appears within one minute. You have complete control over the target, and can even choose to see and hear through it as if its senses were your own, and direct its movement. Action.

Create (7 Pool points): You create something from nothing. You can create any item you choose that would ordinarily have a difficulty of 5 or lower (using the **crafting** rules). Once created, the item lasts

for a number of hours equal to 6 minus the difficulty to create it. Thus, if you create a chariot (difficulty 5), it would last for one hour. Action.

Immortality: You cannot die from natural causes. You do not age, and do not need to eat, sleep, or even breathe (though you can do all these things if you wish, and you still need to rest quietly to make recovery rolls). The only way for you to die is by violence, magic, physical trauma, or other special circumstances. Enabler.

Mask (5 Pool points): You transform your body to become someone else. You can change any physical characteristic you wish, including coloration, height, weight, gender, and distinguishing markings. You can also change the appearance of whatever you are wearing or carrying. Your stats, as well as the stats of your items, do not change. You remain in this form for up to twenty-four hours or until you use an action to resume your normal appearance. Action to initiate.

TIER 5 DOMINION ABILITIES

The PC can choose one ability described below. If a character chooses not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, they choose an additional ability described for their type at the same tier instead, in which case it is treated as a dominion ability, including its Pool cost, if any. In addition, the character can replace one lower-tier dominion ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Band of Disciples: You gain six level 2 NPC disciples who are completely devoted to you. You and the GM must work out the details of these followers. If a disciple dies, you gain a new one after at least two weeks and proper recruitment. Each time you gain another tier, your band of disciples gains another level. Enabler.

Confer Ability (6 Pool points): You can confer a tier 3 or lower special ability from your type or focus to a disciple or other follower for up to one week. Once conferred, the target can use the ability once per day, regardless of its Pool cost (if any). You can confer only one ability at a time. Action to initiate.

Divine Knowledge (6 Pool points): Transcending yourself, you can ask the GM one question and get a general answer. The GM assigns a level to the question, so the more obscure the answer, the more difficult the task. Generally, knowledge that you



could find by looking somewhere other than your current location is level 1, and obscure knowledge of the past is level 7. Gaining knowledge of the future is impossible.

Action.

Conjuration (7 Pool points): You produce, as if from thin air, a level 5 creature of a kind you have previously encountered. The creature remains for one minute and then returns home. While present, the creature acts as you direct, but this requires no action on your part. Action.

Fast Travel (7 Pool points): You warp time and space so that you and up to ten other creatures within immediate distance travel overland at ten times the normal rate for up to eight hours. At this speed, most dangerous encounters or regions of rough terrain are ignored, though the GM may declare exceptions. Outright barriers still present a problem. Action to initiate.

Inspired Seraph. You gain the benefits of the tier 2 ability Call **Seraph**. In addition, you bless your seraph with two new capabilities. Options include the following. Work with your GM if you prefer a different capability.

Seraph, page 170

Blessing of Protection. The seraph can erect an aura of protection around itself and anyone within 10 feet (3 m) of it for one minute (or until it is destroyed). It cannot do so again until after your next recovery roll. The blessing grants all protected creatures +1 to Armor. Action.

Cryserech, page 34

Cypher Blessing. The seraph can carry one extra cypher for you. Enabler.

Tough: Your seraph adds 15 points to its health and +1 to Armor.

Virtue: Your seraph can manifest one of the ethics ascribed to **seraphs of virtue** (courage, humility, and so on). However, your seraph does not gain divine shifts.

Seraph of virtue, page 171

TIER SIX DOMINION ABILITIES

The PC can choose one ability described below. If a character chooses not to awaken a dominion ability at this tier, they choose an additional ability described for their type at the same tier instead, in which case it is treated as a dominion ability, including its Pool cost, if any. In addition, the character can replace one lower-tier dominion ability with a different one from a lower tier.

Control Weather (10 Pool points): You change the weather in your general region. If performed indoors, this creates minor

effects, such as mist, mild temperature changes, and so on. If performed outside, you can create rain, fog, snow, wind, or any other kind of normal (not overly severe) weather. The change lasts for a natural length of time, so a storm might last for an hour, fog for two or three hours, and snow for a few hours (or for ten minutes if it's out of season). For the first ten minutes after activating this ability, you can create more dramatic and specific effects, such as lightning strikes, giant hailstones, twisters, hurricane-force winds, and so on. These effects must occur within 1,000 feet (300 m) of your location. You must spend your turn concentrating to create an effect or to maintain it in a new round. These effects inflict 6 points of damage each round. Action.

Dominion Sense (9 Pool points): You sense a current event pertaining to your dominion that is significant for the next day, if you succeed on a difficulty 3 Intellect task. Significance can be measured by the number of people involved; if several hundred or more people are involved, the event is probably significant (though the GM might determine significance in some other fashion). If you apply a level of Effort, you also gain a vision of the event for a period of up to ten minutes. For example, if you are a god of the Hunt and a prison full of slaves is released into the wild for the pleasure of jaded nobles in **Cryserech** to hunt down, you likely learn of it. Action to initiate.

Earthquake (10 Pool points): You trigger an earthquake centered on a spot you can see within 1,000 feet (300 m). The ground within 250 feet (76 m) of that spot heaves and shakes for five minutes, causing widespread damage to structures and terrain in the area. Buildings made of wood, stone, or brick collapse; walls topple; cliffs crumble; ceilings cave in; some areas of ground rise up; and other areas sink. Creatures inside collapsed buildings or beneath a crumbling cliff or falling wall are subject to a crush (3 points of damage) or a huge crush (6 points of damage) and may have to dig themselves free, as the GM decides. Furthermore, the force of the quake is sufficient to knock creatures to the ground and prevent them from standing until the shaking stops. Action to initiate.

Master the Hosts (8 Pool points): For one week, you can control any seraph or raver. If none are in range when you use this ability, one appears within one minute. If you use an action to concentrate on the target, you are aware of what is going on around it (you see and hear as if you were standing next to it, no matter how far away you are). You must touch the seraph or raver to create the bond, but afterward, there is no range limitation. You can master only one seraph or raver at a time. Action to initiate.

Omniscience, Greater (10 Pool points): You gain complete knowledge of an area equal in size to a 100-foot (30 m) cube, including all objects or creatures within that area. The area must be within short range. Your knowledge includes the level of creatures or objects. You also learn specific details, purposes, and intentions of creatures and objects in the area. For example, you know that invisible runes on the floor are magical, exactly how they are triggered, and the curse they inflict if they are triggered. Some magical effects resist or prevent omniscience. Action.

Twist of Fate: When you roll a 1, you can reroll. You must use the new result, even if it's another 1. Enabler.

Usurp Cypher: You destroy one cypher that you bear and gain its power, which then functions for you continuously. The cypher must have an effect that is not instantaneous. You can choose a cypher when you gain this ability, or you can wait and make the choice later. However, once you usurp a cypher's power, you cannot later switch to a different cypher—the ability works only once. Action to initiate.

FORMING A PANTHEON

A group of PCs could be considered a pantheon, or at least a proto-pantheon. Allied NPCs might also be part of a character's extended pantheon, if you wish. For some styles of play, "pantheon" is just a fancy word for group. However, you could decide to grant a group of allied gods additional benefits (those noted below) to incent the PCs to formally embrace the pantheon concept. It's possible that campaign arcs related to the **Seven Prophecies** are affected depending on how well everyone in the pantheon gets along.

OPTIONAL PANTHEON BENEFITS

Some of the following benefits may accrue to the PCs who form a formal pantheon and are able to remain a cohesive group. Only one pantheon ability can be applied to a dominion ability at one time.

Pantheon Solidarity: If three or more PCs coordinate the use of the same dominion ability in the same round, only one PC spends Pool points, but the other PCs involved still use their actions. The Pool cost for that ability is halved (round up, minimum 1) for the PC using the ability.

Pantheon Worshipers: If three or more PCs who make up a pantheon have disciples, the prayers offered by those disciples grant the PCs +1 on their recovery rolls.

ADVANCING BEYOND SIXTH TIER

It's possible that a campaign could take characters up to the sixth tier, especially if you choose not to follow any of the paths described in the Seven Prophecies, or to delay their fulfillment. But what if you want to keep playing the game beyond sixth tier? There is no seventh tier. Neither character types, foci, nor dominion abilities go beyond sixth.

However, you can simulate continued **advancement** quite easily if you wish. To do so, allow characters to continue to pay for character benefits (4 XP each) as normal, with the following caveats:

- Effort cannot increase beyond 6. Instead, choose another skill or an alternative ability, such as adding 2 recovery rolls, reducing the cost of wearing armor, or selecting a new type ability.
- An Edge higher than 6 in any one stat is not permitted.
- When a character gains four benefits, he normally gains a new tier. Instead, choose another ability suited to the type. Further, choose any ability (of any tier) from the options for **customizing foci** abilities described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. Finally, gain an additional divine shift and a choice of any dominion ability (of any tier) per four benefits gained.



Character Advancement, page 223



Customizing Foci, page 91

Seven Prophecies, page 95

EQUIPMENT



Cyphers, page 176

Artifacts, page 178

The mint in Iron City regularly melts down older coins, recasting them with the image of Nulumriel.

Iron City, page 38

Aether, page 85

The Afterworld is a mix of medieval goods, oddments of industrial craft, and the products of crumbling divine legacies, spells, and wishes. This chapter looks at currency, materials, and gear. **Cyphers** and **artifacts** are not listed here, but rather in chapter 15.

CURRENCY

People of the Afterworld have a keen appreciation of gold, silver, gems, and several other special materials. Coins both newly minted and from before the Fall are still in circulation, and many coins have specific names based on where they originated, where they were minted, or the image stamped upon them. While that may be important to some, most people just call the coins by well-known generic terms. What's important is the quantity of valuable metal or material that each unit of currency contains.

Generally speaking, the following units of currency will be understood by anyone in the afterworld.

Penny (a copper coin). 10 pennies = 1 moon.
Moon (a silver coin). 10 moons = 1 star.
Star (a gold coin).

MATERIALS

Though magic and lucky discoveries means special materials described below are known and used in the Afterworld, most objects crafted are made of wood, leather, cloth, stone, glass, or metal. Skilled smiths can craft steel and other alloys, but most work in iron or bronze. Items made with special materials are usually at least two price categories more expensive than normal.

Special materials are valuable, though they're rarely used directly as a currency. Instead, when they're recognized, they're used to craft even more valuable objects and structures. Such materials include (but are not limited to) the following.

Aetherstone: This material is quarried from special interstitial locations in the **Aether**. When brought to the world, it has the appearance and strength of granite;



however, under certain conditions, structures and containers built from it return for brief periods to the Aether.

Spellweave Cloth: Spellweave is not unlike silk to see and touch. Many alternative methods exist for crafting spellweave cloth; however, most methods rely on spells designed to toughen regular woven and spun materials. Regardless of origin, most spellweave is about ten times as strong as regular cloth.

Cavazel Steel: Also called green steel. Weapons fashioned in **Cavazel** (before its destruction) often came with additional characteristics. Usually, that quality reduces the difficulty of attacks made with the weapon by one step or improves armor toughness.

Soul Glass: Transparent iron brought back from **Soulrest** and forged into weapons (and other items) that gain additional characteristics. Usually, that quality wounds spirits, ghosts, and other immaterial beings as if they were made of normal flesh, and inflicts an additional 1 point of damage on other unquiet dead, but other qualities sometimes manifest.

Serpent Gold: Serpent gold is a rare yellowish metal that is lighter than iron but just as hard. Apparently, serpent gold was common ages ago, but no longer. The material is especially useful for creating armor; most serpent gold armors are one step lighter than normal, but still provide the protection of the normal armor of its kind.

Phoenix Scale: Phoenixes are deadly foes, so working the scales (and feathers) of one into armor is no easy task. But if a skilled armorer has such material on hand, the set of medium armor fashioned also grants the wearer +2 to Armor against attacks that normally bypass Armor.

Seraphic Iron: Weapons forged of specially treated and rendered carcasses of defeated **seraphs** have the capacity to ignore Armor and directly wound the flesh of foes.

Cavazel, page 52

Seraph, page 170

Soulrest, page 84

EQUIPMENT LISTS AND PRICES

Items appearing in this chapter are general examples, not exhaustive lists. Equipment in the Afterworld is usually about as

advanced as that found in medieval societies, but can be more advanced. For example, a simple tent or bedroll might be constructed of spellweave that makes it entirely water-resistant as well as far lighter and warmer than cloth. A chainmail hauberk could be made in whole or in part from reddish phoenix scales that are harder and lighter than steel and provide mental protection as well as physical.

PRICE CATEGORIES

The *Cypher System Rulebook* introduces five price categories for goods and services.

Inexpensive items range in price from 1 to 29 pennies, and include items such as arrows and other ammunition, chalk, and simple meals.

Moderately priced items range in price from 3 to 49 moons, and include items such as simple weapons and armor, a tent, a thief's kit, and so on.

Expensive items range in price from 5 to 99 stars, and include items such as medium or heavy weapons or armor, the fee for bribing a city politician or buying a slave out of servitude, and so on.

Very expensive items range in price from 100 to 2,000 stars, and include jewels, low-level artifacts and cyphers, and so on.

Exorbitant items are well over 2,000 stars in price, and are the province of wealthy merchants, queens and kings, and dragons.

SHIELDS AND ARMOR

Item	Cost	Notes
Shield	40 moons	Asset for Speed defense tasks

ARMOR

The most common types of armor worn in the Afterworld include the following.

Light (1 point of Armor)	Cost
Aketon (quilted cloth or leather jacket)	10 moons
Hides and furs	5 moons
Light ward of protection*	300 stars
Medium (2 points of Armor)	Cost
Chainmail hauberk	55 stars
Breastplate	65 stars
Spellweave gambeson **	100 stars
Medium ward of protection*	3,000 stars
Heavy (3 points of Armor)	Cost
Plate armor	95 stars
Serpent gold breastplate**	2,000 stars
Heavy ward of protection*	5,000 stars

* Wards of protection do not require a wearer to be practiced in Armor and do not increase the cost of using a level of Effort when attempting a Speed-based action. They usually last one year.

** When worn, the indicated special armors protect at their level, but tax the wearer as if they were one level lower. Thus, spellweave gambeson provides 2 points of Armor, but taxes the wearer as if it were light armor.

Some sorcerers know the art of inking protective tattoos—wards of protection—on flesh and may grant that protection to others if paid well enough.



Using Armor, page 184

WEAPONS

The most common types of weapons wielded in the Afterworld include the following.

Light (2 points of damage)	Cost	Notes
Club	10 pennies	
Dagger (katar)	5 moons	
Dagger, double blade (haladar)	100 stars	Wielder can make a second simultaneous attack with a difficulty that is one step higher
Shortbow	30 stars	Long range
12 arrows	1 moon	
Whip (savar)	7 moons	
Knuckle claw (tiger claw)	7 moons	Asset to conceal weapon in hand
Medium (4 points of damage)	Cost	Notes
Bow	40 stars	Long range
12 arrows	1 moon	
Crossbow	50 stars	Long range
12 medium bolts	1 moon	
Flail	40 stars	
Long sword (patar)	50 stars	Integrated gauntlet; asset to resist dropping
Battleaxe (parashar)	60 stars	
Staff	2 stars	Treat as light weapon if used one-handed
Trident	40 stars	
Spear (velar)	3 stars	Can be thrown as a short-range weapon
Heavy (6 points of damage)	Cost	Notes
Heavy mace (gadar)	30 stars	
Heavy crossbow	70 stars	Long range, action to reload
12 heavy bolts	4 moons	
Lance	40 stars	Often used with a mount
Maul	40 stars	
Greatsword (shastar)	90 stars	



Weapons, page 184



OTHER EQUIPMENT

Item	Cost	Notes
Adventurer's pack	50 stars	50 feet (15 m) rope, 3 days' rations, 3 spikes, hammer, warm clothes, boots, 3 torches
Ale/wine/other alcohol (glass)	3 pennies	
Ale/wine/other alcohol (bottle)	2 moons	
Backpack/Courier bag	20 moons	
Bedroll	20 moons	
Book	100 stars	Asset to task related to book topic after 10 minutes spent reading the book
Boots/shoes (average quality)	10 moons	
Boots/shoes (exceptional quality)	50 stars	Asset to tasks related to travel endurance
Clothing	10 moons	
Clothing, warm	20 stars	Asset to resisting effects of cold
Clothing, fine/tailored	50 stars	Asset to interaction tasks
Come-Along (block and tackle)	10 stars	Asset to lifting heavy objects
Compass	100 stars	Doesn't work in Eye of Elanehtar
Disguise kit	90 stars	Asset to disguise tasks
Dream dust (7 doses)	5 pennies	Daily use eliminates dreams, protects users in the Nightland against dangerous dreams sent by the King of Nod
Elephant, draft	450 stars	Can be fitted with carriage
Healer's kit	70 stars	Asset to healing tasks
Grappling hook	10 stars	
Lantern	10 stars	
Lantern oil, ½ pint (230 ml)	5 stars	Burns for 10 hours
Lockpicks	3 stars	Asset to lockpicking tasks
Lockpicks, machined	90 stars	Two assets to lockpicking tasks
Matchsticks (10)	10 stars	
Meal	3 pennies	
Musical instrument	Variable	
Pouch	5 stars	
Prybar	5 stars	Asset to tasks related to opening stuck doors
Quiver	2 stars	
Rations (1 day)	2 moons	
Rope (50 feet/15 m)	10 stars	
Spikes (10) and hammer	5 stars	
Tent	40 stars	
Torches (3)	2 stars	Burns for 2 hours
Trella juice (2 doses)	100 stars	Asset to Intellect tasks for 2 hours; addiction leads to lost time and mental decline without steady consumption
Waterskin	10 moons	
Water pipe	10 stars	
Wodner oil (5 doses)	50 stars	Induces euphoria for 2 hours, during which time all Intellect tasks are one step more difficult

While war elephants may be purchased, the price is exorbitant.

PART 4

GM's TOOLBOX



CHAPTER 14: CREATURES AND NPCs

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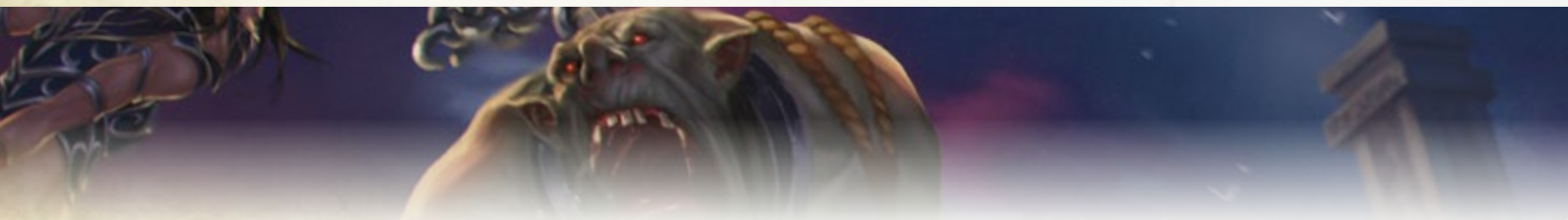
CHAPTER 15: CYPHERS AND ARTIFACTS

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CHAPTER 16: ADVENTURE: RITE OF SPRING

182

CREATURES AND NPCS



The creatures in this chapter can be found in the specific locations described in this book, but as always, GMs are free to use a creature however and wherever they want. The realms available in *Gods of the Fall* are so varied that this chapter only begins to explore the types of creatures that characters might encounter in their travels.

The most important element of each creature is its level. You use the level to determine the target number a PC must reach to attack or defend against the opponent. In each entry, the difficulty number for the creature is listed in parentheses after its level. The target number is three times the level.

A creature's target number is usually also its health, which is the amount of damage it can sustain before it is dead or incapacitated. For easy reference, the entries always list a creature's health, even when it's the normal amount for a creature of its level. For more detailed information on level, health, combat, and other elements, see the *Understanding the Listings* section in the *Cypher System Rulebook*.

FANTASY CREATURES
IN THE SETTING

Most creatures and NPCs noted in the *Cypher System Rulebook* as being appropriate for a fantasy genre campaign also exist in the Afterworld, including ghosts, giants, elementals, ghouls, giant spiders, and so on. Note that gods are also described as creatures in the rulebook (though the term demigod is used). Demigods make particularly appropriate foes for the PCs, at least after the characters have gained a few tiers and associated dominion abilities and divine shifts.

The only creatures noted in the *Cypher System Rulebook* that are not normally found in the Afterworld, at least by their common names, are as follows:

Demons and Devils: The Afterworld doesn't have traditional demons or devils; however, if you wish to use the stats for either one of those creatures, you could do so and reskin that creature as a variety of *raver*, new kind of *seraph of sin*, or some other divine beast.

Angels: Likewise, there are no traditional angels in the Afterworld. That said, the Battle Hosts of Elanehtar were filled out by *seraphs of virtue*. They were angelic beings to be sure, but they were entities of iron animated by divine grace, not living creatures.

Dragons: The Afterworld has creatures called dragons, but these are not the traditional, leathery-winged, fire-breathing sort. Afterworld dragons are people who have hoarded and gathered so much sorcerous power that they rival city-states in personal power. Dragons barter in souls, longevity, artifacts, and magic, and for the most part, have lost their humanity in the process.

Shadow Elves: Similarly, the Afterworld isn't home to elves (or, for that matter, dwarves and halflings), so shadow elves are also off the table. (That said, animate fungal creatures from the Second Deep are sometimes referred to as faerie creatures, including the elf knight.)

Raver, page 169

Seraph of sin, page 172

Seraph of virtue, page 171



Understanding the Listings, page 274



Demigod, page 283

Divine shifts, page 105

NEW CREATURES AND NPCs BY LEVEL

Nodling (nightmare)	3
Seraph	3
Slaver	3
Empusa	4
Griffon	4
Raver, lesser	4
Zekadid	4
Bibliomancer	5
Faerie ring	5
Gorgon	5
Nightfall wolf	5
Seraph of sin	5
Seraph of virtue	5
Erinyes	6
Golden bull	6
Night horror (nightmare)	6
Rakshasa	6
Slave master	6
Troll	6
Elf knight	7
Knight of Reconciliation	7
Raver, elder	7
Hellmaw	13



SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL CREATURES FOR YOUR FANTASY GAME

Assassin	Giant snake	Statue, animate
Chimera	Giant spider	Thug/bandit
Demigod	Goblin	Vampire
Djinni	Golem	Wendigo
Dream sallow	Guard	Werewolf
Elemental	Mechanical soldier	Witch
Ghost	Occultist	Wizard, mighty
Ghoul	Ogre	Zombie
Giant	Orc	
Giant rat	Skeleton	

The *Cypher System Rulebook* provides simple stats for other creatures and NPCs for a fantasy game, including bats, dogs, rats, and so on.


Other Creatures and
NPCs for a Fantasy
Game, page 239

BIBLIOMANCER

5 (15)

Sorcerer and bibliomancer are essentially synonymous terms. Some bibliomancers prefer to be called sorcerers, or even wizards. Those who accumulate an overwhelming amount of power and influence are sometimes called dragons.



Dragon (mighty wizard), page 339

GM Intrusion: *The bibliomancer reverses their normal trick, and tries to suck the PC into their book. A trapped PC remains in a strange story realm until they can escape with a successful Intellect roll.*

Bibliomancers are usually humans, but not always. They affect dress that is dramatic and atypical. Some adorn themselves with magical sigils and tattoos of text passages, and others prefer hooded robes and staves. A few even try to blend in. Regardless, most bibliomancers carry at least one or more tomes or scrolls on their person.

Motive: Understand and acquire magic

Health: 17

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Short

Modifications: Defends as level 6.

Combat: Bibliomancers can cast spells, and some can pull the likeness of a creature, object, or effect described in tomes they carry, which grants bibliomancers enhanced offensive and defensive capabilities. Eschewing simple physical weapons, bibliomancers are likely to use spells of blasting, a creature drawn from a book, or if available, a cypher or artifact to accomplish their ends.

At minimum, a bibliomancer can accomplish at least one of the following magical effects:

Produce a level 6 or lower creature from a book to defend the bibliomancer, use a spell to attack one or more creatures within short range that inflicts 5 points of damage (ignores Armor), or teleport to a place of safety using a cypher.

Interaction: Bibliomancers are often engrossed in their magical research. The best way to get one's attention is by offering a tome or other written work the bibliomancer hasn't previously encountered. Even the most selfish sorcerer is likely willing to trade some bit of their expertise in return for the completion of a task or a generous gift.

Use: Some bibliomancers see themselves as the gods' inheritors, and show up when questions of divine power (such as that resident in cyphers) arise, claiming for themselves the role of executor.

Loot: Bibliomancers typically carry 10d6 stars, 1d6 cyphers, possibly an artifact, and 1d6 books (not necessarily magical, but potentially so).



ELF KNIGHT

7 (21)

AN ELF KNIGHT IS THE MOST COMMON NIGHTMARE FOUND IN THE SECOND DEEP, BUT IS ONLY A MANIFESTATION OF SOMETHING FAR MORE TERRIFYING: AN INTELLIGENCE MILES WIDE AND DEEP THAT WAKES IN THE FUNGAL DARKNESS.

An elf knight is a bulky, hunchbacked humanoid 12 feet (4 m) in height composed of mushroom flesh covered in a bone-white carapace. Its head is a hump of translucent ooze. The creature uses obsidian claws to slash its way through the fungal spires of its home, and to attack those who intrude upon the quiet of the Second Deep.

Motive: Defense

Environment: Anywhere in the Second Deep

Health: 30

Damage Inflicted: 8 points

Armor: 5

Movement: Short

Modifications: Speed defense as level 5 due to size.

Combat: Elf knights slash foes with their obsidian claws, but can instead release a variety of dangerous spores as an action.

Animate Fungus: No more than once per minute, an elf knight can animate two mundane fungal growths within short range as level 3 creatures under its command.

Acidic Spores: Living, non-fungal targets within immediate range must make a Might defense roll or suffer 5 points of damage (ignores Armor) for three rounds.

Paralytic Spores: Living, non-fungal targets within immediate range must make a Might defense roll or stand as stiff and mindless as a mushroom for a round.

Interaction: Sometimes an elf knight releases communication spores, which allow it to telepathically speak with other creatures within immediate range. Every elf knight is actually a mouthpiece for the single, mysterious fungal intelligence that controls the Second Deep. Because that intelligence is still more asleep than awake, most elf knight communications make little sense.

Use: Always moving, elf knights are fearless guardians, willing to seek out and attack intruders anywhere.

The term “elf” is lost to antiquity in the Afterworld, but is related to visions associated with exposure to fungal spores.

Second Deep, page 61

GM Intrusion: The elf knight releases confusion spores. The character must make an Intellect defense roll or attack their allies for up to one minute.



EMPUSA

4 (12)

Empusa originally descended from a god named Hecali, one of the Three Judges of Soulrest.

Hecali, page 85

Three Judges, page 85

Soulrest, page 84

Empusa are voracious entities who have seeped out of Soulrest in great numbers since the Fall. When they emerge from the shadows, empusa appear as normal-sized humans with scarlet-hued hair. Although they served as guardians of the dead in Soulrest, in the Afterworld empusa are creatures of unlimited hunger, especially for humans and tarans. When possible, they lure potential meals to a secluded location where victims can be devoured without interruption.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Anywhere shadowed or dark in the Afterworld, or in Soulrest

Health: 24

Damage Inflicted: 4 points

Movement: Short; immediate when seeping through solid objects of its level or lower

Modifications: Level 5 for stealth and disguise tasks; level 7 for psychic whisper ability due to three divine shifts.

Combat: When an empusa bites a foe, they regain 1 point of health for every 2 points of damage they inflict. An empusa usually prepares a meal by first mentally dominating a target within immediate range with a psychic whisper.

A target must make a difficulty 7 Intellect defense roll or come under the empusa's mental control for several minutes (without its divine shifts, the psychic whisper attack would be a level 4 attack). Most empusa can mentally dominate only one or two targets simultaneously. The empusa usually commands the target to follow her to a discreet location, and to react to the creature's bites as if they were kisses. (Once mentally dominated, a victim can't be affected again by the same empusa for several days.)

Interaction: An empusa seems like a friendly and helpful traveler, and may even help PCs achieve a goal, but betrayal of at least one PC is likely.

Use: The PCs are staying in a safe-seeming metropolis inn. That's when one character hears tapping at the window, and enticing whispers through the glass.

Loot: Empusa usually have hidden lairs where valuables of previous victims can be found, which usually include a few cyphers.

GM Intrusion: The character's attack on the empusa severs its head, which animates and flies under its own power and continues to attack the character, but now as level 5 for Speed defense.



ERINYES

6 (18)

Winged terrors with a vaguely human female aspect (though slightly taller than a normal human), erinyes originate in Soulrest. There, they were called upon to punish those who broke oaths, duties, or promises sworn in the name of a deity. Of late, few make such oaths. Thus, erinyes are among the first of Soulrest's denizens to take advantage of the Hellmaw's inattention in guarding the ways into and out of Soulrest. They enter the world, delighting in punishing mortal creatures for any reason, or none, in a display of unbridled fury.

Motive: Hungers for flesh, punish oathbreakers

Environment: Almost anywhere in Soulrest and the Afterworld

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 12 points

Armor: 3

Movement: Short; long when flying

Modifications: Level 8 for sharpened wing attacks due to two divine shifts.

Combat: When an erinyes restricts itself to moving an immediate distance or not attacking in a round, it blends in almost perfectly with its surroundings, making it effectively invisible. When it attacks, an erinyes flings sharpened feathers at up to two targets standing next to each other within short range as a level 8 attack that inflicts 12 points of damage (without its divine shifts, the attack would be level 6 and inflict 6 points of damage). Foes struck take damage and must make a difficulty 6 Might defense roll or fall unconscious for up to one minute. Each round a creature fails to rouse itself with a successful Might task roll, it suffers 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor).

Some erinyes who find their way into the Afterworld collect and use cyphers.

Interaction: Erinyes are manifestations of fury, and hardly seem intelligent. But sometimes they can be calmed for brief periods and negotiated with, if the name of one of the *Three Judges* is invoked (Samiel, Hecali, or Etanernal).

Use: The PCs are attacked by one or two erinyes after they give false witness, fail to meet an obligation, or otherwise don't live up to their oaths. (Erinyes are drawn to gods more than to mortals.)

Loot: Some erinyes carry cyphers.

Three Judges, page 85

GM Intrusion: The character struck by the erinyes flashes back to some oath or promise he broke. The memory becomes especially troublesome for the next minute, during which time the difficulty of all tasks attempted by the character is increased by one step.



FAERIE RING

5 (15)

Faerie rings originate in the subterranean Second Deep beneath the Ruinscape.

Second Deep, page 61

Ruinscape, page 52

Faerie ring victims perish happily, in the warm embrace of an alluring vision, never realizing they've actually been sucked into a gelatinous, predatory ooze 10 feet (3 m) in diameter. Fungal in origin, faerie rings have become more and more of a plague for the last twenty years in the Afterworld, popping up along trade roads, outside villages, and even in the sewers and basements of Nightland metropolises. Be it enticing music, the smell and sight of an amazing feast, or the glance of a charming and captivating stranger, a hunting faerie ring calls victims to it, rather than seeking them out.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Almost anywhere in the Second Deep and on the surface

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Immediate; immediate for burrowing or climbing

Modifications: Speed defense as level 2.

Combat: A faerie ring hides itself in an enticing magical illusion that can include motion, sound, scent, and other sensory components. That's enough to lure many victims to within immediate range. On a failed Intellect defense roll, creatures within immediate range of the faerie ring are engulfed; onlookers might see the victim incorporated into the illusion. An engulfed victim suffers 5 points of ambient damage from fungal digestion each round in which it does not escape the illusion with a successful Intellect defense roll, and then a successful Might roll to physically pull itself free. If the faerie ring's true nature is discovered, it may try to spin another illusion that evokes the creature's illusory (but in their mind successful) escape.

Interaction: A faerie ring is part of the fungal intelligence of the Second Deep, but it is just a limited component. However, it can interact, speak via an illusory avatar, and even develop goals of its own. If its true nature is discovered, it might create an illusory avatar to bargain for its life.

Use: A newly established inn is staffed by happy and alluring people. However, sometimes visitors and travelers who stay there are never seen again.

GM Intrusion: Just when the character believes they're free, the fungal mound surges forward and attempts to physically engulf them.



GOLDEN BULL

6 (18)

Some divine creatures survived Elanehtar's destruction, including several golden bulls. Stories in old tomes suggest that golden bulls, tigers, falcons, and similar creatures once played upon Elanehtar's eternal plains. Now just a few survivors have found their way to the Afterworld, and most have become hardened and cruel by their experience, if not downright rapacious. Golden bulls are slightly larger and even more densely muscled than standard bulls.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Anywhere in the Afterworld, Aether, or Soulrest

Health: 27

Damage Inflicted: 15 points

Armor: 4

Movement: Short

Modifications: Level 9 for goring attacks due to three divine shifts; level 7 for breaking through barriers.

Combat: Golden bulls attack by goring foes, inflicting 15 points of damage on a successful attack (without its divine shifts, a golden bull would inflict 6 points of damage). If a golden bull charges a short distance, it can attack as part of the same action, and inflict an additional 2 points of damage.

A golden bull is filled with fire; attacking one in melee inflicts 5 points of damage on the attacker.

Finally, a golden bull can breathe forth its divine flames, dealing 12 points of ambient damage to all creatures within immediate range (without its divine shifts, this attack would inflict 3 points of damage on all targets).

Golden bulls can smash through stone walls or knock down an entire house. An angry bull can smite a rocky cliff and cause a rockslide or an avalanche.

Interaction: Golden bulls can speak seraphic, but usually choose not to. They are belligerent and cruel, and almost impossible to tame or train.

Use: A golden bull has decided to destroy a holdfast in the Ruinscape by smashing down its walls one segment at a time and eating anyone who appears to defend the sanctity of the structure.

GM Intrusion: *The golden bull smashes into the wall, causing the surrounding structure to collapse. If the structure is made of wood, it also catches on fire.*



GORGON

5 (15)

Katheer, page 58

DESPITE HAVING SOME FEATURES IN COMMON WITH KATHEER FOUND IN THE FIRST DEEP, GORGONS SEEM FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE THIRD, THE RUIN OF A WORLD RULED BY TYPHON, GOD OF MONSTERS.

“Hideous visage” doesn’t do justice to a gorgon’s features, which are so cursed that a victim who meets its gaze is turned to stone. A gorgon’s upper body is humanoid save for its awful face and mane of snakes instead of hair, while its lower body is that of a coiling serpent. A gorgon stands about 6 feet (2 m) tall.

Motive: Return the god of monsters, Typhon, to prominence

Environment: Anywhere in the Third Deep, sometimes protected by a colossus

Health: 27

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Short

Combat: Unless the gorgon’s visage is hooded, each round anyone within short range who sees the gorgon’s face and fails a Might defense roll descends one step on the damage track. A creature that would be slain by this effect (by descending a final step on the damage track) is turned to stone instead. This effect happens regardless of any other action the gorgon takes. In combat, when a character within short distance attacks the gorgon, they must avert their gaze (which increases the difficulty of their attack by two steps) to avoid this effect.

Most gorgons carry a bow and quiver, enabling them to make long-range attacks.

In close combat, a gorgon lashes out with the serpents on its head. A target that fails its Speed defense roll takes 2 points of damage from the bite and must immediately make a Might defense roll to resist the poison (which deals 4 additional points of Speed damage that ignore Armor).

Some gorgons have one or two divine shifts, usually applied to increase the range and difficulty of their petrifying attack.

Interaction: Madness and fury consume gorgons.

Awakened in the buried ruins of a world where they once served as priests of Typhon, gorgons seek to learn what happened, and to bring Typhon back, however impossible that might seem.

Use: A gorgon with a few divine shifts finds its way to the surface, and is tracking down relics it thinks it needs to undertake a world-altering ritual.

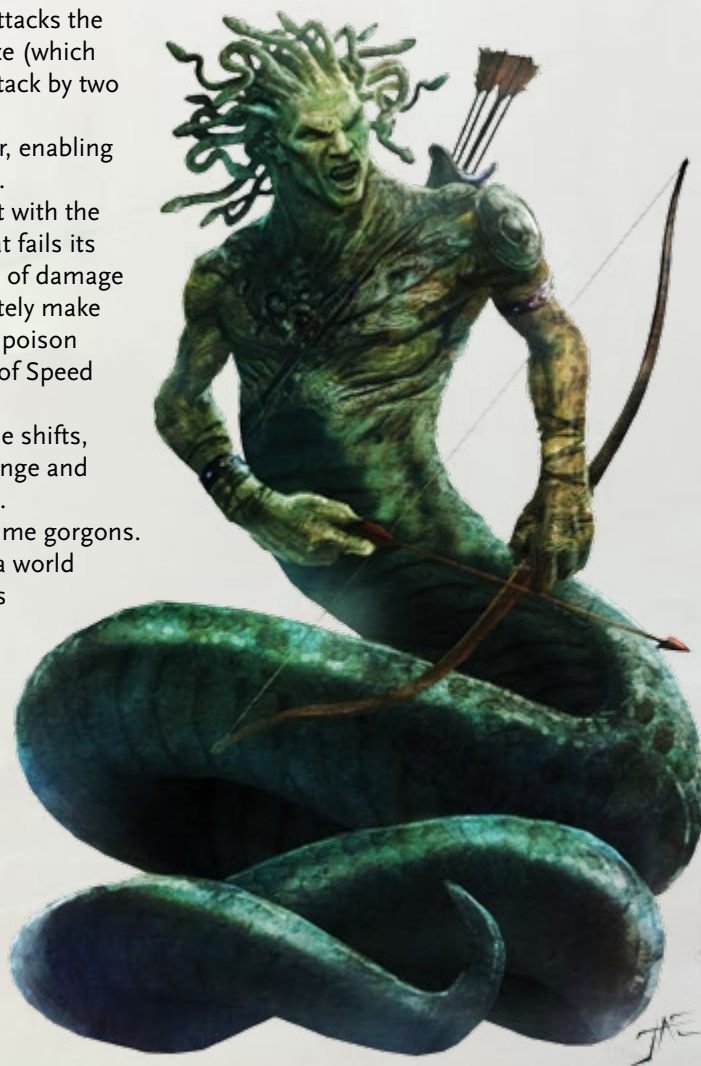
Loot: A gorgon typically has a few cyphers and may have an artifact as well.



Damage track,
page 202

Typhon, page 64

GM Intrusion: The character trips over a fallen statue—a previous victim of the gorgon’s gaze—hidden in the underbrush, and falls at the base of the gorgon.



GRIFFON

4 (12)

Combining a lion and eagle, the griffon is a creature of strength, majesty, and savagery. Griffon colonies are thick along the flanks of the Aravan Range, but mating pairs can be seen winging across the sky nearly everywhere in the Afterworld. Their nests resemble those built by eagles, though larger, and sometimes with space set aside for holding live prey. In addition to scraps of cloth, feathers, bones, and other oddments, many nests contain valuables snatched by the griffon. Swords, chests, staves, moons, and stars spilling out of bags are not uncommon in nests belonging to the alpha mating pair in a larger colony. About the size of a regular lion, a griffon's wingspan stretches over 20 feet (6 m).

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Anywhere, but especially in mountainous regions, singly or in groups of three

Health: 12

Damage Inflicted: 6 points

Movement: Short; long while flying

Modifications: Perception as level 6; Speed defense as level 5; attacks as level 5 when diving at ground-based prey.

Combat: Griffons soar through the skies, their keen eyes watching the ground below for suitable prey. When prey is spotted, griffons dive and attack with claws. Struck victims must make a second Speed defense roll to twist away or be grabbed and flown an additional short distance back into the air. Griffons may drop captured prey to their deaths.

On the ground, griffons are no less fierce. They can make two attacks (claws and beak) as part of the same action against one or two foes. However, griffons fight to the death only if protecting a nest. They flee if they suffer significant damage.

Interaction: Griffons are wild animals and behave as such. Griffons found as chicks can be trained as mounts.

Use: The PCs search out a griffon's nest to steal its eggs on behalf of a patron. Alternatively, PCs on mounts might draw an attack from a group of hungry griffons.

Loot: A griffon nest might hold an artifact weapon, 2d20 stars, and a few cyphers.

Griffons attack those who wear bright colors, and especially travelers bearing flashing, shiny armor, shields, and swords. Some ancient species memory of war seems to trigger this response. They also attack horses, elephants, and other similar beasts.

GM Intrusion: *The griffon snatches a valuable piece of the character's equipment and flies off.*



HELLMAW

13 (39)

Certain old prayers suggest that there are not one, but three Hellmaws, one that served each of the Three Judges.

GM Intrusion: *The Hellmaw's bite pulls the character's soul out of their body. For each round the soul remains dissociated, the character suffers 10 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor), until they succeed at a difficulty 7 Intellect roll.*

The guardian of Soulrest is perhaps the most feared creature of the Afterworld. A beast formed from divine will and the flesh of hundreds of dead souls, the Hellmaw is a being capable of fighting several gods at once. Now that the gods are dead, the Hellmaw runs free through Soulrest, consuming souls at its leisure. Sometimes, it appears for a time in the world of the living, a walking disaster worse than any tornado or earthquake. The Hellmaw is 70 feet (20 m) long with a wingspan twice that.

Motive: Hungers for souls and destruction

Environment: Anywhere in Soulrest; sometimes seen loping across the Ruinscape

Health: 166

Damage Inflicted: 20 Intellect points

Armor: 5

Movement: Long

Modifications: Speed defense as level 8 due to size and speed.

Combat: The Hellmaw can attack foes with its soul-shattering howl up to about a half a mile (1 km) away. The howl inflicts 20 points of Intellect damage that ignores Armor on targets who fail an Intellect defense roll. If targets succeed, they suffer 10 points of Intellect damage that ignores Armor instead. (The Hellmaw can make this attack up to once per hour.)

In melee, the Hellmaw can bite a foe, regardless of whether that foe is fleshy or an insubstantial spirit. A bite inflicts 20 points of damage, which is partly the result of the Hellmaw absorbing the victim's flesh and soul. Thus, each such bite restores 10 points to the Hellmaw's health.

The Hellmaw can sense weak spots in reality's fabric, which allows it to slip into various realms, including Soulrest, the Afterworld, Nod, and more distant realms in the Aether, but only if it spends about a minute to sniff out the way.

Interaction: Unless presented with a token of a god's power (such as a dead god's implement, or what was once its binding chain), the Hellmaw can't be reasoned with. Even then, it normally pauses only for a round before returning to the slaughter.

Use: If the PCs venture into Soulrest, escaping from the Hellmaw may prove to be part of the experience.



KNIGHT OF RECONCILIATION 7 (21)

None enforce the Reconciliators' anti-divine ideology more fiercely than the specially trained Knights of Reconciliation. Each knight is a master of weapons and sorcery. They ferret out any sign of divine magic, including cyphers, divine artifacts, and those claiming to be new gods. Knights of Reconciliation also protect against ravers, seraphs of sin, and other true, actual evils.

Motive: Track down and eliminate divine influence

Environment: Almost anywhere, usually accompanied by a bibliomancer and two or three level 3 lesser knights

Health: 50

Damage Inflicted: 10 points

Armor: 3

Movement: Short

Modifications: Speed defense as level 8 while holding a shield; level 10 to resist effects that would influence their mind, charm them, or put them to sleep.

Combat: A Knight of Reconciliation is typically armed with a massive one-handed weapon and a shield. When a knight spends an action to do so, they detect the closest concentration of divine energy (cyphers or divine shifts) within short range.

A Knight of Reconciliation can channel mystical energy at up to four targets within short range (an attack they call a Cleansing Strike). A target who fails a Might defense roll against a Cleansing Strike suffers 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor). Targets who possess divine shifts who fail their defense roll lose access to the benefits from those shifts for one minute. Targets affected by Cleansing Strike become immune to further attacks with the ability for one day.

In addition, a Knight of Reconciliation may ride a trained steed (a level 5 beast able to move a long distance each round).

Interaction: Knights of Reconciliation are determined, dedicated, fair, and just to those they protect against lies, insinuations, and heresies.

Use: A Knight of Reconciliation shows up, half dead, claiming that ravers infesting a ruin to the north took out her team. The knight is looking for someone to help her clean out the infestation.

Loot: Knights of Reconciliation carry weapons, heavy armor, and possibly a small cache of collected cyphers (which a knight never uses in combat, since they are considered to be relics of temptation).

Order of Reconciliation, page 90

False God is the name Reconciliators bestow on anyone found to possess divine shifts, or who openly proclaims divinity.

Divine shifts, page 105

GM Intrusion: The character struck by the knight must succeed on a Might defense roll or lose access to all their dominion abilities for one day.

Dominion, page 138



NIGHTFALL WOLF

5 (15)

*The Night Beast
Awakens, page 101*

*A victim of a nightfall
wolf pregnancy doesn't
have to be female.
Treat the condition
like a curse (level 5).*

Nightfall wolves are lesser manifestations of the Night Beast. What exactly is the Night Beast? No one knows. Everyone who did died the last time it ended an age, tens of thousands of years ago.

When the Night Beast rouses, nightfall wolves are born spontaneously. Horses, hounds, wolves, and people horrifically birth squirming, two-head wolf monsters. Once born, the pups quickly grow to full-size black-furred wolves with two heads, reaching well over 10 feet (3 m) from muzzle to tail.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Alone or in packs of two to four anywhere in the Afterworld

Health: 25

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Long

Modifications: Speed defense as level 4 due to size; perception as level 7.

Combat: Nightfall wolves can bite a single target twice as one action. If two or more wolves attack a single target in the same round, the attacks are level 7 and each bite inflicts 7 points of damage.

If a nightfall wolf uses its action to howl, all foes within long range who fail an Intellect defense roll lose access to one divine shift (if any) for one minute.

Nightfall wolves can see invisible creatures, ignore illusions, and attack out-of-phase, immaterial creatures and ghosts normally.

If slain, a nightfall wolf melts into a pool of oily, black liquid that drains into the ground.

Interaction: Nightfall wolves are rabid predators.

Use: A noble family's daughter gave birth, not to a normal baby, but to a horrific wolf-pup with two heads. The wolf-pup escaped into the castle dungeon after savaging its mother. There its howls can still be heard, growing deeper and louder each day.

GM Intrusion: *The wolf that bites the character twice in one round clamps down and holds on, inflicting 10 points of damage each round. The character can't take any actions until they escape.*



NIGHTMARE

Nightmares crawl across the face and beneath the surface of Nod, left behind by thousands of years of dreaming mortals. Whether encountered on Nod or on the world of mortal flesh, they are equally terrifying.

NODLING

3 (9)

Lesser nightmares, sometimes called nodlings, are mindless terrors that infest Nod's psychic substrate. Usually child sized, their features are a horrible mess of flesh, bone, hair, and horn.

Motive: Hungers for minds

Environment: Anywhere on Nod in groups of five or more

Health: 9

Damage Inflicted: 3 Intellect points

Movement: Short

Modifications: Speed defense as level 4 due to size and frenzied quickness; Intellect defense as level 6.

Combat: Nodlings bite, pinch, squeeze, and hug, inflicting 3 points of Intellect damage that ignore Armor. Five nodlings attacking together can make a single attack against one character as a level 5 creature. A swarm's successful attack deals 5 points of Intellect damage that ignore Armor.

Interaction: Nodlings are essentially dream vermin.

Use: A nodling swarm is attracted as characters first enter Nod, are about to leave it, or pass between dreams.

GM Intrusion: A PC must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect task, or lose their next turn out of surprise or horror upon seeing a nodling.

NIGHT HORROR

6 (18)

Night horrors are intelligent psychic entities formed from especially vile dreams. They retain their existence by feeding off the terror of other creatures. They can take the apparent likeness of any creature, living or dead, up to three times the size of a human.

Motive: Hungers for minds

Environment: Anywhere on Nod

Health: 23

Damage Inflicted: 6 points

Movement: Short; flies a long distance each round

Modifications: Intellect defense as level 9; disguise tasks as level 7.

Combat: Night horrors use a weapon appropriate to their apparent likeness. Taking a new likeness is something a horror can do as part of another action, up to once per round. A night horror can attack all creatures within short range with a psychic display so horrible that targets must make an Intellect defense roll. Those who fail take 6 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and become terrified, freezing in place. Each round a victim fails an Intellect task to break free of the fear, they suffer an additional 6 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor).

Interaction: Night horrors are insane supernatural predators. Some have enough intelligence to understand strategy and tactics. These can be negotiated with, but they are also the ones who vie with the King of Nod for control of the moon.

Use: A night horror is bound in a cursed book that finds its way into a local shop or home.

GM Intrusion: The character is pulled physically into Nod (if not already there) or pushed back into the Afterworld.

RAKSHASA

6 (18)

The Rakshasa Queen still dwells in Soulrest. She is responsible for releasing the Hellmaw. She wears the enchanted chain that bound it looped around her waist like a belt.

Rakshasa Queen, page 87

When particularly evil humans came to Soulrest, Samiel returned them to life as rakshasas. Human sized, they can change their shape and faces, confuse the senses of both the living and dead, and work powerful magic. With Samiel's death, the rakshasas were freed to pursue their own desires, most of which are rooted in gluttony, lust, and a desire for power.

Motive: Exploration and adventure

Environment: Usually in the Nightland attended by servitors and slaves

Health: 22

Damage Inflicted: 6 points

Armor: 2

Movement: Short

Modifications: Intellect defense as level 8; knowledge of magic as level 8; tasks related to lying as level 7.

Combat: A rakshasa can extend venomous claws from its hand and make two attacks as a single action. In addition, if a victim fails a Might defense roll, toxin on the claws inflicts an additional 2 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) for three rounds.

A rakshasa knows several spells, including one or more of the following.

Shapechange. Once per day the rakshasa can change its shape, usually to that of a normal animal, but sometimes to that of a human-animal hybrid.

Judgment of Guilt. A long-range stunning attack against a single foe inflicts 6 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and renders victim incapable of taking its next turn as it mentally relives past transgressions.

Banish. An immediate-range attack banishes one target to Soulrest on a failed Intellect defense roll (usable once per month).

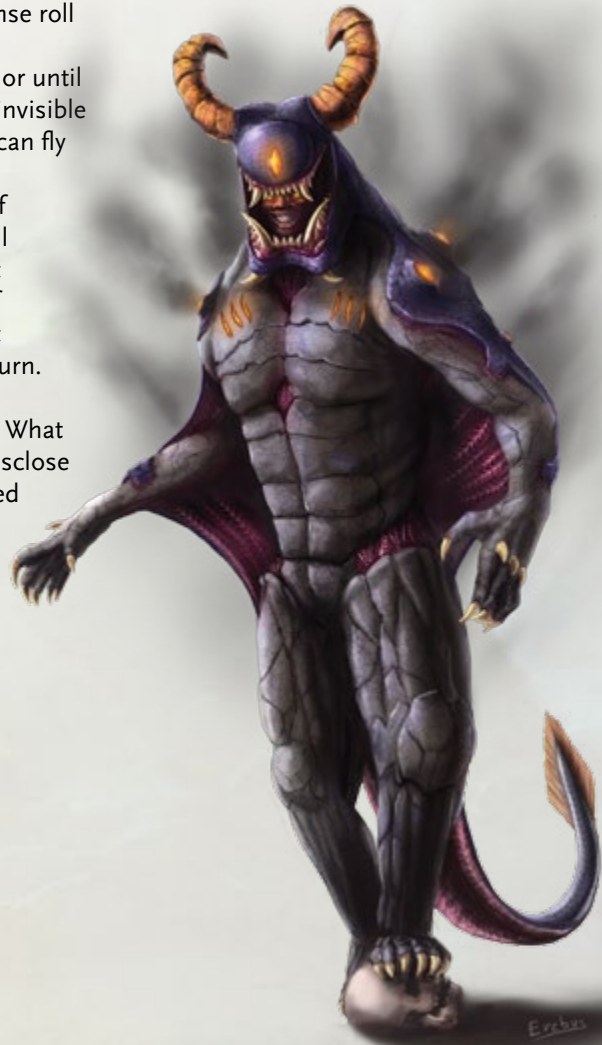
Assassin's Leap. For up to one minute or until it attacks, the rakshasa becomes invisible (all stealth tasks as level 10) and can fly a long distance each round.

Interaction: Rakshasas are masters of deceit. They may seem like helpful strangers and potential allies, but rakshasas always play an angle. If a rakshasa negotiates with PCs, it eventually demands a favor in return.

Use: A rakshasa stole a book from a wealthy owner who wants it back. What the owner doesn't immediately disclose is that the book in question is filled with powerful curses.

Loot: Some rakshasas supplement their claws and spells with enchanted weapons of artifact-level power, as well as a few cyphers.

GM Intrusion: The character is targeted with a sense-evasion spell. On a failed Intellect defense roll, the PC loses the ability to perceive the rakshasa for one minute or until the rakshasa inflicts damage on the character.



RAVER

When gods are slain, sometimes ravers are born from their remains. Ravers manifest like the aura preceding a crippling migraine headache, flapping cloaks of bleeding skin, creeping mist, or a thunderhead underlit by lightning.

RAVER, LESSER

4 (12)

Lesser ravers are mere fragments of the essence of a dead god, but still potent and terrible. They vary in size, but usually stretch no larger than 6 feet (2 m) in diameter.

Motive: Corruption and murder

Environment: Anywhere in the Afterworld, Aether, or Soulrest alone or in groups of three

Health: 15

Damage Inflicted: 7 Intellect points

Movement: Short when flying

Modifications: Level 5 for melee attacks due to one divine shift.

Combat: Lesser ravers attack by mere touch, inducing images of crazed savagery in the victim. In addition, a lesser raver can usually manifest one curse as a short-range attack once per day.

Interaction: Lesser ravers live to destroy and corrupt, and they have no capacity for negotiation.

Use: A raver might creep up on a lone character and deliver a curse from hiding.

Raver curses can be selected from the Curses Table.

Curses Table, page 69

GM Intrusion: *The character struck or cursed by the raver must make an additional Intellect defense roll, or one of the character's cyphers hatches, becoming a lesser raver.*

RAVER, ELDER

7 (21)

Elder ravers represent a much greater fragment (or several collected fragments) of a dead god. Terrifyingly, they have achieved self-awareness. Many are well over 20 feet (6 m) in diameter.

Motive: Corruption and murder

Environment: Anywhere in the Afterworld, Aether, or Soulrest

Health: 50

Damage Inflicted: 13 Intellect points

Movement: Long when flying

Modifications: Level 10 for melee attacks due to two divine shifts.

Combat: An elder raver's attack is a touch that induces images of crazed savagery. Alternatively, an elder raver can inflict any curse from long range on one or more targets.

Interaction: An elder raver has enough self-possession to bargain with other creatures if it senses an advantage to be gained.

Use: An elder raver infests a shrine to the god it once was, feeding off worshippers who visit.



SERAPH

Seraphs in their thousands served the gods of Elanehtar as soldiers, messengers, and guardians. Seraphs are created entities, crafted by various gods of the forge long ago; their iron carapaces are animated by divine grace.

With Elanehtar's fall, many seraphs remain inert and drifting in the Aether. Sometimes they fall to the world, wake up, and try to find meaning. Others remain guarding shrines, temples, and other places that were once important to the gods in the Afterworld. As the new gods rise, more and more seraphs are being conscripted to serve them as they did of old.

SERAPH

3 (9)

When messages were sent to mortals from the gods, a seraph was dispatched to deliver the decree. If god fought god, each drew up a Host comprised chiefly of seraphs. Seraphs are about 7 feet (2 m) tall.

Motive: Fulfill the will of the gods

Environment: Almost anywhere alone or as part of a larger group

Health: 12

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 2

Movement: Short

Combat: Most seraphs use their metallic limbs to batter foes in combat. Some employ heavy weapons or long-range medium bows. Seraphs cannot be stunned or dazed. They are immune to most poisons and disease, and 1 of their 2 points of Armor protects against ambient damage (environmental damage, heat, cold, falling, and so on).

A seraph regains health at a rate of 1 point per round, or 2 points per round if in the presence of a divine being (such as a demigod or PC) who is in command of it. Even if a seraph is completely destroyed, the scraps of its form slowly reassemble over the course of three days, unless the scraps are melted down or dispersed.

Interaction: Many seraphs can't speak, but rely on writing. Those that make sound usually do so only to sing the praises of one of the dead gods. Many exceptions exist, but most seraphs are not prone to deep thought. They attempt to accomplish the tasks set by their creators (the dead gods), or those with the authority in the present to command them.

Use: Descending streaks of light herald a small host of seraphs falling into the world from the Aether. Some are inert, others help Afterworlders they find, but a few go on a rampage.

Loot: A seraph might carry one or two cyphers as part of the elaborate decoration forged into their metallic bodies.

GM Intrusion: The seraph detonates in an explosion of divine fury. The seraph is slain (though it will rise again in three days' time). Characters within immediate range of the explosion take 9 points of damage from shrapnel.



SERAPH OF VIRTUE

5 (15)



WHEN THE ARCH OF HEAVEN THREATENED TO FALL WITH ELANEHTAR, THE GREAT ARCHITECT—A VIRTUE NAMED NUTHIEL—CALLED UP A COMPANY OF ONE THOUSAND SERAPHS TO BOLSTER THE MASSIVE ARCH. PERHAPS THEY WOULD HAVE SAVED THE STRUCTURE, IF NOT FOR THE TREACHERY OF A SERAPH OF SIN.

Seraphs of virtue (also simply called virtues) are touched by divine power, giving them a godlike nimbus. To them was given command of various companies of regular seraphs, as well as other important tasks. Often, virtues would accompany divine avatars. Most important, virtues built and maintained the Arch of Heaven. Virtues are about 9 feet (3 m) tall.

Motive: Fulfill the will of the gods

Environment: Almost anywhere alone or commanding a small host of seraphs

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 13 points

Armor: 3

Movement: Short; long when flying

Modifications: Holy fire attacks as level 7 due to two divine shifts.

Combat: A virtue has two divine shifts, normally applied to their ability to call down a narrow pillar of holy fire on a victim within long range that inflicts 11 points of damage (without the shifts, a virtue would inflict 5 points of damage).

Each virtue personifies a particular ethic. A virtue can aid other creatures within short range by manifesting its ethic in its aura. Ethics include the following.

Courage: Selected targets in short range have an asset on tasks related to resisting fear and acting boldly.

Purity: Selected targets in short range have an asset on tasks related to resisting poison, disease, and curses.

Humility: Selected targets in short range have an asset on tasks related to persuasion and pleasant social interaction.

Diligence: Selected targets in short range can reroll a 1, but must use the new result, even if it's another 1.

Temperance: Selected targets in short range have an asset on Intellect defense tasks.

A virtue's 3 points of Armor also protect against ambient damage (environmental damage, heat, cold, falling, and so on). Otherwise, a virtue has the same immunities, regenerative abilities, and resurrection abilities as a standard seraph.

Interaction: Virtues have well-developed personalities, though those personalities revolve around the particular ethic they embody. However, many virtues suffer from a spiritual malaise due to the Fall.

Use: A seraph of virtue appears and commands the PCs to follow. The virtue says that it is an agent of the Seven Prophecies, and that it has a new task for the aspiring gods to complete. The task is related in some way to the virtue's manifest ethic. For instance, if the ethic is purity, the virtue leads the PCs to a location where a sickness must be cleansed from a community.

Loot: A virtue might carry a couple of cyphers and possibly an artifact that is somehow tied to its manifest ethic.

Arch of Heaven, page 70

GM Intrusion: On a failed Intellect defense roll, the character experiences overpowering regret at failing to live up to whatever ethic the virtue manifests, and loses its next turn.

SERAPH OF SIN

5 (15)

Seraphs of sin (often just called sins) are virtues who have become corrupted by personal despair or by direct malign influence. Freed from all ethical bonds, sins are almost as crazed as ravers, though they tend to focus only on a single perversion of virtue when spreading their temptations. Sins are about 9 feet (3 m) tall.

Motive: Serve evil gods

Environment: Almost anywhere alone or commanding other malign creatures

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 3

Movement: Short; long when flying

Modifications: Curse attacks as level 7 due to two divine shifts; lying as level 6.

Combat: A sin has two divine shifts, normally applied to their ability to curse a victim within long range. Depending on the malignancy a particular sin embodies, the effects of a particular curse might vary. Curses that different sins can speak include the following.

Wrath: Target suffers 11 points of Might damage and must make an Intellect defense roll or spend the next turn attacking an ally.

Gluttony: Target suffers 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and must make an Intellect defense roll or spend the next round scrounging for food.

Pride: Target suffers 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and must make an Intellect defense roll or ignore all enemy attacks (so they automatically hit).

Envy: Target suffers 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and must make an Intellect defense roll or try to steal something valuable from an ally.

Sloth: Target suffers 5 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) and must make an Intellect defense roll or fall asleep (from which the target can be awakened normally after the first round).

A seraph of sin's 3 points of Armor protect it against ambient damage (environmental damage, heat, cold, falling, and so on). Otherwise, a sin has the same immunities, regenerative abilities, and resurrection abilities as a standard seraph.

Interaction: Sins are vile tempters, eager to engage characters, and may even attempt to pretend to be a virtue in order to lead its victims morally astray.

Use: A seraph of sin is secretly working hand in hand with a corrupt public official, ruler, or other person of authority in the Nightland.

Loot: A sin might carry a couple of cyphers and possibly an artifact that is somehow tied to its curse.

GM Intrusion: On a failed Intellect defense roll, a character remembers some former transgression they committed, and loses their next turn describing it to all who will listen.



SLAVER

Slavers often work together in gangs or guilds; these groups give slavers a great deal of power and prestige.

SLAVER

3 (9)

Without pity or morals, slavers see other people as commodities to be bought, sold, and used.

Motive: Selling others into bondage for profit

Environment: Almost anywhere in groups of three to five

Health: 9

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Short

Modifications: Speed defense as level 4 due to shield; whip attacks as level 5.

Combat: Slavers prefer to work in groups and employ blunt items like maces and clubs, but they especially like whips. Rather than killing foes, slavers render them unconscious. Victims are bound, collected, and sold. If faced with a real threat, they retreat, unless ordered otherwise by a slave master.

Interaction: Slavers may accept bribes from prospective victims, but only if they think the victims might offer them too much of a fight. If they think they can capture victims, take their possessions, and sell their captives into bondage, all the better.

Use: Slavers are everywhere across the Nightland. A few might even try to enslave the PCs.

Loot: Any given slaver has 2d6 stars in addition to weapons, shields, light armor, and miscellaneous gear.

GM Intrusion: When the slaver's whip damages the PC, the PC must make a Might defense roll or the whip wraps around their neck and begins suffocating them, dealing 4 points of Intellect damage each round (ignores Armor).

GM Intrusion: The master produces a cypher that grants him two divine shifts. For the rest of the day, he acts as if two levels higher.

SLAVE MASTER

6 (18)

Slave masters have risen in rank and power among their kind, and may even own their own slaver guild.

Motive: Selling others into bondage for profit

Environment: Almost anywhere, usually commanding a group of three to five slavers

Health: 25

Damage Inflicted: 8 points

Armor: 3

Movement: Short

Modifications: Defends as level 7 due to shield; whip attacks as level 7

Combat: A slave master sends in slavers first, but provides support, relying on precious cyphers or an artifact acquired during the course of their career. Slavers inflict 1 additional point of damage when the master can see them and issue commands.

Interaction: Cruel and calculating, slave masters are rarely swayed, unless offered obscene profits. Many have slaves speak for them, or have mouth-sewn slaves serve them hand and foot.

Use: A slave master heads up a press gang laying siege to an isolated village in the Nightland; a plea for aid goes out.

Loot: A master has 3d10 stars in addition to weapons, a shield, heavy armor, and miscellaneous gear. He also has at least three cyphers and possibly an artifact.



TROLL

6 (18)

A troll is a hideous humanoid standing at least 10 feet (3 m) tall that hunts more by smell than by sight. They are the most dangerous of the nefar, but not the most intelligent. Always ravenous, trolls eat anything, and rarely take the time to cook a meal. Usually, they distend their mouths and throats and swallow subdued prey whole.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Trolls dwell alone or in pairs in the Verge, but can be found hunting nearly anywhere

Health: 30

Damage Inflicted: 7 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Long

Modifications: Speed defense as level 5 due to size; Might defense as level 7; sees through deception as level 4.

Combat: The troll attacks with its claws. If it hits, it grabs a foe tightly, then squeezes and bites until the victim is dead or it releases that victim to attack another creature. Each round that a held creature does not escape, it suffers 10 points of damage.

Trolls enjoy a magical metabolism, and regain 3 points of health per round, unless their health is reduced to 0. If a troll receives a particularly egregious wound (10 or more points of damage in one round), rather than regain health in that round (and instead of taking any other action), the troll divides into two level 4 trolls that are 3 feet (1 m) tall. Spawned trolls that survive and have access to food grow into full-power trolls within a few weeks.

Interaction: Trolls speak the language of the nefar, but a few know Silver. Most prefer to attack and eat other creatures, but might be bargained with after a successful show of force.

Use: Trolls likely are chance encounters in the wilderness for unlucky travelers, but sometimes captured trolls are used by slavers, armies, and powerful wizards as guards and warriors.

Spawned troll: level 4, Might defense as level 5; health 15; Armor 1; claws inflict 5 points of damage; grabbed victim suffers 5 points of damage each round victim does not escape

GM Intrusion: The struck troll divides into two separate trolls that immediately attack the character in the same action.



ZEKADID

4 (12)

This leathery, slug-colored humanoid burrows effortlessly through ground that has not been sanctified or blessed, leaving narrow tunnels behind. Most zekadids are confined to the **Fourth Deep** beneath the **Ruinscape**, where their tunnels are endless labyrinths. A few have escaped onto the surface of the Afterworld when the confines of the many Deeps were shattered by Elanehtar's fall. Zekadids are about the size of a human.

Zekadids are drawn to creatures or objects that possess divine energy (such as PCs, cyphers, some artifacts, and each other). Somehow, they seem to subsist on such energy, if they can draw it forth with a psychic siphon attack.

Motive: Consume divine energy

Environment: Usually in the Ruinscape, especially in the Fourth Deep

Health: 12

Damage Inflicted: 10 Intellect points

Movement: Short; immediate when burrowing

Modifications: Psychic siphon attacks as level 7 due to divine shifts.

Combat: Zekadids rely on their psychic siphon attacks that can target a creature within short range. On a failed Intellect defense roll, a victim suffers 10 points of Intellect damage (4 points without divine shifts) and the zekadid learns of the victim's immediate plans and goals. Victims with divine shifts lose access to one divine shift per successful attack. Lost divine shifts return when the character makes a recovery roll.

If two or more zekadids are present, they can generate a telekinetic effect able to manipulate objects, break ropes, open or close doors, push creatures, and so on. These co-generated abilities have a level equal to 4 plus 1 for each five additional zekadids present (to a maximum of level 13).

Interaction: Zekadids may telepathically interact with other creatures, transmitting a sense of overwhelming alienness, along with a sense of a vast, ancient passage of time, but little else.

Use: The goals of the zekadids are meant to mystify and bewilder. The *true* nature of what lies in any of the Deeps is meant to defy complete understanding, but that is especially true for the Fourth Deep. Are the zekadids the children of dead gods of a previous age? The remnants of those gods themselves? Do they protect the Annihilation Seed in the Fifth Deep, or are they just more victims?

Sometimes, a lone zekadid that finds its way to the surface forgets itself, and takes on the personality and life of the last victim it used psychic siphon on.

Fourth Deep, page 65

Ruinscape, page 52

GM Intrusion: The zekadid telepathically interfaces with the character, overwhelming their mind with the perception of being buried alive, stunning the character so that they lose their next turn.



CYPHERS AND ARTIFACTS

Why do cyphers sometimes appear as mundane objects? Perhaps it has to do with the influence of observation by conscious minds, which somehow makes an unformed splinter collapse into the semblance of an item likely to be found in the Afterworld.



Finding and Identifying Cyphers, page 341

Using Cyphers, page 342

Manifest Cypher Table, page 344

Raver, page 169

Cypers and artifacts are objects invested with magical power. The magical power contained in cyphers is divine, while artifacts can be either divinely invested, or created by mortals.

CYPHERS

Cyphers are fragments and splinters of fallen Elanehtar. Cyphers are found and used over the course of play, and grant one-use abilities to PCs. In the Afterworld, these splinters sometimes appear like dully glowing crystal shards no more than a few inches long. Other times, especially if they've been in the proximity of intelligent creatures for any length of time, they take on forms that seem in keeping with their surroundings in the Afterworld, so they might appear as a pendant, an elixir, a crown, and so on.

PCs can have only a small number of cyphers at a given time because if they ever go over their cypher limit, the quotient of divine power inherent within their own bodies interacts with that contained in the cyphers, creating a divine beacon that draws ravers. Ravers don't instantly flock

to the PC, of course. But the longer the PC transgresses their cypher limit, the more likely it is that ravers will find them. A good rule of thumb: each day a PC transgresses their cypher limit carries a 35% chance that one or more ravers will find them.

Standard rules for finding, identifying, and using cyphers are presented in the *Cypher System Rulebook*. The GM can use those cyphers, and the additional cyphers presented here, when selecting (or randomly rolling) cyphers for encounters. Generally speaking, all the cyphers PCs find in the Afterworld belong to the **manifest** category (having a physical form), as described in the *Cypher System Rulebook*.

However, PCs (with their divine shifts) have an advantage over other creatures when identifying cyphers: all PCs and other creatures with divine shifts can recognize a cypher merely by examining it. To them, a cypher seems to possess a minor nimbus, identifying it as a piece of Elanehtar.

In addition to the new cyphers presented here, PCs can find all the *Cypher System Rulebook* manifest cyphers in the Afterworld.

NEW CYPHERS

Aegis

Apotheosis

Apotheosis, greater

Apotheosis, lesser

Beneficence

Confer divinity

Divine elevation

Excommunication

Glorification

Godstrike, greater

Godstrike, lesser

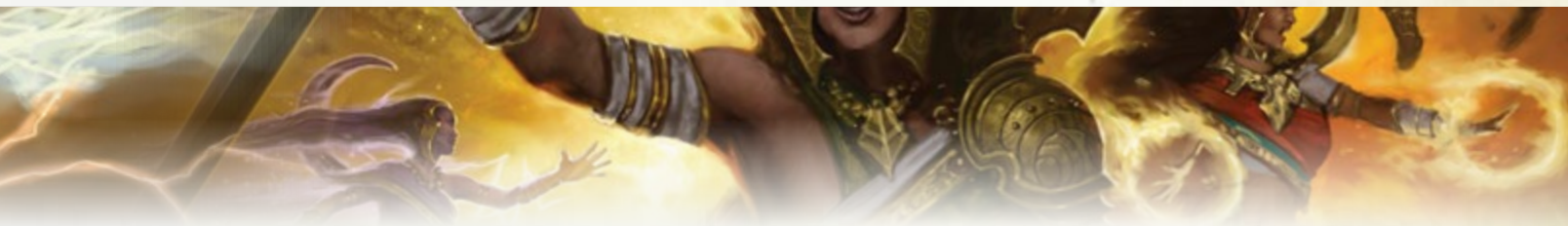
Hand of the gods

Speed of the gods

Strength of the gods

Sword of the gods

Wit of the gods



SINCE EACH USED CYPHER RELEASES A BIT OF ELANEHTAR'S ESSENCE, USING ENOUGH OF THEM MIGHT ONE DAY PRECIPITATE ELANEHTAR'S REFORMATION.

AEGIS

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts who manifests their nimbus (thus rendering it visible to creatures that cannot normally see it) gains an additional effect for up to one hour. While this manifestation is active, the user has +3 to Armor.

APOTHEOSIS

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts gains three additional divine shifts for one minute.

APOTHEOSIS, GREATER

Level: 1d6 + 3

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts gains five additional divine shifts for one minute.

APOTHEOSIS, LESSER

Level: 1d6

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts gains one additional divine shift for one minute.

BENEFICENCE

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: Up to three selected targets within short range regain a number of points to their Pools equal to the cypher level.

CONFER DIVINITY

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts can confer one or more of those shifts to a willing target within immediate range. The target can be mortal or divine, or even an object. The conference lasts up to one hour, or until the target returns the divine shifts (or dies). While the conference lasts, the user cannot access any benefits normally directly granted by those divine shifts.

DIVINE ELEVATION

Level: 1d6 + 1

Effect: Any target, even an object, gains two divine shifts for one minute.

EXCOMMUNICATION

Level: 1d6

Effect: A target within short range loses access to a number of divine shifts equal to the cypher level for one minute. If the target has fewer divine shifts than those nullified, it takes the difference as points of damage that ignore Armor (3 points per divine shift).

If an object gains one or more divine shifts, it might spontaneously become animated. If so, it does not necessarily follow directions provided by the user.

GLORIFICATION

Level: 1d6

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts who manifests their nimbus (thus rendering it visible to creatures that normally cannot see it) gains an additional effect for up to one hour. While this manifestation is active, the difficulty of resisting attacks is reduced by two steps.

GODSTRIKE, GREATER

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: All creatures with divine shifts within short range are stunned, losing their next turn, and take damage equal to the number of divine shifts they possess (ignores Armor).

GODSTRIKE, LESSER

Level: 1d6

Effect: All creatures with divine shifts within short range are stunned, losing their next turn.

HAND OF THE GODS

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts who manifests their nimbus (thus rendering it visible to creatures that normally cannot see it) gains an additional effect for up to one hour. While this manifestation is active, the user can use the nimbus as if it were an extra limb, allowing the user to reach, manipulate, and make melee attacks on creatures within short range as if standing next to them. Alternatively, the user could use the nimbus to carry an object.

SPEED OF THE GODS

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: User's Speed Edge increases by 1 for one hour. If the user has divine shifts, they also gain an additional amount of Speed Edge equal to the number of their divine shifts.

STRENGTH OF THE GODS

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: User's Might Edge increases by 1 for one hour. If the user has divine shifts, they also gain an additional amount of Might Edge equal to the number of their divine shifts.

SWORD OF THE GODS

Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: A user with one or more divine shifts who manifests their nimbus (thus rendering it visible to creatures that normally cannot see it) gains an additional effect for up to one hour. While this manifestation is active, the user's nimbus takes on the form of a glowing weapon the user is practiced in using. The difficulty of attacks made with the weapon is reduced by two steps. The weapon inflicts normal damage plus a number of additional points equal to the number of divine shifts the user possesses.

WIT OF THE GODS

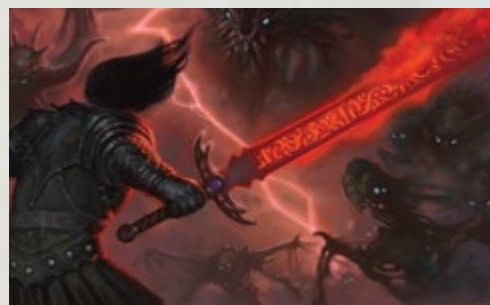
Level: 1d6 + 2

Effect: User's Intellect Edge increases by 1 for one hour. If the user has divine shifts, they also gain an additional amount of Intellect Edge equal to the number of their divine shifts.

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are items of lasting magic that were (usually) fashioned before the Fall. Unlike cyphers, artifacts are more than one-use items. Unless one loses its enchantment through overuse, an artifact constantly provides its effect as a weapon, armor, communication device, and so on. Because artifacts were generally created by godlike beings or master sorcerers (or dragons), their use is not always straightforward. Some come with curses designed to keep the item out of the hands of thieves.

Depleted artifacts can sometimes be re-enchanted, but that's rare. Especially powerful artifacts are not usually drained of magic when they become depleted—instead, they magically pass to a new user, or otherwise pass out of their previous wielder's ownership.



RE-ENCHANTING AN ARTIFACT

PCs might be able to re-enchant an artifact using one of the following methods:

- Have the artifact blessed by the **King of Nod**
- Quench the artifact in the blood of the **Hellmaw**
- Sacrifice a **divine shift** to the artifact
- Partly (or completely) fulfill one of the **Seven Prophecies**
- Sacrifice another, un-depleted artifact of equivalent level
- Complete a **divine labor** (one that doesn't count toward a **PC Obligation**)

FINDING, IDENTIFYING, AND USING ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are sometimes found in old ruins. When the PCs come upon an area where scavenging might be possible, they can search (an **Intellect** action). Typically, being skilled in sorcery, magic, or something similar reduces the difficulty of this search. The GM determines the difficulty for the task, but it is usually 3 or 4, and scavenging can take ten minutes to an hour.

Scavenging is not the only way to get artifacts. They can also be granted as rewards or taken from fallen foes. Sometimes they can even be bought in metropolises such as Corso, but this occurs more rarely than most PCs would probably like. Artifacts might also be created by PCs. A god of the Forge might choose to make one as his **divine labor**. Alternatively, a PC might make one by sacrificing a **divine shift**.

Once found, identifying an artifact and its functions is usually a separate task, also based on **Intellect** and modified by knowledge of sorcery, magic, and so on. The GM determines the difficulty of the task, but it is usually equal to the level of the artifact.

It takes fifteen minutes to three hours. If the PCs can't identify an artifact, they can bring it to a sorcerers' guild to be identified or, if desired, traded. The process of identification usually includes gaining knowledge on how to use the artifact, including learning any magical phrases or other esoterica required of the wielder to operate it.

A character can attempt to use an artifact that is not identified, but this is usually an **Intellect** task with a difficulty equal to the artifact's level + 2. Failure might mean that the PC can't figure out how to use the artifact or that they use it incorrectly (GM's discretion). Of course, even if the character uses the unidentified artifact correctly, they will have no idea what the effect will be.

Most of the time, using an artifact is one action. Unless otherwise specified in the text or suggested by logic, the action is **Intellect** based.

ARTIFACTS

Many more artifacts associated with previous **divine ages** exist than the few described here. The following provides a few examples for the GM to use and build upon.

AMULET OF VERECOCHO

Level: 1d6 + 4

Form: Amulet showing the symbol of Verecocho, god of Magic (an all-seeing eye)

Effect: Wearer can use spells from the **Casts Spells** focus up to their tier. A user with one or more **divine shifts** can temporarily confer those shifts into the amulet (thus losing access to them). Until the user recalls those **divine shifts**, the user can cast spells of their tier plus the number of **divine shifts** they conferred to the amulet.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

King of Nod, page 80

Hellmaw, page 164

Divine shift, page 105

Seven Prophecies, page 95

Divine labor, page 142

Obligation, page 137



Casts Spells, page 103

NEW ARTIFACTS

Amulet of Verecocho

Book of Dead Gods

Boots of Mudarak

Cloak of Balakar

Demonchalice

Lantern of Avi

Lyre of Slumber

Needle of Inquiry

Pen of Aren

Samiel's Knife

Staff of Serpents

Sword of Yesterday

Zenia's Spear

BOOK OF DEAD GODS

Level: 1d6 + 4

Form: A massive tome with elaborate binding (divine characters note a dim nimbus)

Effect: The tome lists the ninety-nine gods (now dead) and their associated dominions. If the user has at least a few rounds to refer to the book, the difficulty of any task associated with one or more of the gods who lived prior to the last Fall is reduced by two steps.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

BOOTS OF MUDARAK

Level: 11

Form: Pair of boots inlaid with designs of forests and mountains

Effect: When the boots are activated as part of a move, the wearer can walk across empty air for a long distance each round for up to one hour. In addition, user can teleport to any location they have previously visited up to once per day, and take up to one creature within immediate range with them.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, boots disappear and reappear somewhere else in the Afterworld)

CLOAK OF BALAKAR

Level: 9

Form: Blue cloak with elaborate designs suggesting blowing wind

Effect: Wearer can calm level 9 or lower winds in a 1 mile (1.6 km) radius, or up to once per day, create a windstorm lasting one minute whose winds are quite destructive (level 5) in the same radius.

Depletion: 1 in 1d6 (on depletion, cloak disappears and reappears somewhere else in the Afterworld)

DEMONCHALICE

Level: 1d6 + 3

Form: Black glass chalice with red lights languidly playing on surface like liquid

Effect: Each demonchalice is keyed to one user. Once keyed to a user (by touching an unkeyed demonchalice), the artifact doesn't function for anyone else until the current user dies. Each demonchalice is also linked to a raver (lesser or elder). The user can call the raver into existence as an action. The summoned raver does as the user commands for one minute. If the summoned raver is not dismissed before the end of that period, it turns on the user.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

LANTERN OF AVI

Level: 15

Form: Golden lantern

Effect: Upon command, the lantern blazes, creating an apparent sun in the sky that provides full daylight in an area 1 mile (1.6 km) in diameter centered on the lantern for one hour. If used in the *Nightland*, it's as if *Nod* fades away for the duration in the affected area.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, lantern disappears and reappears somewhere else in the Afterworld)

LYRE OF SLUMBER

Level: 13

Form: Nine-stringed harp

Effect: Target within short range moves one step down on the *damage track*. If this would kill the target, it instead falls into a magical slumber that lasts indefinitely.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, lyre disappears and reappears somewhere else in the Afterworld)

NEEDLE OF INQUIRY

Level: 1d6 + 5

Form: Silver wand sharpened to a needle's point at one end

Effect: While the needle pierces a target's flesh (inflicting 1 point of damage in the process), the target whose level is less than or equal to the artifact's is compelled to answer each question put to it, though it gains an Intellect defense roll to resist answering a particularly revealing question each time.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check per question truthfully answered)

Nightland, page 22

Nod, page 78



*Damage track,
page 202*

DEAD GODS

Aren, Namer	Saberaash, patron god of Corso
Avi, Sunmaker	Samiel, one of the Three Judges
Balakar, Windfather	Seroyer, god of Knowledge and Art
Girothen, patron god of Cryserch	Sudhara, god of Destiny
Hecali, one of the Three Judges	Verecocho, god of Magic
Mudarak, Pathbreaker	Zenia, Earthshaker
	... and many more

PEN OF AREN

Level: 14

Form: Colorful quill with ever-inked tip

Effect: User can write the true name of a selected creature within short range as an action. The pen can pierce any illusion, disguise, or similar stratagem of its level or less.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, pen disappears and reappears somewhere else in the Afterworld)

SAMUEL'S KNIFE

Level: 14

Form: Blade with the face of Nod's eternal eclipse

Effect: This weapon functions as a normal light blade. The difficulty of attacks made with it is decreased by one step. In addition, on a successful attack the knife inflicts additional damage (ignores Armor) equal to the artifact level. If the knife is used to administer the killing blow upon a target, the target's soul is drawn into the blade. The soul remains trapped there for up to three days, after which time it is transferred to *Soulrest*.

The wielder can ask three questions of a creature whose soul is trapped in the blade. After answering the third question, the soul departs for *Soulrest*.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, knife disappears and reappears somewhere else in the Afterworld)

STAFF OF SERPENTS

Level: 9

Form: Staff carved from jade in the shape of a long serpent

Effect: The staff confers several abilities.

Venom: When used as a medium weapon, the staff inflicts normal damage plus, on a failed Might defense roll, 5 additional points of Speed damage (ignores Armor).

Serpents: Summons four staff serpents, each 10 feet (3 m) in length.

Transformation: A user with one or more divine shifts can temporarily transfer those shifts into the staff. While the user does so, the staff becomes a 40-foot (12 m) long serpent whose level is equal to the artifact's level plus the number of divine shifts transferred into the staff. The gargantuan serpent does the user's bidding until the divine shifts are recalled.

Transportation: User and up to ten others within short range are teleported directly into the *First Deep*.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check for all uses except for when using the staff as a melee weapon)

SWORD OF YESTERDAY

Level: 12

Form: A shimmering blade of silver and gold

Effect: This artifact functions as a normal medium weapon. The difficulty of attacks made with it is decreased by one step.

In addition, by infusing the weapon with a divine shift per person, the wielder and up to three willing characters within immediate range can travel to a specified point in time. The point in time must be within ten years of the present. For each divine shift conferred to the sword, the wielder can travel ten more years. When travelers appear in the new moment in time, they do so in the same position they were in when the sword ability was used. Upon arriving at the intended temporal destination, the travelers are stunned for one minute. In order to return to the original time, divine shifts must be called back from the sword. If travelers attempt to move to a period before the Fall, each must succeed on a difficulty 6 Might defense roll, or rebound into their original time and descend two steps on the damage track.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, sword disappears and reappears in some other time and place)

ZENIA'S SPEAR

Level: 13

Form: A huge, finely crafted spear of silver and gold filigree

Effect: This weapon functions as a normal spear. The difficulty of attacks made with it is decreased by one step.

In addition, the wielder can make a long-range lightning attack on a target and all creatures within immediate range of the target that inflicts damage equal to the artifact level. Alternatively, every other round the wielder can throw the spear at a single foe within long range, inflicting double the artifact level in damage. Once thrown, the spear returns to the wielder, ready to be used the next round.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (on depletion, spear disappears and reappears somewhere else in the Afterworld)



For the GM: *Managing Time Travel*, page 175

Soulrest, page 84

Staff Serpent: level 4; Armor 1; bite inflicts 4 points of damage and target must make Speed defense roll or be held immobile. Each round the target fails to escape, it suffers 4 points of crushing damage that ignore Armor

First Deep, page 58

CHAPTER 16

ADVENTURE:
RITE OF SPRING

According to Prophecy (Salvation): *Recipients must do more than simply accept the Gift of Spring; they must defend her birth against the fires of both Nod and Hell.*

Central Market, page 27

Carrack, page 27

Dershan: *level 2*

Disturbed shopper:
level 3

Corso, page 24

Tower of Reconciliation,
page 29

Indulgences, page 24

Rite of Spring is an adventure you can use to start your campaign.

BRIEF SUMMARY

The PCs must defend a mother in labor—the “Gift of Spring”—from an increasingly determined assault from a variety of foes. If the PCs can hold out until the child is born, the assault is foiled and a prophecy is fulfilled.

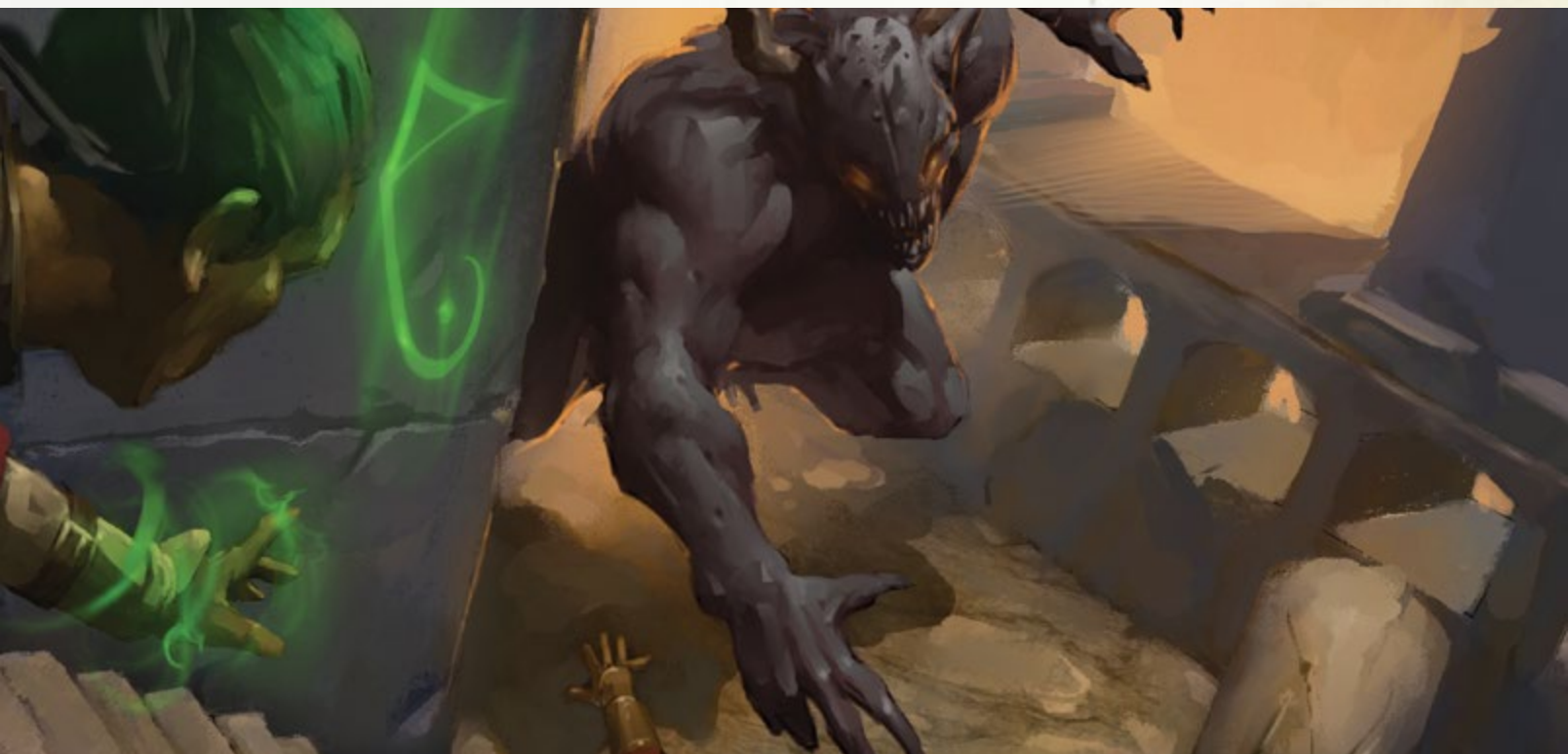
DETAILS

PCs in Corso learn of a dilapidated mansion in the city near the West Gate that’s recently withstood a series of attacks from strange creatures. Because the mansion lies in the undercity of Low Corso, the City Watch can’t be bothered to provide aid, despite the failure of the attackers to purchase indulgences. Moreover, PCs eventually learn that getting the Reconciliators involved would only make matters worse.

GETTING INVOLVED

The PCs could begin this adventure nearly anywhere in Corso, but might be perusing goods in the Central Market, or having drinks at the Carrack (or some other tavern) in the Docks. An aged man named Dershan approaches the characters in a state of extreme agitation. The PCs have never seen him before, but Dershan seems to know them. He frantically asks for aid, calling the PCs divine ones and redeemers of the Afterworld. This sort of talk disturbs a group of four fellow market shoppers who don’t like to hear talk of old gods or new, especially with the Tower of Reconciliation visible everywhere in Corso.

If the PCs disentangle Dershan from the disturbed onlookers, he explains that a woman named Sephoni is all alone, giving birth to the Gift of Spring. Bleak forces conspire to prevent it. Dershan is old and addled, but secretly part of the Adherence, a group that still prays to the dead gods. He’s *convinced* that Sephoni’s child is the first ray of hope the Nightland has seen since the Fall, and that the PCs are connected—



maybe even divine themselves. Dershan says Sephoni, her midwife, and a couple of street gang members are holed up in a ramshackle structure called Caladar Keep.

FINDING OUT MORE

If Dershan is quizzed further, he says he learned of Sephoni's plight several days ago when she approached him in Low Corso, asking for his aid delivering her child. Convinced of her peril and potential, he helped round up the gang members and midwife. They've already withstood a few probing attacks by "nasty little biters out of nightmare!" Sephoni, in her pain, said worse attacks would come, and dispatched Dershan to find the "redeemers of the Afterworld" and gave him the PCs' description and general location. How she gained that information, Dershan doesn't know, but suspects it's a miracle.

If the PCs ask around Corso, they learn Caladar Keep was (before the Fall) where judges determined the guilt or innocence of alleged criminals. The judges of Corso were famous for their piety, which allowed them

to learn through divine sight the truth of each alleged criminal defense.

If the PCs have a way to gain a premonition or otherwise gain privileged knowledge, they indeed discover that something of special importance is happening in Corso, a "birth that will serve as a symbol of a new beginning for the Afterworld, but only if the forces of darkness are defeated."

STARTING POINT

If the PCs agree, Dershan conducts them through Corso to Caladar Keep. The keep is built along the wall just north of the West Gate. He identifies himself to gain entry at the Outer Wall Gate, then conducts them to the Birth Chamber, where Sephoni and the others wait.

PCs (as characters who have begun their own Awakening) can sense an incipient *nimbus* on Sephoni, but it's not initially clear whether it's generated by the mother, or the soon-to-be-born child.

Manifest nimbus,
page 143

GODS OF THE FALL

It's not expected that you'll use each adventure location's suggested GM intrusion; they're merely available as an option.

BIRTH CHAMBER

PCs find the woman Sephoni, her midwife Sanda, and four Low Corso toughs (level 2) in a chamber that apparently originally served as a trial room. Sephoni is lying on a cot where the judge's bench was once sited. Bandages, a pail of water, and some baskets of food are nearby.

Sephoni (level 4, divine knowledge as level 8) is well along the way to giving birth, and is only semi-conscious. She has just enough cognizance to smile and thank the PCs before another round of labor pains has her concentrating only on controlling the pain, with the midwife Sanda's help.

The toughs (Corbet, Brista, Faaline, Grisina, and Zek) are convinced that Sephoni is giving birth to something "that will change everything; the birth of Spring!" They've taken Dershan as their leader. But they will follow the PCs' lead if the PCs take charge of the defense. The toughs indicate they've already defeated a couple of other groups of Low Corso scum who have come sniffing around, showing way too much interest in the old keep.

The midwife Sanda is unconvinced that anything divine is happening, but she has been paid by Dershan to help deliver the baby, so she begins the adventure as moderately helpful, though afraid. She doesn't like it when people talk about the return of the divine, and becomes more agitated the more that topic is raised.

GM Intrusion: The midwife Sanda, afraid for her own life after the keep experiences one or more attacks, betrays Sephoni and the PCs.

Sanda: level 2; midwifery as level 5

OUTER WALLS

The main keep and grounds are protected by a five-sided outer wall, one side of which is set along Corso's much taller and thicker wall. Corso's walls are 30 feet (9 m) thick and 50 feet (15 m) tall, on average. Caladar's outer walls are 6 feet (2 m) thick and 20 feet (6 m) tall, on average. A path runs along the top of the wall, accessible via narrow stone stairs on the interior.

When PCs arrive, the outer walls are not patrolled. If the PCs set a patrol, they have an asset on detecting any attacks that come over the outer wall, plus an asset to all tasks during the first round of combat.

GM Intrusion: The wall path gives way, pitching the PC to the ground outside the wall.

Corso's walls: level 6

Caladar Keep's outer walls: level 5

OUTER GATE

Two toughs (level 2, Nia and Mulin) who support Sephoni and Dershan guard this entrance gate (level 4). They open the gate and let PCs through if the PCs are accompanied by Dershan. Attacks that successfully breach this gate are also probably strong enough to defeat the two toughs unless one or more PCs are on hand to help in the defense.

GM Intrusion: The rickety old gate breaks from disrepair.

EVENT TIMELINE

After the PCs meet Sephoni, explore the keep, and decide on a plan of defense, the attacks on the keep begin (see The Attacks).

The entire adventure should occur, in-world, over the course of no more than about twenty hours at most. This means that the attacks are separated by a series of intervals, maybe something like: one hour - 30 minutes - 10 minutes - one minute - 5 rounds - 2 rounds - 1 round. PCs may find themselves separated and fighting on different fronts during the final few attacks before the birth.

The attacks cease when Sephoni gives birth (see Wrapping Up the Adventure) or when she is killed. The GM decides when Sephoni gives birth, which means it's possible for the GM to "save" the PCs who find themselves fighting foes that outclass them on too many fronts.

KEEP HALL

This main chamber has broken statuary and fallen, once-grand decorations. All the big oaken doors that lead to secondary chambers have fallen from their hinges except the door to the old court room, now the Birthing Chamber.

GM Intrusion: A shadow scuttles along the wall and merges with the PC's shadow. What does it mean? An attack disrupts any inquiry.

WELL

This old well still provides water. It also connects to the sewers, which provides another access point for attacks.

GM Intrusion: The character hears a faint call for help from down the well. Is it a trap, or a tough pledged to Sephoni who accidentally fell in?

YARD

When the PCs arrive, the yard (the mostly empty area between the keep proper and the outer walls) is not patrolled. If the PCs set a patrol, they have an asset on detecting any attacks that are launched from the yard, the outbuildings or the well, plus an asset on all tasks during the first round of combat.

GM Intrusion: During an attack, the ground beneath a character gives way, dropping him 20 feet (6 m) into an old latrine pit infested with biting worms (swarm of level 1 worms attacks as a level 3 creature).

THE ATTACKS

Treat as GM intrusions. You can use them in order, roll them randomly, or choose them in the order you like. Note that NPC allies will act on their own to help the PCs—you can narratively deal with this by simply noting that a particular NPC is “dealing with the nodlings” while the PCs deal with some other threat. In this way, you don’t have to track all the fights.

d10	Attack
1	Five level 2 street toughs, branded with the symbol of a writhing serpent, climb over the outer wall
2	A bibliomancer (page 156) uses magic to loft himself over the outer wall
3	Five level 3 street toughs with a battering ram (level 5 for smashing down barriers) breach the outer gate
4	Four nodlings (page 167) materialize out of shadow in the yard
5	Two griffons (page 163) fly down from the night and begin tearing at the keep roof
6	A ghost (<i>Cypher System Rulebook</i> page 293) manifests in one of the outbuildings used as a prison for alleged criminals
7	Three zombies (<i>Cypher System Rulebook</i> page 333) crawl up out of the well
8	A witch (<i>Cypher System Rulebook</i> page 330) uses magic to teleport into the keep hall
9	A Tranquil assassin (level 5, stealth as level 7) attempts to slip into the Birthing Chamber
10	A rakshasa (page 168) appears on outer wall (WARNING: likely to kill first-tier PCs in a straight-up fight)

KEEP ROOF

A set of iron rungs gives access to a hatch from the keep hall that opens onto the slate-tiled roof. PCs who set a watch have an asset on detecting any attacks from the roof plus an asset on all tasks during the first round of combat.

GM Intrusion: A character who fails a difficulty 5 Speed defense roll slips off the roof and falls 30 feet (9 m) to the yard.

OUTBUILDINGS

These old outbuildings constructed in the yard once fulfilled several different, now long-defunct purposes. They’re mostly empty now, but contain useful materials for PCs interested in shoring up defenses, repairing doors, and creating traps, such as lumber, wire, tools, tarps, and so on.

GM Intrusion: An attacker hides in the building and attacks a lone character.

It's not expected that the PCs will fight every fight noted on The Attacks table. Some can be dealt with by intimidation, trickery, or diplomacy. Toughs might even be convinced to switch sides and help defend.

CORSO

WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE

If Sephoni is protected long enough (a span determined by the GM), she finally gives birth to a healthy baby girl she names Arua. Immediately upon Arua's birth, all current and future attacks cease, even attacks already launched, as if some kind of geas or enchantment shattered. The attackers melt away, fly off, or stand blinking stupidly, with no memory of how they came to be where they are.

Sephoni, should she survive, explains that she's been having visions of her unborn child Arua, dreams of peace and renewal, for months. Just as her time came upon her, those visions turned to omens of danger. She was too far along to flee, so she dispatched Dershan to find those that Arua told her—in a final vision—were the “redeemers of the Afterworld.” She doesn't know anything else for certain, but seems to be willing to take up the protective mantle of a mother with a divine child to raise in secret. If questioned about the father, Sephoni merely shrugs, saying she met a dazzling sailor on the docks who swept her off her feet. As happens every so often in such matters, the birth control charm fizzled. But now Sephoni is grateful for that lapse.

To the *Awakening* eyes of the PCs, Arua has a nimbus for the first several hours after her birth, though that nimbus finally fades into a latent state. PCs can still sense it, but they must concentrate all their attention to do so.

A PC with divine knowledge, arcane knowledge, or some other way to gain a premonition or prophetic knowledge, gets the strong sense that when the child grows to adulthood (or sooner), she'll manifest an amazingly strong divine power over renewal, life, and dawn. A vision of the child smiling into a sunrise that the Nightland hasn't seen in decades graces the PC. But for that to happen, the child needs to survive. And thanks to the PCs, she has. Further dangers may await the child, but for now she is safe. At least, until the child grows older. Upon reaching the Afterworld Age of Reason (seven years old), she may once again become a target.

Knight of Reconciliation,
page 165

King of Nod, page 80

Lords of Hell, page 86

Rakshasa Queen, page 87

Awakening, page 136

Fulfillment Experience
Points, page 99

HIGHER-TIER PCs

PCs who are second tier or higher will find the challenges of this adventure significantly easier to deal with, given their access to divine shifts. One way to keep the challenge high for PCs is to throw more encounters at them at much shorter intervals, and to simultaneously launch the final few attacks before Arua's birth.

If PCs are third tier or higher, consider throwing a *Knight of Reconciliation* or other higher-tier threat at them near the finale.

MORE DETAILS

Though unlikely to come into the main course of play, it's possible that the PCs eventually discover that both the *King of Nod* and a *Lord of Hell* known as the *Rakshasa Queen* were responsible for the attack. Being creatures of strong supernatural abilities, the Dream King and the Rakshasa Queen had a premonition of a “god of Spring” being born in Corso. Learning that a rival had discovered the divine rebirth as well, the King of Nod and Rakshasa Queen both determined to act quickly and destroy the child before its birth rather than let another power of the Afterworld gain control over it.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The PCs should earn 2 experience points (XP) for agreeing to aid a pregnant woman in need, and 4 XP as *Fulfillment XP* for fulfilling a portion of the Prophecy of Salvation.

CAMPAIGN NOTES

If the PCs take further interest in protecting the child, Sephoni is interested. She'd accept help finding a safer place in Corso away from the threat of slave press gangs. Alternatively, she has family in Somorrah, and would accept aid in traveling across the Nightland to reach that location, despite its reputation as a terrible place.

Meanwhile, the Order of Reconciliation eventually gets the scent of what went down in Caladar Keep. They put a few trackers on the job, hoping to eventually learn more.

PART 5

BACK MATTER



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GLOSSARY

Adherent: Someone who believes the dead gods will one day return; a member of the Adherence.

Aether, the: An intangible realm of conception; the interstitial “space” that separates the Afterworld from other realms and dimensions.

Afterworld: Another name for the world, but one signifying the world's plunge into cruelty and hopelessness.

Arenic: The language spoken by many humans in the Nightland and Ruinscape; once the main language of Cavazel.

Artifact: An implement of great power. Some were created by mortals, others by gods before the Fall.

Avi: Another term for the sun; also the name of the dead god who was once known as the god of the Sun.

Awakening: When those previously unaware of their destiny realize or begin to wake their divine spark.

Bibliomancer: Another term for sorcerer, especially one that uses books as focus for their magic.

Book of Fate: A mystical tome, of which many copies were made, recording the Seven Prophecies.

Cavazel: Large, rich, blessed country utterly destroyed in the Fall. Located where the Ruinscape now lies.

Champion: A warrior of uncommon prowess and audacity. Also a PC type.

Chapterhouse: A chapel or cathedral converted to a monastery where secular philosophy (and sometimes martial arts), not religion, is practiced.

Corso: Largest metropolis in the Nightland.

Cypher: A fragment of shattered Elanehtar. Usually contains just enough divine power to call down a single minor miracle.

Dead god: Generic term for all the gods that died in the Fall.

Deep, the: Remains of world's previous ages magically preserved in succeeding levels of subterranean layers.

Delirium, the: A wandering storm that kills minds and twists souls, probably a single, colossal raver.

Demon/Devil: Another term for raver, or a generic term for any creature native to Soulrest.

Destroyer: A warrior of cunning and stealth, with a preference for long-range attacks.

Disciple: Someone who believes in the power of a god, who preaches about that god's greatness, and who would personally serve a god if given the opportunity.

Divine shift: A game mechanic, non-setting term. Each divine shift offers a PC a significant power upgrade.

Dominion: A divine area of interest; each god has at least one, such as War, the Hunt, Healing, and so on.

Dominion ability: A game mechanic, non-setting term. Each divine ability offers a PC a godly ability.

Dragon: An extremely powerful sorcerer—usually a human—without morality and ethics who cares only about gathering ever more magical power.

Dream dust: Daily use eliminates dreams, protects users against dangerous dreams and nightmares from Nod.

Elanehtar: The home of the gods, before it fell burning and crumbling. When it smashed into the world, Elanehtar was destroyed.

Empusa: Natives of Soulrest who punished betrayers. A living metaphor for hunger.

Erinyes: Natives of Soulrest who punished oathbreakers. A living metaphor for rage.

Eye of Elanehtar: Site of Elanehtar's impact. Now a colossal, never-ending storm of shrieking ravers.

Fall, the: All-encompassing term for when Elanehtar fell, the gods died, and the world lost hope.

God: An entity with the ability to change the world by accessing magic at a divine level.

Golden Bower: A kind of farm in the Nightland lit by a magical golden lamp that allows crops to grow.

Guild of Sleep: A guild of sorcerers in Corso (a Nightland city) who focus on dream magic.

Hell: An old term for the spiritual realm more commonly known as Soulrest.

Hellmaw: One-time guardian of Soulrest, now one of the most terrifying threats in the Afterworld.

Hidden Hand: A thieves' guild headquartered in Mehergan (a Nightland city).

Holdfast: Generic term for a keep built in the Ruinscape. Holdfasts usually host at least one salvage guild.

Indulgence: Fee paid in Corso that releases a perpetrator of a bad deed from legal responsibility for it.

King of Nod/Dream King: An entity that claims rulership over the moon of Nod.

Krakens: Range of peaks that partially separate the Nightland from the Verge and Ruinscape.

Line of Nod: Termination line of Nod's eclipse. It's dark within its circumference. Beyond it, Avi shines.

Lords of Hell: Group designation for entities warring for control of Soulrest in the Three Judges' absence.

Moon: Generic term for an Afterworld currency. Moons are silver coins.

Nefar: Group designation for monstrous humanoids including goblins, orcs, ogres, and trolls.

New Atheism: Not so much a disbelief in gods, but a loss of hope that gods will ever return, or be relevant if they do.

Nightland, the: Swath of civilized land dotted with several metropolises lying within the Line of Nod.

Nimbus: Divine aura only other divine beings can usually see, unless a deity chooses to manifest it to all.

Nod: Intruder moon that sprang up after the Fall, tracking Avi across the sky, creating a permanent unmoving eclipse on the ground (the Nightland). Rumored to be a land of dreams and nightmares.

Nulumriel: An extremely powerful sorcerer who declared herself empress of the Nightland.

Obligation: A task a god must accomplish in order to more fully Awaken their divine abilities.

Pantheon: A group of related gods.

Penny: Generic term for an Afterworld currency. Pennies are copper coins.

Rakshasa: An evil soul plucked from Soulrest and reincarnated as a living creature of mischief and malice.

Raver: When gods are slain, sometimes ravers are born from their skins.

Reanimated: Citizens of Crysech (a Nightland city) who have chosen to become undead and undying.

Reconciliator: A member of the military Order of Reconciliation, charged with stamping out any and all vestiges of the old gods, or the rumor of new ones.

Ruinscape: Ravaged land surrounding the Eye of Elanehtar. Beneath the Ruinscape lie the Deepes.

Salvage guild: Prospectors of the Deepes. Most salvage guilds operate out of holdfasts.

Savior: A sorcerer more concerned with the welfare of others than herself. Also a PC type.

Scarred: Natives of Hornscar (a Nightland city) who suffer from magically induced physical changes.

Seraph: Seraphs are created entities, forged by various gods of the forge long ago; their iron carapaces are animated by divine grace.

Seven Prophecies: A divine foretelling of a time when the Afterworld shall be saved from darkness, possibly by new gods.

Shaper: A sorcerer with a natural talent for spells or bibliomancy. Also a PC type.

Silver: The primary trading language used in the Afterworld.

Slaver: A despicable job option in the Afterworld. Without pity or morals, slavers see others as merchandise.

Sleen: Member of a civilized humanoid species with snakelike scales instead of skin.

Sorcerer: Generic term for a spellcaster or other non-divine person who uses magic.

Soulrest: Spiritual realm in the Aether where the spirits go after their bodies die in the Afterworld.

Star: Generic term for an Afterworld currency. Stars are gold coins.

Taran: Member of a civilized humanoid species of considerable height without eyes.

Three Judges: The three main gods that once oversaw Soulrest: Samiel, Hecali, and Etanernal.

Tower of Reconciliation: Nulumriel's palace and Order of Reconciliation's headquarters.

Tower of Verecocho: Still-standing structure in Hornscar (a Nightland city) holy to the dead god of Magic.

Tranquil, the: An assassins' guild headquartered in Cryserch (a Nightland city).

Trella juice: Drug that increases the ability of the user to concentrate.

Verge: Uncivilized (or at least unexplored) land north of the Nightland infested with nefar.

Wodner oil: Drug that infuses the user with a sense of euphoria.

AFTERWORLD TIMELINE

The Afterworld's history is rich. It's also mostly forgotten. Over the eons, several ages of the world have come and gone. Most left no written record noting their length, important events, gods, people, or what caused them to end. The timeline presented here mostly focuses on the period after the Fall.

UNKNOWN AGES

Before recorded history, the Unknown Ages stretch back to primordial times. Sages and interested bibliomancers believe that these periods could be reconstructed by researching the *Deep*s; however, no sage of any standing has yet risked such a trip.

NEW AGE

Prior to the Divine Age was the New Age. Only its name and a few particulars are recalled in the present. Its name alone suggests that it likely superseded some even earlier age. Evidence from the *First Deep* suggests that serpentlike *katheer* (and possibly *sleen*) ruled the world during the New Age for thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of years.

DIVINE AGE

-32,614 AF to -43 AF Rising from obscurity, the gods Zenia, Balakar, Verecocho, Samiel, and all the others helped forge a world of human (and to a lesser extent, *sleen* and *taran*) kingdoms. By -10,000 AF or thereabouts right up until the Fall, most accounts describe this age as a golden time to be alive.

AFTER THE FALL

1 AF Elanehtar fell, destroying the kingdom of Cavazel. The gods died. Tens of thousands of people died in the first moments, and tens of thousands died in the subsequent months in the turmoil that followed. Nod appeared in the sky, blacking out a region of the world famous for its green plains and independent city-states.

2 AF Apocalyptic religious cults, including the Final Clave, rose to power. The cults promised

the gods' return, but only if their own bloody rituals were enacted and leaders raised to power.

3 to 6 AF Corso and Cryserch fought a series of bloody wars for resources. The Final Clave and other cults grew in popularity despite its horrific practices because they promised the gods' imminent return.

7 AF Nulumriel declared herself empress of the Nightland. Her first act was to put down the cults, including the Final Clave. Doing so provided a veneer of legitimacy to her claim that she was suited to rule.

10 AF The practice of slavery, already growing here and there without the gods or their priesthood to stamp it out, rapidly cemented its place as a power in the Afterworld with the formation of the Kasmandar Slave Company.

12 AF The Order of Reconciliation was established by Nulumriel after she was challenged by a "false" god.

13 AF Those faithful to the dead gods' memory are mostly driven underground (or killed). From this unlikely start, the Adherence rose. The Adherence, unlike the apocalypse cults, hoped to bring the gods back with peaceful prayer.

20 AF Explorers in the Ruinscape returned to the Nightland with tales of various subterranean layers—the *Deep*s—filled with treasures and fossils of vanished, previous ages.

23 AF Tanubar Holdfast was founded in the Ruinscape.

39 AF The city of Somorrah was attacked by an assemblage of nefar in an event later called the Troll War. A powerful bibliomancer, stopped the attack. Some say Visheidon is nothing less than a new god.

42 AF The present day.

*Deep*s, page 57

First Deep, page 58

Katheer, page 58

Sleen, page 127

To the people of the Afterworld, the history that matters began just over 40 years ago; the years are numbered sequentially forward from After the Fall, or AF.

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NAME

IS A

DESCRIPTOR

TYPE

WHO

FOCUS

GOD OF

DOMINION

TIER

EFFORT

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

POOL

EDGE

POOL

EDGE

POOL

EDGE

RECOVERY ROLLS

1d6+

DAMAGE TRACK

☐ IMPAIRED

☐ DEBILITATED

☐ 1 ACTION ☐ 1 HOUR

☐ 10 MINS ☐ 10 HOURS

+1 Effort per level
Ignore minor and major effect results on rolls
Combat roll of 17-20
Speed Pool is 0
deals only +1 damage

SPECIAL ABILITIES & DOMINION ABILITIES

ADVANCEMENT

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into skill Pools

MOVE TOWARD PERFECTION
+1 to the edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or specialize in a trained skill

OTHER
Refer to the Open System Rulebook

SKILLS • MIGHT T = trained S = specialized I = inability T S I

SKILLS • SPEED

T S I

SKILLS • INTELLECT

T S I

ATTACKS

MOD DAM

CYPHERS

EQUIPMENT

LIMIT

ARMOR

MONEY

GODS OF THE FALL

BACKGROUND

DOGMA

PORTRAIT

DIVINE SYMBOL

DISCIPLES

NOTES

FIRST LABOR

DIVINE LABOR