

LITTLE RED GOBLIN GAME'S GUIDE TO

CULTURE



Little Red
Goblin Games

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

Little Red Goblin Game's Guide To Culture

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Cultures

The following are “cultures”, societal aspects that influence your character independent of their race. This is because they are comprised of many races and may exist in more than one places. These are written with an eye on setting neutrality and you are encouraged to modify them to fit your game.

Defining Your Culture

Like one's deity, during character creation you can simply designate yourself as a member of a specific culture if it fits your backstory. This has no mechanical benefit or detriment but may open/close options to you based on your choice. A character probably has multiple cultural influences but, mechanically, they can only have one culture.

Targeting Cultures

Some effects target creature types or even subtypes. You can substitute “culture” in these instances. If a character has declared themselves to be a member of a culture or otherwise has close ties to it (GM's discretion) they may be targeted by effects that designate a culture. Some examples of this might include a ranger to select a specific culture in lieu of a creature type, allowing a bane weapon to be created that targets a specific culture, or make magic items that trigger based on a character's culture.

Culture vs Government/State

One's “culture” is a separate definition than one's loyalty to or citizenship in a state, country, government, etc. This can be concurrent with that (a small nation may have a predominant culture) but it is not tied inherently to that. For example, in the real world, there is a “western/cowboy” culture in the United States and Mexico that is centered in a certain region but isn't inherently tied to the state or government.

Making Your Own Culture

After reading this book you may feel inspired to write your own culture that is appropriate to your setting or game. Use the ones we wrote as examples. The basic mechanical requirements for making your own culture are:

- **What Culture Is:** A group of people with shared beliefs and traditions that are not bound by race, class, or other mechanical aspects of the game.
- **Culture Trait:** Each culture has an option that players can take during character creation. See the “culture trait” section at the end of this book for more information.

Setting, Race, & System Neutrality

These cultures are specifically written in such a fashion that they can be slotted into any game with minimal intrusion. They are not written with any race in mind so they can serve as the background of a specific race, a sovereign land, exactly as written in their entry. We provide mechanical benefits for both Pathfinder and Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition in the “culture traits” section at the end of this book.



The Immortal Houses

*Ring in the bells for the immortal houses,
Ring in the bells for their mortal sons,
Ring in the bells for their will be done."*

-Hymn of the Immortals, Verse 16-18

The Immortal Houses were created to help simplify the lineages of immortals; when your oldest brother could have died 287 years ago family trees get complicated. An Immortal House is a quasi-noble house that contains all the relatives of an immortal. Because of the centuries of investment, knowledge, connections, and accumulation of wealth Immortal Houses are absurdly well funded. Immortals themselves are generally disinterested in the runnings of their estate, to various degrees, and thus the running such an estate falls to the oldest of the immortal's children (referred to as the "Prima Scion"). This head of the household will delegate duties their siblings and other relatives. The relationships of the various Immortal Houses to their immortals are as different as the natures of those immortals; and some lack all but required contact with their Prima Scion while others are intimately involved in the day to day affairs of their houses. Living in an Immortal Household is a politically charged affair and has been adequately described as a "never ending family reunion".

Scions

A scion is a child sired by an immortal. When raised in Immortal House culture they take on a role something like that of a historical knight or samurai. They are nobles who administer various aspect of their culture (often land and finances) while being expected to also serve in martial and culture roles. Scions are not only expected to be able to handle themselves in a fight and on a chaotic battlefield but also do things like perform courtly dances, write poetry, create art, orate, speak intelligently on any number of topics (particularly philosophy, politics, and religion), and possess both courtly graces and refined matters. The ultimate test of a scion is to raise something. This is often a particularly hard creature to tame like a certain kind of war dog, a bucking bronco, or a child they take from a rough life and train as an honored retainer. Few master all these aspects of scionship but those that do are held in high esteem. Those who do and achieve great thing are "celebrated" in a formal ceremony upon achieving some great rank.



This might be being declared a general or admiral in the military, a master craftsmen of an expected guild, a high mage, etc. This is a special privilege that the Prima Scion can bestow upon fellow scions and is generally only given to those who have reached late adulthood and contributed extensively to the Immortal House's prestige.

Prima Scions

The oldest living scion of an immortal. They serve as the executor of their immortal parent's estate (managing their wealth) and thus are the de facto head of their Immortal House who is answerable only to their immortal parent themselves. Prima scions reign until their death, though they may willingly step down, abdicating to the next in line. An abdicated Prima Scion is referred to as an "Elder Scion" and they take on a kind of "elder statesman" role. While they lack actual political power they are often made advisors due to their many connections and years of experience.

Nobili Domo

Immortal Houses have physical locations called Nobili Domo; ostentatious keeps, manorhouses, castles, temples, or palatial estates where all the relatives within four hereditary steps of the current Prima Scion live. Houses may own property elsewhere, but the Nobili Domo is the seat of power where all business is conducted. Any relative within four steps of the current Prima Scion can request "entitlement", which is the right to live in the Nobili Domo. Those living in their houses' Nobili Domo are taken care of in a luxurious fashion, though they are given duties in the administration of the family's assets. They are also given a generous stipend based on their duty and even those without hereditary closeness to the immortal may become quite independently wealthy. While technically at the discretion of the Prima Scion, refusing it is a great faux pas. Still the act of seeking entitlement is seen as an act of subservience; part swearing of fealty and part acknowledging the power of the Prima Scion. A scion does not need to seek entitlement as it is a birthright of theirs that cannot be denied.

Within the walls of a Nobili Domo the immortal, and by extension their Prima Scion, has "Immortal Imperium". This legal right makes the Nobili Domo sovereign territory owned and administered by the immortal and thus what they say constitutes laws. This allows the immortal and their prima scion (acting on their behalf) to ignore local laws and customs within the walls of the Nobili Domo. If a Prima Scion uses this in a fashion that is against the wishes of the immortal, or if other scions suspect that they are, the law is considered unjust and thus not binding (so, for example, a Prima Scion cannot write a new will for the immortal).

When a current Prima Scion dies or retires those who are not related to the new Prima Scion may be disinherited. Those who are find themselves quickly kicked out of the Nobili Domo and many struggle to find a life. A city of extended relationships often springs up around the formal walls of a Nobili Domo and helps sustain it.

Immortal Concubines

Spouses, of any gender, are referred to as "Immortal Concubines". Because the term "Moa" is used to denote one's non immortal parent in their lineage names, immortal concubines are sometimes called "moas" in slang. An immortal concubine is always introduced by their numerical position among the other spouses of the immortal ("Announcing the 5th Immortal Concubine of the Immortal Lady Lesandravite, Jovian da Aundrel!"). A current immortal concubine is always referred to by their parental title by all scions (mother, father, etc) regardless of their relationship to them. Immortal concubines occupy a unique niche within an Immortal House. They technically, as the immortal's lawful spouse, have as much of a right to manage the finances and act in the stead of the immortal themselves as the Prima Scion. Because they act as a single legal entity with their spouse, the Prima Scion is, in effect, managing their finances too, and an immortal concubine can overrule them. For the sake of order and decency immortal concubines are as uninvolved with the Immortal Houses as the immortal and focus on their marriage (or whatever sort of relationship they have) rather than the politics of their house.

Omniscions

An omniscion is the child of two immortals who falls under the protection of two Immortal Houses. This term has also occasionally been used to described as the child of two Prima Scions while both are in power. Traditionally, an omniscion cannot become the Prima Scion of more than one Immortal House though rules specifically against it are scarce. In the rare cases where one was to be appointed Prima Scion they often renounce their claim to the other house.

Adoptions

An “adjutor” is an adopted sibling or child and is generally done for political convenience. If someone is adopted they forsake all hereditary rights from their old family. Scions will do this, particularly Prima Scions, to allow people of great value to stay in their employ (and thus in the Nobili Domo). An immortal may adopt a child and their place in the ascendancy to Prima Scion is recorded at the time of the adoption. Some Immortal Houses do not allow adjutor Prima Scions while in others it is a common practices. The term “Adjutor” is added after other family titles.

Retainers

Those who work for the Immortal House but are not part of the Immortal House are called “retainers”. They are often skilled laborers, farmers, merchants, teachers, and others who provide services that they house cannot provide for itself. Their quarters are in a separate location from the actual family, either outside the walls of the Nobili Domo or in a dedicated area within its walls. Valuable retainers often marry into the family or become adopted as adjutors and become entitled by the Prima Scion as a result.

Expunging

A scion can be “expunged”, meaning that they are disowned by their immortal and thus stripped of all rank and privilege associated with them. Theoretically, acting on their behalf, a Prima Scion can expunge someone though if their immortal parent caught wind of such a thing and their permission had not been expressly given it may lead to the Prima Scion themselves also being expunged. An expunged scion can only be reinstated via an edict from their immortal parent.

Castaways

A “castaway” or “stray cat” is a scion of an immortal who roams far from home. They either don’t care about the Immortal House, don’t like the politics of it, or are unaware of their link to the house. Occasionally one will “come in out of the cold” and join Immortal House life and, while they are entitled to do so, they are looked upon as “uncultured” until they take on the mannerisms and traditions of Immortal House culture. There are various methods by which a castaway can be prevented from becoming Prima Scion; some Immortal Houses state that the new Prima Scion must present themselves in the Nobili Domo within 30 days of the previous one’s death, others say they must have lived in the Nobili Domo for at least 2 years, and others have far more bizarre and arcane rules.

The Death of an Immortal & Their Wills

The death of an immortal is a exceedingly rare and tragic event. They leave behind a last will and testament called the “Immortal Testamentum”. Upon their death their considerable possessions are split up among their living scions according to the document, though the exact nature of the Immortal Testamentum is known only to the Prima Scion (and Elder Scions) until the death of the immortal. It is regarded as one of the most sacred documents (next to the official family records) of an Immortal House and is guarded by scion soldiers. It is an immense document with many legal complexities and is comparable in size to a lich’s spellbook and twice as hard to understand by those not familiar with it.

Many surprises have been found in these documents; at least one occasion specified simply (over a mere 800 pages) that all their worldly possessions should go to their cat and another where the immortal’s death caused all their scions to turn to stone until the castle they were in rose above the clouds.

It should be noted that occasionally things other than “death” trigger these events as well. Should an immortal become untethered from their body in such a way that they will not be able to interact with their immortal house on a permanent basis they are considered “dead” for the purpose of their will. This typically happens

if an immortal become a literal deity, if they leave this reality (possibly to an adjacent one), if they are locked in a realm of eternal pain by a vengeful god, etc. There have been several instances where their own scions have traitorously killed or otherwise eternally imprisoned their immortal (or at least had a hand in it) and this is widely regarded as the most profane thing a member of an Immortal House can do.

Military & Adventuring

All Immortal Houses have a military, from a household guard to a large standing military force lead by crack scions, and all are utilized differently. Their disposition and use are largely dependent on the needs and wants of the immortal, but all heavily involve the scions. As a result of the varied skilled and often storied military careers of scions they are given to the adventuring life. Scions adventure to gain prestige, to find lost immortal parents so that they might right a wrong at home, to gain immortality themselves, or simply to increase the renown of their noble lineage. Scions can earn their celebrated status though adventuring and a significant portion have.

Races

Because each Immortal House is connected by a common lineage they tend to be somewhat uniform in terms of their race. Half breeds are common in them, as immortals are known for their storied lives and many acquaintances, but most members of a noble house have at least part of the same racial makeup. As immortals can be from any race, different houses have different races at their core but all function somewhat similarly. While an immortal goblin might sire an Immortal House that functions like an extremely wealthy goblin tribe and an dwarven Immortal House might be more clannish than even your average dwarf family, they all tend to conform to the same politicking and hierarchy.

Names

One's name is a big part of your life in Immortal House culture. In Immortal House culture longer names implies greater status; there is a saying that one's power can be measured by how long of a name you can make someone say when they address you.

Peasants, retainers and those of distant relationship often have a single name given to them by their parents, referred to as a "personal name" ("Paul"). They will sometimes add "son of", "daughter of", or "child of" and one of their parents name after this if they are particularly proud of a family connection.

Those of a closer relationship have two names their personal name and a surname which denotes their family ("Paul Rednik").

Scions style themselves with their personal name, their immortal house's surname, then "moa" and their non-immortal parent's name ("Paul Silverstar moa Jenna"). "Moa" means "child of".

Celebrated scions are given a "honor name" that goes before their name and is used on formal occasions only. It is often the personal name of an honored ancestor or hero they wish to be associated with ("Saiga Paul Silverstar moa Jenna").

Prima Scions are always have an honor name and are granted a single word epithet after their name. This is often several combined words to impart more meaning ("Saiga Paul Silverstar moa Jen Allfather")

Location: The Immortal City

The Immortal City is a collection of twenty-three such Immortal Houses whose sprawling Nobili Domo compounds comprise the various districts of the city. The resplendent city is the picture of luxury and those who live under the aegis of an Prima Scion live a life of decadence and strict adherence to family rules. Politics and bloodlines are at the heart of city life and, as only those within a few steps of the current Prima Scion are allowed to live in this city, ensuring one's continued close relationship to them is foremost on everyone's minds.

The city benefits from the exorbitant wealth of the various immortals being partially pooled together for their mutual benefit. A tithe to the city is given by every Immortal House in the Immortal City every year and these financial donations fund their government. They are not run by a single individual but rather by a small assembly of forty-six representatives, two from each Immortal House. A representative of this "Inner Council" may not be a Prima Scion, though one is almost always the heir apparent to the position to grant them clout, training, and to give them a foot

up in the politics of the city. A military, known as the “Magna Militaris”, is funded by this and the private donations of the various Immortal Houses (who want to curry favor with them in case of revolt). The leader of this force is a general from the house with the lowest standing, though all houses are represented in the Magna Militaris in various forms.

Terms

- **Immortal:** Any creature within an unlimited lifespan who cannot be killed (save through exceptional means).
- **Immortal Concubines:** Spouses, of any gender, are referred to as “Immortal Concubines”.
- **Immortal Houses:** A quasi-noble house that contains all the family members of given immortal.
- **Scions:** All those children sired by the immortal themselves are referred to as “scions” of that immortal.
- **Prima Scions:** The oldest living scion of an immortal.
- **Nobili Domo:** This is the estate, the physical location, of an Immortal House.
- **“Four Steps”:** In order to reside within the Nobili Domo a person must be within four hereditary steps of the current Prima Scion. An example of a “step” is a sibling relationship, a parent-child relationship, or a spousal relationship. Because a scion is always at least a step sibling to the current Prima Scion they are welcome in the Nobili Domo.
- **Adoption/Adjutors:** An adjutor is an adopted sibling or child and is generally done for political convenience.
- **Omniscions:** An omniscion is the child of two immortals who falls under the protection of two Immortal Houses.

- **Disinherited:** To be kicked out of the Nobili Domo due to a lack of relationship to the current Prima Scion.
- **Entitlement:** Permission to live in the Nobili Domo.
- **Immortal Imperium:** A legal concept that, within their Nobili Domo, an immortal’s word is literal law. Through their position a Prima Scion has a sort of Immortal Imperium by proxy.
- **Expunged:** A method of disowning a scion.
- **Magna Militaris:** The military forces of the Immortal City.
- **Castaway:** A “castaway” or “stay cat” is a scion who is not part of traditional Immortal House society.
- **Immortal Testamentum:** This is the last will and testament of an immortal.
- **Celebrated Scion:** A scion who has achieved great things and has been “celebrated” by the Prima Scion for their works.

CHARACTERS FROM AN IMMORTAL HOUSE LIKELY...

- Are well acquainted with labyrinthine laws and politics.
- Place a heavy emphasis on familial ties.
- Are related to an immortal, by blood or adoption.

CHARACTERS VISITING AN IMMORTAL HOUSE AREA CAN EXPECT...

- Scheming politics and family feuds that span multiple generations. If they aren’t careful, they can easily get swept up in affairs.
- Opulence and convoluted traditions.
- A greater emphasis on who you are related to. Some houses are judgemental towards outsiders without important familial ties.



Coffin Culture

Death

*"Because I could not stop for Death -
He kindly stopped for me -
The Carriage held but just Ourselves -
And Immortality.
We slowly drove - He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility -
We passed the School, where Children played
At Recess - in the Ring -
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain -
We passed the Setting Sun -
Or rather - He passed Us -
The Dews drew quivering and Chill -
For only Gossamer, my Gown -
My Tippet - only Tulle -
We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground -
The Roof was scarcely visible -
The Cornice - in the Ground -
Since then - 'tis Centuries - and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity -"*
"Because I Could Not Stop For Death"
Emily Dickinson, Poems: Series 1, 1890

Death isn't so bad, it's a natural part of life. Those who live in the Great Necropolis or who have been influenced by those who have are not afraid of death, though they have a healthy respect for it. It has been so profoundly normalized in their culture that people accept and celebrate a life well lived. This has led to a great deal of importance being placed on impermanence, a valuing of the fleeting and insubstantial nature of the world. They believe that all "things" are in a constant state of transition between being different "things"; either in the process of changing or that they no longer exist.

Joining the Culture

Normally one is born into a family that's part of the culture but, as coffin culture is rather open and accepting, one can acclimate to it or marry into it. It's more a lifestyle than a set group of rules and it is certainly not a formal organization. The term "movement" is not a good phrase for it as movements end and coffin culture has outlasted many of them; they are more a persistent tradition with social norms and rules that is perpetuated by those who adhere to it. Certain cities are centers for coffin culture and serve as informal capitals governing bodies of the culture. A good rule of thumb is that "You never need to ask if someone is part of coffin culture. It is immediately and undeniably apparent".

Coffins

Long ago a settlement was formed in the ruins of an ancient and expansive necropolis. This burial complex became home to a rich and diverse culture that normalized death and have a casual relationship with it. In time so called "coffin culture", a name earned for their infatuation with artistic coffins, spread farther than this burial ground and now its location is all but forgotten (if it wasn't a myth to begin with). Sects of coffin culture can be found in every major city and many independent enclaves can be found inhabiting city-sized mausoleums around the world.

The name "coffin culture" comes from the practice its adherents have of crafting and decorating their coffins. These are works of art that are put on display in the home for everyone to admire. They are filled with candy and gifts during their high holidays and buying or crafting one's own coffin is a sign of adulthood. Famous artists are commissioned to make exquisite coffins and matching headstones and can cost as much as a house.

The name of the culture is probably derived from the way some members of the coffin culture carry coffins with them while traveling, earning them to the

nickname “coffin-backs”. They use these as tents, storage vessels, sleeping chambers, backpacks, and expect to be buried in them if they die. They are not their fancy one, though they may have ornamentation, and come with straps like a backpack and many other features.

Gothic Architecture

Coffin culture is obsessed with gothic architecture and many of their buildings feature heavy uses of stone, spires, large expanses of glass, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, and pointed arches. While it is immediately apparent in larger structures like temples and castles they build it is even evident in things like tables, barns, and forts.

Funerary Parties

The hottest event of the season are always held in the culture’s extensive mausoleums and necropoli. Parties for the recently deceased are rowdy social gathering where the wine flows like the spirit of the deceased and tradition says that more that is drank the easier their transition will be! Music is a huge part of coffin culture and famous musicians from the world over are hired for funerary parties, often paid lavish retainer fees years in advance. Funerary parties are open to anyone and no one is turned away at the door; it is an accepting (if not a little wild) party that everyone is meant to enjoy. Even those not immersed in coffin culture find themselves turning up for funerary parties and embracing the bacchanalian energy they embody.

Grotesque Tableaus & Appearance

Another feature of coffin culture is the creation of “tableaus” or striking arrangements of artistic elements. This might be an actual human skeleton dressed in a fine suit propped up at a piano in their entry hall, a fountain of red water whose pool is bedecked with red gems, or the mummified remains of one’s pet encased in glass atop of bed of enchanted roses. They are meant to make a statement about life but not in a demeaning or negative way. They are to show reverence to death while still making an artistic statement. Many devotees of the culture turn themselves into walking grotesque tableaus either by fashion, by tattooing, body modification, or by the accessories they carry with themselves. These are always in good taste yet visceral and striking. One might find someone from the coffin

culture wearing a stud earring made of bone to a fancy party, a warrior carrying a bouquet of shrunken heads, a lady in waiting wearing makeup that makes her look subtly more like a corpse, or a priest with an extensive tattoo that illustrates all the bones in their body.

Compassion

Coffin culture is a very polite and accepting society and they are famous for not only their hospitality but also their habit of constantly apologizing for things to be polite. They have made something of an art out of apologies and, despite their overtly dark aesthetic, they will trip over themselves to make one feel at ease among their collection of shrunken heads and the personal coffin in their living room. They are an open and accepting culture from people of all walks of life and don’t have many social hangups. While all alignments can be found among them, people who practice coffin culture tends towards good alignments.



Necromancers

Rather than being ashamed of necromancy and holding it in contempt they are treated more as a banal profession. Coffin culture has rules about disrespecting the dead and so long as a necromancer treats those who have passed on with the due respect they deserve, they are welcomed. Those who commit heinous crimes against the undead will find themselves lynched by a mob from the coffin culture before a crusade of holy knights can even mount up on their mighty steeds. Professional necromancers are called on to speak with the dead regularly, though most members of the coffin culture know how to do that a bit, or awaken an old relative to attend a wedding or other event they should have been around to attend.

Undead

Members of coffin culture have a complex relationship with undead. On the one hand they themselves will call old friends and relatives back for a party so that they might be venerated. On the other hand they are also disgusted by the notion of bringing back a tortured spirit to do their bidding. They are the first ones to lay a wayward spirit to rest, by force if necessary, but see no problem inviting a necromancer over to create a skeleton out of their deceased cat. The line they draw is solid though; only bring back a spirit to honor them and help them and never enslave them.

Location: The Catacomb Kingdom

The Great Necropolis is a place that gave birth to coffin culture and its adherents make pilgrimages to it. Found by travelers looking for a place to call their own, forced into it by fate, coffin culture first took roots in its creepy hallowed halls. The earliest coffin-backs are said to have sheltered from those trying to persecute them, though the reasons as to why and the validity of these claims are lost to history. Over time they began to live in the Great Necropolis and the civilization flourished. The practice of living next to the dead took on a life of its own and now pockets of people who follow their ways can be found everywhere.

Campaign Integration Note: The “Great Necropolis” does not need to exist in your game. It can simply be a large graveyard, a big catacomb, etc. The term is a filler for any place you want to incorporate. It works great if you have an undead society or other monument to death.

CHARACTERS RAISED IN COFFIN CULTURE LIKELY...

- Are casual around death but don't rush to meet it.
- Carry around a coffin that they use for storage and sleeping.
- Have a semi-morbid artistic aesthetic and black humor.

CHARACTERS VISITING A COFFIN CULTURE AREA CAN EXPECT...

- People living near graves and tombs.
- Polite manners and a sense of compassion, despite morbid surroundings.
- Gothic architecture and grotesque tableaux.

New Items

Coffin-Pack

Price 70gp; **Weight** 6 lbs.

This strapped coffin-shaped wooden pack is sized slightly smaller than the bearer. Inside, numerous shelves, cupboards, and drawers allow for tidy and efficient storage of items. The handles on the sides of the coffin also serve as hook points for external bags. Coffin-packs are prized above standard backpacks for the increased protection offered by the wooden construction; tales abound of supplies surviving falls over cliffs or being dunked in a river. When using a coffin-pack, treat your Strength score as +1 higher than normal when determining your carrying capacity, and the coffin-pack counts as a waterproof container. The contents can be emptied from the pack to allow a person to sleep within, though in a very cramped fashion.

The Godslayers

Atop a spire that reaches into the heavens themselves lives a culture as if to defy the gods themselves to strike them down for their hubris. In their earliest years they slew their own patron deities because their gods promised them all the land they could lay their eyes on and failed to deliver on that promise. Impatient, the settleman raged against their local deities and ultimately committed deicide.

Origins

From all parts of the world were gathered strong warriors, woven together into a tapestry of military glory that allowed these once disparate people to form together and carve out a small area for themselves; a kingdom at the base of a mountain that reached above the clouds. These foreigners, brought together by the need to survive, accepted each other as siblings, despite having different parents, but they could not agree on their gods. Each race and culture brought with them their preferred gods and no one could agree upon who would be the patron deity of their bold new land. In time it was decided that the proto-godslayers should be an independent people who had their own gods. Many demigods and spirits came to their leaders in those days and offered themselves. Only when the spirits of the mountain itself came to them did they accept; it promised them that any land they could see from the peak of the mountain would be land they could rule over.

The Years of the Growing Mountain

Conquest after conquest drew not only more land and fame to the proto-godslayers but spread the influence of the Mountain God and its kin across the world. With each new conquered land the mountain grew ever-larger. Each time it grew the keen eyed proto-godslayers could see further. It reached so high that, with a mighty leap, a man at the top of it could leave the planet's atmosphere. However when they finally came upon a foe they could not match, a mighty empire aided by a coalition of the proto-godslayer's foes, they lost faith in the Mountain God.

The Slaying of a God

The proto-godslayers had forgotten what loss felt like and when they were routed by their foes they grew indignant at the Mountain God. They demanded to know why they'd lost its favor. It told them that they had been lax in their sacrifices to it and that a powerful god was helping their foes. Rather than make more sacrifices they decided to make a sacrifice of the Mountain God. They sent their entire army up the mountain itself and leaped from its peak. It is said that they reached the realm of the gods and went on a deicidal rampage. They slew the outsiders in the employ of the Mountain God, the lesser gods under it, and finally chopped off the head of the Mountain God itself. They used the head and spine of their once great and mighty protector as a battering ram to burst open the walls of the city of their foe and burn every building they could not sack.

The Curse of the Godslayers

Those who live too long in the shadow of the mountain where the Mountain God once lived are cursed by the death of its deity. They suffer from an insatiable blood rage when in the presence of deities, divine magic, holy relics, or agents of the gods (angels, demons, etc). Despite the mystery and misinformation surrounding some of the godslayer's origins the gods, if they can be believed, have confirmed that the godslayers did at one point kill a major deity and anyone associated with their legacy is, in fact, lightly cursed.

Despite their deicidal crusade, the godslayers aren't inherently malicious. Even darker forces earn their ire, with the godslayers being provoked in equal measure by gods and demon lords. In fact, any non-mortal force (and most mortal forces) that attempt to command influence attract the wrath of godslayers. They firmly believe that only mortals should lead mortals, and have a strong sense of internal community, even if they spend a great deal of time arguing.

Beliefs

They have a cultural believe that the gods are flawed, imperfect, and can be defied by mortals. The godslayers are not atheists, they know the gods exist but are displeased with their interference in mortal affairs; they believe no good can come of taking the bargains of powers greater themselves. Relying on the gods is a weakness mortals cannot afford and the godslayers have a culture that seeks to improve the lot of mortals without the aid of the gods. They tend to give a pass to nature deities or other natural forces that do not seek to interfere with mortals beyond what their cosmic duties requires but would never worship them. In fact, their ire towards any given god is proportional to how much that deity and its agents interfere with mortals.

The godslayers are deeply superstitious and employ many arcane magic users (particularly abjuration and divination wizards) to keep them safe from things like curses, hexes, and jinxes. There is a pervasive cultural notion that one must destroy (or at least protect) what falls off their body (ticks with your blood, boogers, hair, nail clippings, skin flakes, etc) and most carry around a small box for that purpose that they will burn the contents of each day. This is because they believe that others can use stuff that was once part of you against you (which is, magically speaking, at least occasionally true). Professions such as barber or doctor require an immense amount of societal trust, and as such are among the most scrutinized and verified members of a community; apprentice barbers undergo grueling training in how to handle fallen hair and nurses prepare special containers to return shed blood to its rightful owner.

Godslayers also believe in a concept called "crisis birth". This means that they, as a group (or subgroup), should put themselves into crisis to force themselves to grow. They mean this both in an evolutionary fashion (culling the weakest) and in the sense that it is training that allows them to better themselves in the future. Because of this military units will jump off cliffs together, leap into portals to literal Hell, and challenge each other to games of chance. Needless to say, they are also a very fertile cultural with quite liberal, but biologically respectful, practices in terms of procreation.

Deathseekers

Many culture-heroes in godslayer cultures die glorious deaths. It is almost written into every narrative and story. It's become so archetypal that a godslayer play is considered avant garde or a subversion of form if it lacks a good hero's death (a recently famous one has a devil use its last breath to curse a prideful godslayer hero with immortality). Godslayer culture has a caste of people known as "deathseekers" who seek to emulate these great heroes. These fanatical warrior always fight alone and seek out the biggest, toughest, nastiest, foe to engage in one-on-one combat if possible. If not, they will hurl themselves at foes with such gusto that it is thought to account for much of the success they have found on the battlefield. Deathseekers will travel in "bands", loosely knit groups of individual deathseekers that travel from battlefield to battlefield, picking the losing side and seeking their ultimate reward. When fighting alongside believers against a greater challenge they never fight under their authority. It is best to think of a deathseeker band as being "fighting the same enemy, at the same time" rather than as true allies. There are many stories of deathseekers finishing up one enemy and turning on their former "allies". As godslayers have a sense of honor, they will often loudly and clearly make it known who they are fighting and why. This is done by a small ritual known as the "Request for Death" where they beseech their foe to give them a death worthy of their honor.

An important note is that deathseekers aren't stupid or suicidal; they want to overcome the trial, but only just. They don't want to go out and die a fool's death against an undefeatable enemy. They want the long odds, but they want to at least feel there is a chance. An important aspect of a deathseeker's tale is the idea of death at the moment of greatest triumph, that the deathseeker will never diminish. To a devoted deathseeker the greatest insult is to grow old and frail.

Names

Godslayers have monosyllabic names like: Rux, Del, Tarn, Vek, Tul, Fod, Dim, Sin, or Mel. They don't have last names and, if someone has the same name they'll differentiate the two people by either their family, something they did, or some physical aspect. So two Dels might be referred to as "Fat Del" and "Del, you know- Grog's daughter". It's considered bad form in the godslayers to name your child after a well known person because people will always have to think of a way to describe your child when speaking about them.

Joining the Culture

Anyone who has lived under the mountain for a few years generally is considered a godslayer. The thing is- no one is really sure which mountain was the mountain. Some say it crumbled after the Mountain God was killed, some it didn't and posit that whatever the tallest mountain in the world is must be the mountain, and still others say the mountain is a metaphor and so long as you live with contempt in your heart for all the gods you are "cursed" by having "lived in the shade" of the contempt from the gods. Essentially, "joining" is more a state of mind and the people you associate yourself with. If you surround yourself with godslayers and throw yourself into a rage when someone says "bless you" when you sneeze- you're probably a godslayer.



Demographics

As it was when the first godslayers joined in union together, the godslayers will accept anyone in their ranks who have contempt for the gods and pride in their mortality. Anyone, of any race or gender, can be counted as a godslayer. Godslayers don't care a great deal about race, ethnicity, or gender; as long as you can contribute to society in some way they don't care. They also don't expect more than one can offer and will use the old and handicapped as readily as anyone else, with the expectation being that they will contribute to their society in some fashion that matches their ability.

Life as a Godslayer

Godslayers live like everyone else but have a few exceptions. They don't follow any religious traditions and try to root out anything with a religious origin, are highly militant, have a heavy emphasis on one's family and communal responsibilities, they constantly challenge themselves, and seek a glorious death. Despite what one might think, they are not all dedicated to crusades against believers; there is a normal distribution of artisans, laborers, traders, craftsfolk, artists, musicians, statesman, and the like. Despite the intense anti-god rage they are known for, being a godslayer isn't their all-consuming focus. It is the culture they were raised in or find themselves in; they are a person first and a godslayer second.

The intensity of their cultural beliefs creates many complexities; how does a godslayer merchant conduct themselves when they trade with a believer? Does a godslayer in a metropolitan city have the right to ask for a special exemption for their children so they are not subjected to religious dogma? The path walked by a godslayer, particularly among believers, is a fine line that has many perils. Does one let their fervor get the better of them and risk being ostracized or is it best to swallow their rage and compromise on their beliefs for the sake of convenience? Can a god-worshiper be considered a good person in the eyes of a godslayer, despite their "shortcomings"?

Location: Spiremount

("THE SPIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN")

An immense tower, reaching above the clouds and built directly atop a mountain, the Spiremount serves as the symbolic testament to the death of the Mountain God. Intentionally filled with dangers, safeguards, and defenders, the godslayers see Spiremount as a training ground for their battles against the divine. It is the closest thing they have to 'holy place', though they refer to it as a 'cultural monument'. It is viewed as a rite of passage to climb to the top, overcoming the various physical and puzzling challenges, and scream a challenge out to the gods. Curiously, Spiremount has had to be rebuilt several times, as it suffers from an unusually high concentration of lightning strikes, earthquake activity, and other natural disasters.

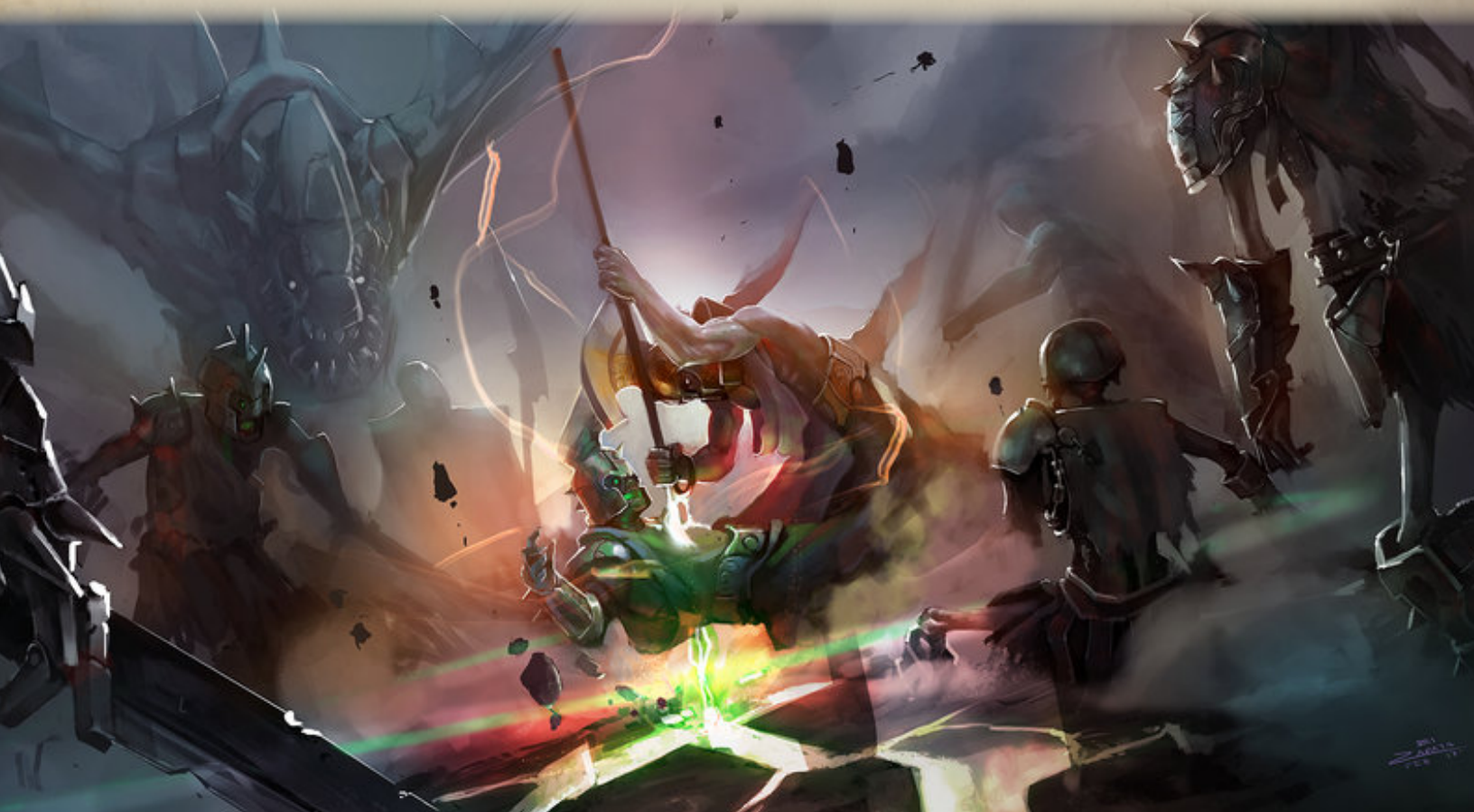
While Spiremount itself remains the singular icon of defiance, smaller spires built in the same style are common sights in godslayer areas. A common practice is to climb these smaller towers to scream one's frustrations at the gods. Once a year, communities hold a festival where ardent godslayers (especially deathseekers) race to the top of specially constructed spires to be the first to reach the prize; a warhelm made to symbolize the skull of the Mountain God. Competition is fierce and brutal, with the winner gaining minor celebrity status among their peers.

CHARACTERS RAISED BY GODSLAYERS LIKELY...

- Don't see gods as something to worship, but something to overcome.
- Take offence at any attempt to convert them to a religion or proselytize at them.
- Are paranoid about keeping track of personal items like hair and nail clippings.

CHARACTERS VISITING A GODSLAYER AREA CAN EXPECT...

- At least veiled animosity towards divine spellcasters and others with strong ties to gods. Those who push divine beliefs hard can expect outright hostility.*
- A strong emphasis on personal achievement within the community, and contributing what one is able to.
- Stories where the hero dies at the end.
- *Note: Godslayer NPCs have their starting attitude lowered by 1 step when dealing with believers and 2 steps when dealing with divine casters.



The City

Straddling several dimensions “The City” is a metropolis that is home to countless beings. The City is a monster though, a slow moving behemoth of a place where crowded streets, enforced civil codes, and government pay make for a pressure cooker that produces not only the best but also the worst that all the dimensions it represents have to offer.

A City of Many Dimensions

The City is comprised of many districts. Each district is actually, physically, located on another plane of existence than its neighboring districts. Moving between districts requires moving through large, permanent, portals. Because of this unique setup The City has access to the best and the worst parts of nearly every plane of existence. Conquest of The City is also nearly impossible as the attackers would have to adapt to myriad environments and fight all manner of creatures. True conquest is impossible as The City can simply shut down (temporarily or permanently) portals between districts, stranding the invaders. The City itself is laid out in a much more three dimensional layout with many layers above and below where one might consider the “ground” to be. As they are all physical locations connected via portals, one district’s relative position to another is irrelevant. It is quite easy to get lost and visitors hire one of the many tour guides who are itching to get some of that sweet tourist money so they can get a big bonus from The City’s tourism bureau.

The Big City Mindset

The many creatures who live there share a cultural identity that is a result of the heavy blending that is required to fit into live in The City. While most people might have very clear concepts of what a “person” is, Cityfolk (as they are called) accept a much wider array of beings as equals. Ever had a conversation with the disembodied soul of a thrice-murdered Prince? Undead might seem scary but to someone from The City it’s not unusual for a vampire or zombie to deliver a package. And most people would freeze up if a demon tried asking for directions, but in The City they’re just

another citizen. Even mages aren’t seen as “weird” or “special”, just people following a specific trend (last year it was arcane wards, this year it’s 5th dimensional yoga). In short, almost nothing phases people from The City.

All Paid According to their Means

In The City, people are paid by a central government. Their paycheck is based on their skill level, the results they produce, and by the value their work has to The City. These factors can fluctuate; if The City has too many blacksmiths and not enough adventurers you better bet there will be a flurry of adventuring license applications once the value index of blacksmiths starts dropping. One of the most stable jobs is food production and farmers tend to end up in the upper middle class of The City’s society. It’s not amazing pay but the work has had a stable value index over the years.

Another unique facet of The City is that inheritance is forbidden. Nothing can be inherited by the descendants of the deceased and it is all given to The City. Because of this people who know the end is near give away luxurious gifts to their friends and family.

Forced Sovereignty

In The City, your civic duty to society is to lead. Every decade every citizen of legal age must take a test for competence. Subsequent tests are administered to those who passed the first round. At the highest levels essays are written anonymously and voted on by a council of proctors who represent many facets of society. The winner rules for a decade then they may never hold political office again. Their cabinet is comprised from those who made their way into the higher rounds of the test and tested well in particular areas. A contestant who proved to be a economic wiz but didn’t pass the geographic part of the exam might be appointed to the position of finance minister. There is generally a strong negative reaction among citizens who find themselves in high government office without any intent to do so and many will intentionally fail their exams so they can avoid the unwelcome attention and such a job



could potentially bring. The extremely wealthy and influential also avoid it because the pitiful paycheck it provides pales in comparison to what they make and may bar them from holding non-elected office (where they can do some real shady stuff). More than one bright young student has found themselves elected to the highest position in the land only to become totally burnt out by the stress and flee The City in hopes of escaping it. They are always caught and always forced to lead (because no one else wants to either).

Expansion by Economics

The City is BIG, obnoxiously big, and it expands by an interesting mechanic. Industrious individuals can buy a license to open a permanent portal in The City to some plane where they own property (or at least to a place no one else owns). Such individuals gain exclusive use of that portal for the next 10 years and can charge a nice tax to The City for people going in and out of it. The portal owner will try to do business with the locals or extract some resource from the area (water, ore, food, etc) and, after 10 years, if it is economically viable The City will annex that area and form a new district. The owner is paid a hefty bounty for their services and may still retain some rights to trade. The City negotiates with people outside the portal to The City if they wish to annex it but, after 10 years of trade with The City, most jump at the chance to join it due to the economic prosperity it will bring.

The City is famous for the kind of insane industrial power it wields and how hard its people work. Its people are so hard working and well educated that they are known to take over the market of any town they are in within two or three generations. The prosperity this brings the people who do business with them often lures new blood into The City.

Talented Tongues

Every speak to a fire rat? It's a harrowing experience but they know the best places to eat. People in The City speak many languages because most people will find their little district next to one from a totally different plane of existence. It's not uncommon for angels to share a dormitory with a fire elemental, a vampire, or a sentient iron golem and for them to all pick up a smattering of each other's languages (particularly insults). Life is cramped, stifling, and uncomfortable in

The City so people's favorite pastime for their newly acquired linguistic skills is to argue.

Most cityfolk have a tendency to use big words, the bigger the better, and it is considered a hallmark of high intelligence to understand big words. People tend to fake knowing big words, though this regularly backfires on them. Because of this tendency organizations that want to be seen as being "high class" will use the longest words possible to describe themselves. They are only 1-3 words long but the words themselves are often ten letters or longer.

It Takes a District to Raise a Child

In The City children have only a tenuous connection to their parents. They are raised by the system in City-run schools. Food, shelter, education, entertainment, and even light work is provided by The City. Kids will visit their parents on occasion, often holidays or breaks, but parents are generally seen as mentors at best and casual acquaintances at worst. Friends become more like traditional family and kids raised together tend to stay together later in life. Education in The City is top notch by highly practical; a investment in future workers of The City.

Joining and Leaving The City

Like everything else The City has strict requirements on becoming a citizen. Immigration is a huge issue and they will generally only allow prospective citizens who possess skills The City needs and who can pass a general aptitude test. If that has been passed one is offered a contract in a language they understand along with a lawyer to explain to them what the city expects of them and what they will receive in return (food, shelter, entertainment, and fulfillment).

Leaving is a bit harder. The City keeps a tally of how much it has invested into a given citizen, how much they've produced, and how much it expects them to produce for it in the future. Citizens may leave but have to settle up their balance with The City's bankers; in effect one needs to buy their way out of the city. There are exceptions to this though; those with a high demand skill that has suddenly dropped off in value are offered a chance to leave the city, with a bonus, to help balance out the number of people in that field.

Contracts are offered, often to those with an adventuring licence, to go undertake great deed for The City and settle things for them. When one reaches the age of maturity they are offered the right to leave the city, free and clear without consequence or debt, or become a full citizen. One can always just "walk off" and never look back but The City places large bounties on people who owe them money; a solid percent of what is owed by the individual. While slavery is outlawed in the city, penal labor is not and a not-insignificant percent of The City's workforce is doing its work from a prison cell.

CHARACTERS RAISED IN THE CITY LIKELY...

- Have a 'seen it' mentality to everything.
- Fluent in several languages, and understand a smattering of several more.
- Are sending taxes back to The City, and getting some small pay back.
- See travel between planes as mundane.

CHARACTERS VISITING THE CITY CAN EXPECT...

- To hear every language imaginable while walking around.
- Just about anything being available for sale, if you look hard enough and are willing to pay.
- The unexpected to occur regularly.



The Beautocracy

A beautocracy is a culture based on standards of physical beauty. The most beautiful are considered to be the most blessed and hardworking (beauty takes effort after all), therefore the beautiful must not only be the agents of the gods but must also be the most suited to rule as well. Beauty, in their minds, correlates directly with morality and authority so if someone is more handsome than you, you must listen to their orders. However, the concept of "beauty" is a fickle thing and the entire culture is constantly chasing the latest trend. If the king has a crooked nose, everyone breaks their nose and sets it crooked to be more "beautiful". This leads the culture to chase its own tail, incestiously devouring fashion trends of the moment to be more beautiful in an uncertain future fashion landscape. Beauty fades with age; as painting that has seen one too many summers, but polite society is not so unkind as to forget the beauty of yesterday. For those of a certain age, fashion overtakes physical beauty so long as a genuine attempt to maintain one's figure is made. This head lead to a trend where the older someone is, the more elaborate their garb is so that it distracts from their sagging, old, bodies.

The Uglies

The undesirables in a beautocracy are those born with physical deformities, a marred form due to injury, or even just plain features. The upper class will go so far as to throw slanderous insults and even glass bottles at the uglies to the cheers of their sycophantic onlookers who will fawn over their beautiful companion for their "strong throwing arm" or "particularly ingenious word choice". Uglies are untouchable and unmentionable, the act of one of them contacting a truly beautiful person is a crime that the courts will mete out harsh punishments for (harsh labor, grotesque public humiliation, beatings, fines, etc).

All is not copacetic though. The uglies hold secret court in the swamps and sewers of a beautocracy where they convict the worst offenders and they go on terrifying night raids where they defame the beautiful and mar them in ways they will never be able to recover from. The underground resistance of uglies is alive and well

in every beautocracy and it's not always a collective of high-minded individuals looking to over through an inherently dehumanizing and absurd system. Most uglies are just as petty as the beauties who harm them and it's not uncommon for a beautiful person who has been brought low by a ugly raid to join that very ugly court in the future to get revenge on someone prettier than them who has wronged them. The beauties, for their part, see these rumored courts as proof of the uglies' low status and as justification for mistreatment. The cycle of violence is both inherent to the system and self-sustaining.



Worship

A beautocracy is always religious, in some fashion. Divine beauty is so much a part of life in a beautocracy that it is as essential as heavy makeup and imported fabrics. Without the ephemeral *je ne sais quoi* that drives the fickle wind of fashion and assures its adherents that what they are doing means something (rather than just playing “who can be the most pretentious about how they look”) the entire concept of a beautocracy would fall apart. Yes, it is the divine mandate of heaven that stiletto heels are in fashion and fur boots belong only in the devil’s own closet, or so they claim, and this sets an established order that they can all believe in.

Because of this members of a beautocracy have a propensity to worship anything that seems worthy of worship to them in that moment. Cults and spiritual groups spring up like unwanted dandelions in the spring and die out just as quick. Each one exploding in a blaze of sincere devotion, it’s worshipers clinging to its ideals for dear life, before it is extinguished by the next wave of haute couture religious fashion. It is the catwalk as the bully pulpit.

Alignment

Beautocracies are too banal to be truly evil. As a culture it walks the line between neutral and evil. There are certainly wicked things done in the name of beauty but the average citizen is more self-interested than malicious and are more oblivious to the evil they cause. Still, “the opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.” and nowhere is the population more indifferent than in a society based around trend chasing, narcissistic, artists.



Mechanics

A given NPC’s starting attitude towards you in a beautocracy is determined by your Charisma score.

TABLE 1-1: BEAUTOCRACY NPC STARTING ATTITUDE

Charisma Score	Starting Attitude	Social Class
01-10	Hostile	“The Uglies”
11-13	Unfriendly	Low Class
14-16	Indifferent	Middle Class
17-20	Friendly	Upper Class
21+	Helpful	Celebrity

Influencers

Those at the very top of society have a degree of influence over it. If a beautiful maiden contracts a disease and turns her illness into a stark fashion statement, it may sweep the nation and lead to everyone getting intentionally infected and a new standard of beauty to emerge. So long as they are greasing the right palms and backing the right horses, a truly beautiful person is almost impossible to destroy.

So it is with the government of a beautocracy. Each year a gala is held where all the most influential beautiful people are invited to attend. At some point in the excessively lavish evening's affairs a council of venerated elders are polled on who were the most dashing and beautiful people at the gala. The winners form the "Court of Grace and Beauty" 1 year and the couple who wins overall is crowned the "King and Queen of Grace and Beauty", ruling as an undisputed monarch for the same term. While the couples are often romantically involved they are not always but must have attended the gala together. Same sex couples are not prohibited, though they try to have some level of representation of various groups, factions, genders, race, sexualities, and ethnicities on the court as to minimize the unrest in the city. There is also a "King/Queen Fool" who is crowned. This is the ugliest ugly that they police can capture that night. They are chained up and dressed in a gaudy jester's outfit and required to perform at court functions. While this is truly disgusting, many uglies have gained the ears of beautiful people and earned their way into their good graces while simultaneously advocating for the rights of the ugly. The King/Queen Fool acts as a token ugly and is tasked with charity outreach. In darker times, ugly courts often use this position to plan daring ugly raids and gain access to both funding and access to locations and people otherwise unavailable to them.

Punishment

If to be beautiful is to flourish than to be ugly is to die in a beautocracy. Punishments are handed down by a court of the most beautiful and venerated elders for crimes ranging from embezzlement to murder to impolite dinner conversation with your betters. Each infraction is met with some sort of forced physical defacements; public shaving of one's head, a scar, a tattoo (temporary or permanent), a requirement to wear a scarlet letter, a broken limb, or even the mutilation of one's face. The punishment usually fits the crime and small infractions cause temporary defacements such as a public shaving or a temporary tattoo that one can cover up with clothing. The more violent or heinous the offense, the more public and permanent the punishment becomes. High crimes, like treason or murder of one's betters, may even be magically inscribed runes that not only proclaim ones offense in a permanent and public fashion but may actively nauseate those around the offender. Every now and then a fashion trend comes around that makes one such punishment "cool" and the courts need to come up with alternative punishments for a time.

CHARACTERS FROM A BEAUTOCRACY LIKELY...

- Have at least 14 Charisma.
- Understand social graces exceedingly well.
- A dedicated followers of fashion trends.

CHARACTERS VISITING A BEAUTOCRACY CAN EXPECT...

- To be judged based on their appearance.
- Rapidly changing tastes, beliefs, and styles.
- Conflict with an oppressive caste system.

The Silent Haven

The Silent Haven is a quiet, well-connected, large, traveling band of sociopaths. They are fully aware of their mentality, admit to it, and more or less want to be left alone. They travel in secret, moving from one metropolis to another when attention is brought on one of their own. They try to recruit and save sociopaths, giving them creative outlets for their antisocial behaviors.

A Portrait of a Sociopath

A “sociopath” is not a “psychopath” and is instead simply someone who suffers from antisocial personality disorder. They are afflicted with a condition which causes them to have problems empathizing with the emotions of others, lie (often pathologically), and have a detached sense of morality. This causes them to act recklessly and or aggressively at inappropriate times even when they are fully aware that their actions would be wrong. To mask this they will often develop a charming exterior that they try to use to hide themselves from the world. This, coupled with their clinical amorality, makes them ruthless manipulators if this predatory behavior is not carefully watched over. It is a common misconception that sociopaths are all serial killers, they are more selfish introverts masquerading as rugged individualists.

A Band of Sinners Trying to Be Saints

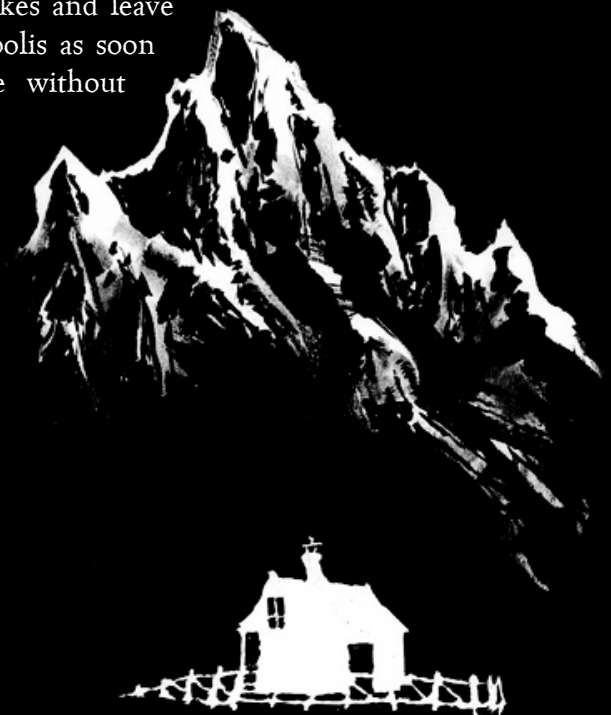
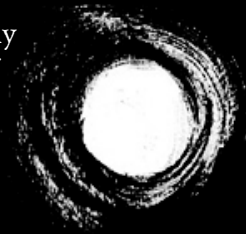
The Silent Haven is a support network for sociopaths who look for other sociopaths and help them cope with the challenges they face in day-to-day life. Even those that have sense enough to want to change or at least integrate better into society find the experience grating as they are deeply antisocial so the network stays loose. A series of sponsors and sponsees operating in small cells help these people carve out little lives for themselves while helping others do the same.

Wickedness for the Sake of the Species

The Silent Haven is not all support groups and kindships though; they have a dark secret that allows them to move free. In the name of whatever city or country is hosting them they plumb the depths of topics that mortal man was not meant to. They operate “Mad Labs” where they covertly put technological and magical advancement above human life/suffering. They operate within some set of laws: a special dispensation covertly given to them by their hosts. Not everyone gets involved in the Mad Labs and most don't even know they exist. Those few genius sociopaths unbound by morality buy the freedom and occasional forgiveness of their peers though; a devil's bargain struck in the dark to allow the suffering sociopaths to live the quiet lives they wish.

Pulling Up the Stakes

The Silent Haven has enclaves in many major cities and operate a sort of underground railroad for sociopaths. Many neurotypical people work as support staff, though what they know is heavily compartmentalized. When one of the sociopaths in a city does something heinous the rest go to ground and quickly pull up stakes and leave the metropolis as soon as possible without



drawing suspicion. Some go to existing enclaves in other major population centers but many will move on to establish new ones. Slowly the network will find and seed a new city with safehouses, allies, and deals with the local governance. In a matter of years the Silent Haven will be established anew, a sociopathic phoenix risen from the ashes.

The Silent One

At the core of the Silent Haven is a deity known as “The Silent One”. Its exact nature is unknown; The Silent One may be a full on deity, a demigod, an avatar of some greater force, or possibly an aspect of some other god. What is known is that The Silent One is a benevolent divinity that only sees sinners as believers; The Silent One is a good deity that only accepts non-good followers. The Silent Haven was made in its honor, though it is not a religious organization and its members rarely are aware of its origin until they have been in the organization for many years.



CHARACTERS FROM A THE SILENT HAVEN LIKELY...

- Are clinical sociopaths or are involved with someone who is.
- Have secrets they try to keep hidden from the world..
- Distrust outsiders.

CHARACTERS VISITING A SILENT HAVEN AREA CAN EXPECT...

- Secrecy and mistrust of outsiders.
- Moral ambiguity in the realms of science.
- A few dead bodies.



TABLE 2-1: THE SILENT ONE

Deity	Alignment	Domains	Symbol	Favored Weapon
The Silent One	NG	Good, Evil, Community, Destruction, Healing, Travel	A House With a Waterfall Within It	Two-Bladed Sword

Culture Traits

Pathfinder

Cultures provide a “cultural trait”. Mechanically they tend to be a bonus paired with a smaller penalty. There are different ways of implementing cultural traits depending on how you GM wants to implement them: they can be taken by all characters for free at 1st level, may be taken in place of a normal trait* if you are using those, or may be taken in place of a 1st level feat. A character can only have 1 culture trait.

If you are designing your own culture, you should provide a feat that can be taken at 1st level. It has both a benefit and a drawback. The benefit should outweigh the drawback and the net benefit should be on par with that of a typical feat.

*Traits were first described in Paizo's Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Campaign. Simply put, they are flavorful feats taken at 1st level as a sort of extra thing to round out your character.

Immortal House Scion

You are a child of an immortal and have been raised as a scion of an Immortal House.

Prerequisite: Immortal House (Culture)

Benefit: You always treat Knowledge (nobility), Knowledge (religion), and Perform (one skill of your choice) as class skills. At 8th level you gain a +2 in all these skills and at 16th level you gain a further +2 (for a total of +4) in these three skills.

Drawback: Your mind is dedicated to the trivial pursuits of politics and thus you receive 1 less skill point per level.

Coffin-Back

You grew up influenced by Coffin Culture and, on a fundamental level, you are not scared of death.

Prerequisite: Coffin Culture (Culture)

Benefit: Death never scares you, thus you +1/4th level bonus (minimum +1) on all saves against death effects and begin play speaking the language of the dead (whatever that may be in your setting) as a bonus language. Furthermore, you may use *speak with dead*

as a spell-like ability once per day plus one additional time for every 3 levels you have.

Drawback: You are less tied to your corporeal form and thus have a -4 penalty on all checks made to stabilize.

Godslayer

“Damn the gods and their agents for making mortals grow fat on their reliance! You are a godslayer damn it and don't need the help of Heaven and don't want the help of Hell!”

Prerequisite: Godslayers (Culture)

Benefit: You gain a +1/6th bonus on attack and damage rolls against outsiders and creatures capable of casting divine spells (minimum +1).

Drawback: You always count as unwilling when targeted by a beneficial divine spell.

Cityfolk

You've seen everything and everybody doing every imaginable thing in every dimension of space and it's only Tuesday.

Prerequisite: The City (Culture)

Benefit: You being play with 3 additional languages that must NOT be selected from your race's normal list of starting languages if they have one. That is to say that races that can select “any” starting languages can select any and you may still not select secret languages. Furthermore, you gain a +2 bonus on all checks made to identify creatures.

Drawback: You may be open minded but you have absolutely zero patience for anyone's guff. You've also never really lived outside a closed system that provided pretty much everything for you (planting your food voucher doesn't grow a pumpkin you know). You get a -4 penalty on all Diplomacy checks made to improve attitudes, a -4 penalty on Ride checks, and a -4 penalty on Knowledge (nature) checks except checks to identify creatures.

Fashionista

You are skilled in the ways of fashion and decorum.

Prerequisite: Beautocracy (Culture), Charisma 14

Benefit: You can spend 10 minutes in any culture you are unfamiliar with to automatically ascertain their general fashion guidelines and some basic levels of understanding of their decorum. Furthermore, you can look at a creature and instantly know if their Charisma is lower, the same, or higher than yours. Finally, Knowledge (nobility) is always a class skill for you.

Drawback: You have a deep seated disgust for anyone less attractive than you. You suffer a -4 penalty on all checks made to improve the attitude of any creature with a lower Charisma score than yours.

Ugly

You are one of "the uglies", a member of the underclass of a beautocracy.

Prerequisite: Beautocracy (Culture), Charisma 10 or less

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on saves against the stench universal monster rule and on saves against becoming sickened or nauseated. Furthermore, you can look at a creature and instantly know if their Charisma is lower,

the same, or higher than yours. Finally, Survival is always a class skill for you.

Drawback: You have a deep seated disgust for anyone more attractive than you. You suffer a -4 penalty on all checks made to improve the attitude of any creature with a higher Charisma score than yours.

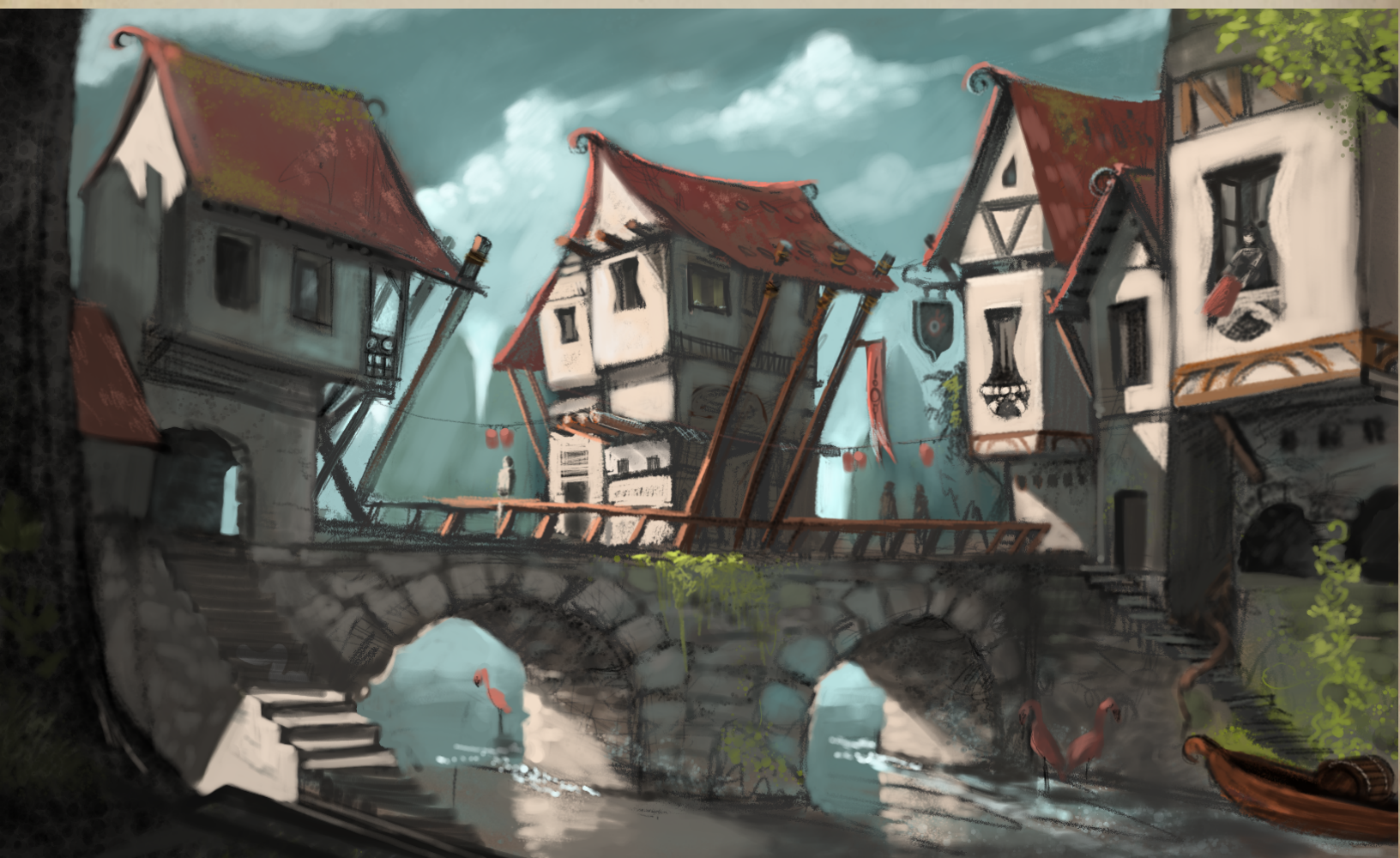
Silent One

You are or were a sociopath involved in the Silent Haven.

Prerequisite: Silent Haven (Culture), Non-Good

Benefit: You are exceptional at playing "the game" of staying hidden. You gain a +4 bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks. In addition, once per day as a swift or immediate action you can use undetectable alignment as a mundane ability that uses your character level as your caster level.

Drawback: You get a -4 penalty on Sense Motive checks and it is never a class feature for you.



Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition

In 5th Edition, culture traits replaces your subrace. Any race can take any culture trait.

Sidebar: Why Are Culture Traits Not Backgrounds?

Your background more pertains to your vocation and “what you’ve done” and your race/subrace more pertains to “where you’re from”. As culture is an important part of a race, particularly expressed in one’s subrace, it is most appropriate to put it there.

The Immortal Houses

Ability Score Increase: Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Immortal Politicians: You gain advantage on Intelligence (History) checks to remember important people and on Charisma (Persuasion) checks related to debates.

Extra Language: You can speak, read, and write one extra language of your choice.

Coffin Culture

Ability Score Increase: Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Coffin-Back: You have resistance against necrotic damage.

Friends With Death: At 5th level you can cast *speak with dead* three times per day. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for it.

Extra Language: You can speak, read, and write uncommon.

The Godslayers

Ability Score Increase: Your Constitution score increases by 1.

God Killer: You gain advantage on Intelligence (Religion) checks to identify the weakness of any celestials and fiends.

Defy Deity: You have resistance against radiant damage.

The City

Ability Score Increase: Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Interdimensional Native: You gain advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks to identify beings of various planes of existence.

Extra Languages: You can speak, read, and write three extra languages of your choice.

Beauties (Beautocracy)

Ability Score Increase: Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Fashionista: You can spend 10 minutes in any culture you are unfamiliar with to automatically ascertain their general fashion guidelines and some basic levels of understanding of their decorum. In addition, you gain advantage on Intelligence checks made to identify cultural elements, fashion trends, and beauty standards.

Pecking Order: You can look at a creature and instantly know if their Charisma is lower, the same, or higher than yours.

Uglies (Beautocracy)

Ability Score Increase: Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Living in Refuse: You gain advantage on Fortitude saves against conditions that might sicken you (such as a ghast or hezrou’s stench ability).

Shunned: You gain advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to live off the land.

Pecking Order: You can look at a creature and instantly know if their Charisma is lower, the same, or higher than yours.

The Silent Haven

Ability Score Increase: Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Mask: You gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks to hide your true nature and appear as a normal, unassuming, person.

Kill the Killer: You are proficient with thieves’ tools.

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