

ANCIENT WORLD



CORE SETTING GUIDE



ANCIENT WORLD

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ANCIENT WORLD

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LATE DISTURBANCE

Past the walls of civilization lie dangerous places. The lands across Dhuran are filled with violent animals, horrific demons, terrifying creatures, and the plagued. The gray elves, in all their wisdom, claim the plagued are the biggest threat. Their relentless pursuit of the death and destruction of civilization knows no bounds. Stuck in a life of undeath, they are mutated forms of their former selves. What energy could cause such a thing to happen?

The wilderness is no place for the weak. These perilous lands and the terrors they hold can only be traversed by the brave warriors who risk their lives to keep others safe. The crusaders may be trying to uncover the roots of some grand hidden secret, and the inquisitors quest to rid the land of demons, but it's the warriors who keep everyone safe. These warriors fight the beasts that draw near, vowing to protect our lands to ensure the survival of all.

Each band of warriors is unique. Some are but a pair of souls who fight bravely for others. Some are a large group who rely on teamwork to get the job done. Others are hardened soldiers who've experienced much bloodshed in their time. However, most of them are thrill seekers, searching for a way to protect their friends and family and vie for a cause they don't understand. They are warriors nonetheless, but they are young and have much to learn.

Cynric Frewer, Roylla Earthcloak, and Feradul Vonothvar would never claim to be thrill seekers. They loudly proclaim how they are a small band of brave warriors determined to rid the Known Lands of the horrific infestation. Almost every day they find themselves traveling through this dangerous wilderness, moving from place to place in the hopes of protecting their brethren in exchange for food, shelter, and maybe a few silver pieces. It is a rough life that few would ever choose, but it's a duty this small band feels must be served to protect their homelands.

The warriors rest after a hard day through the wilderness. While searching for a place to forage, the three were attacked by a pack of ocllys – large, vicious felines that roam the Known Lands. Feradul, the brave grey elf crusader, cut the heads off two ocllys while Cynric put a well-placed arrow in two others. Roylla was pinned down by one of the beasts, unable to move until the creature fled. But now, she stokes a fire, not even thinking how the oclyt could have killed her.

"See anything, Cynric?" Roylla called out.

The deft human ranger leapt down from his perch. "Nothing. I think we're safe for the night," he replied. Although his composure didn't show it, Cynric feared being exposed at night. The security offered by the fire and a canvas tent were enough to keep many animals at bay, but there's no telling when a plagued being may draw near. "What are you making?"

"I decided to cut some meat from those ocllys. It's not bad; not the best, but it will do." Roylla continued to stoke her fire while the meat cooked. As a halfling, she was taught by her tribal leaders how to use the wilderness. As a shaman, she was taught how to survive. She did not fear the wilderness, though she knew the forest was filled with many dangers unseen. "Where's Feradul?"

"I think he's studying in the tent. I can see the glow from his lamp. Feradul! You hungry?"

The grey elf crusader emerged from the tent. "Absolutely! What did you two scrounge up for a meal?"

"Oclyt on a stick," replied Roylla.

Feradul smirked and nodded his head. "Always the resourceful one. This is why I wanted you to join us."

"I can think of better things to eat, but right now, I'll take what I can get." Roylla went back to tending to the meat.

As she knelt next to the fire, her head began to pound out a warning. For her, the headaches were a sign of contact from the spirits. She winced and pinched her eyes tight.

"What is it?" asked Cynric.

"The spirits are trying to communicate..." Roylla stood erect, her eyes slamming open, becoming transfixed on nothing and everything at once. Seconds ticked by and she regained her senses. She blinked away the reverie and turned to her comrades. "Something's here. We must be quiet."

Feradul slowly removed his sword from its scabbard and placed a finger on his lips. He pointed to Cynric and indicated that he should search to the right. He then pointed at Roylla and indicated that she should search straight ahead. Feradul crept to his left, and the three searched through the woods.

A branch snapped some distance away, the sound emanating from Cynric's direction. A rustling of leaves followed. Roylla and Feradul tiptoed towards Cynric's position in an effort to spot the culprit. Feradul leaned in closely to Cynric.

"Do you see anything?" Feradul asked.

"I can't," whispered Cynric. "It's too dark."

"There," interjected Roylla. "I can see two figures in the distance."

"Are they humanoid?" asked Feradul.

"They're walking on two legs, but their features are hard to distinguish."

"Tormentors?" asked Cynric.

"Definitely not. They don't usually wander like that and their deformities would be noticeable, even in the dark."

"I can see them now," Feradul stated. "They don't really walk like I would expect from an intelligent creature. They might be apes. Cynric, prepare your bow. Maybe we can scare them away."

Cynric removed his bow and nocked an arrow. Feradul pointed to a tree in the distance, indicated Cynric to shoot near the creatures in the hopes of scaring them away. He let the arrow fly and it thumped into the tree next to them. A loud roar answered the arrow and one of the creatures began bouncing around angrily.

"I think we made it mad!" exclaimed Cynric.

"You think so?!" yelled Roylla.

"They'll be drawn by the glow of the fire! Prepare yourself!" Feradul stepped back and prepared for the creatures' arrival. He could see two shadow-like forms moving quickly toward the camp. Off to the side, two more shadows joined in.

The three warriors made a half circle around the fire, waiting for the creatures to come.

As the creatures drew near, Roylla shouted out, "Stalkers! I saw two more coming just beyond these two."

Cynric nocked another arrow and prepared himself. "Here they co..."

Before Cynric could finish his exclamation, two ape-like creatures burst into the clearing. One of them leapt onto Cynric's chest, knocking him to the ground. Feradul was prepared and swung his sword deftly, slicing the chest of the second stalker. Two more burst through the forest, following the first ones' lead.

Cynric was pinned to the ground. His ranger senses kicked in quickly as he grabbed a pair of daggers from his waist. Plunging the sharpened edges into the stalker's sides, the beast jumped up and wailed in pain. Feradul's target staggered back, holding its chest wound. Its flesh was easily stained with blood flowing freely from the wound. But the creature wasn't quite finished and leapt to attack.

The third stalker heaved toward Feradul simultaneously as the second, knocking the other out of its way in an attempt to claw Feradul's face. The crusader launched his leather glove into the air, catching the attack cold. The stalker ripped the leather gauntlet free and stomped angrily onto the ground. The beast quickly brought its arms around Feradul's sides, hoping to punch him in the ribs. The second stalker regained its composure and moved to leap over its brother.

The fourth stalker ran toward Roylla. Although she didn't have a weapon to bear, she wore her fetish on a necklace, secured tightly around her neck. Her eyes began to glow as she called upon the spirits to guide her strike against the terrifying opponent. A blue glow formed around her hand capped with a bright white halo. Roylla clapped her hands together and a near deafening burst erupted from between her palms as the light was expelled outwards, striking the stalker squarely in the chest. The burst of spiritual energy burned a hole through the creature's chest, killing it instantly. Roylla's head immediately began to pound in agony as channeling the spirits often caused. She dropped one knee to the ground and flinched. She was still learning to control the spirits, and it always resulted in pain.

Cynric's target stood there with his daggers embedded in the ape's sides. The creature tried to move, but the blades continued to bite its flesh. It started pulling both daggers free from its hide when an arrow plunged deep into its chest. The stalker stopped moving and started falling, face first, into the dirt. It landed with a thud as Cynric ran over to retrieve his daggers.

Feradul was locked in a bear hug from one stalker with the injured one hanging off his back. Cynric pulled a dagger free and threw it skillfully at the stalker grappling the crusader, planting it into the stalker's back and causing the creature to howl, breaking the grapple. Feradul kicked the stalker in front, throwing his body backwards to land atop the stalker behind him. He pulled a dagger from his waist belt and stabbed it into the side of the stalker pinned to the ground. Leaving the dagger in place, he stood up to see the remaining stalker turning his ire toward Cynric and ready for a charge.

Feradul recovered his fallen sword from the ground and swung wide, slicing the tendons in the beast's right calf. The creature immediately fell to the ground and began clawing the dirt to recover its momentum. It attempted to stand, but the right leg wouldn't allow it to. Feradul stalked over and placed his leather-booted foot atop the stalker's back. He plunged his sword deep into the creature, not removing it until the beast stopped flailing about.

The forest was quiet.

Roylla had recovered and moved to stand by Feradul's side. She looked up at him and then over to Cynric. The band was bruised, but no injuries were to be found. Feradul sheathed his sword and stepped back to look at them both.

"We must remove the carcasses from our camp," Cynric stated. "The smell will only serve to bring other carrions here. If we move them far enough away, we'll be able to draw any other animal's hunger away from our camp. Quickly!"

Feradul was able to carry a stalker himself while Cynric and Roylla combined carried another. They hauled the bodies far from the camp, placing them at a nearby dried-up river bed. It took them almost an hour, but the simple act would prove beneficial as the rest of the night passed by quietly.

The three warriors awoke the next morning to a vivid sunrise and the calming sounds of the forest. Not wanting to waste time, they picked through their morning rations and packed up everything. The camp took about an hour to take down given their relaxed state, and Roylla gave the two men an inquisitive look.

"Where to now?" Roylla asked.

"We are still two days out from Linnor," replied Feradul. "We need to resupply and see if we can recruit another ally into our merry band. We might be strong, but there's only three of us and the wilderness can degenerate to chaos quite quickly."

Cynric nodded his head in agreement. "Let's travel along the banks of the river. I need to clean off last night's bloodshed."

"Do you think the stalker bodies will still be there?" asked Roylla.

"Not likely," Cynric stated. "In these woods, they would have been picked clean or hauled off by now."

"Then we will follow the river," interrupted Feradul. "Even if the bodies are there, we will be able to see any threats in the daylight. Let's go."

The small warrior band disassembled their fire pit and covered the ashes with dirt. They left the ominous sanctuary of the forest for the river. It was wide and shallow there, perfect for cleaning off the signs of the conflict from the night before. After about fifteen minutes, they continued their quest, heading now to Linnor, a small town in the western lands run by gray elves. Maybe then their band of three could become a party of four.



WELCOME TO DHURAN

WELCOME TO DHURAN

The year is 500. Over the past 85 years, Dhuran has gone from survival being difficult, to a planet where leaving the sanctuary of civilization immediately puts one's life in danger. The portentous event that caused this turn for the worse was the discovery of a vast, ancient underground city called Drak'tau. Not only does this city hold secrets from an unknown time, it was soon learned that thousands of restless souls were imprisoned for all eternity. Once the city was discovered, these souls were released and the horrors of Dhuran began to come alive.

The 85 years that followed the discovery of Drak'tau have not been kind to the people of Dhuran. The Known Lands are relatively small, and dangers already lurked at the borders with the Land of the Barbarians to the northwest and the Land of the Pharaohs to the southeast. Trapped between the Inner Sea to the north and the Outer Sea to the south, there was little they could do to avoid these threats. Moving everyone to a distant land wasn't an option as there have never been enough ships and the seas are plagued with pirate fleets. The only remaining option was clear: they must fight to survive.

So they did.

Hundreds of warriors heeded the call to protect the places they call home, their friends, and families. These brave warriors are the only hope the Known Lands have to stand against the mounting horrors; a blight that seems to worsen with each passing year. Is there no stopping this oppressive evil?

The more discoveries explorers and scholars make, the worse life seems to get. Instead of dealing with indigenous creatures, which are dangerous enough, the bands of warriors have to deal with the diseased, the plagued, the undead, and demons from the chaos realm. Disturbances felt by the civilized folk reverberate across the Known Lands, angering the uncivilized humanoids, bringing them to arms against the civilized lands. It's a never-ending tidal wave of hate that grows with each passing year and shows no sign of dissipating.

Maybe the secrets locked away in the ancient cities can provide a solution. Maybe the crusaders are right and there should be a greater being protecting the Known Lands from this blight. Maybe the inquisitors are right and we need to cut off the infection that brings the plagued creatures to life. Or, maybe the heroic deeds of the warriors will finally bring an end to the madness.

What is Ancient World?

Ancient World is a dark fantasy setting for the *Entropic Gaming System* role-playing game. It takes place on the ominous planet of Dhuran within the region locally known as the Known Lands. Although the civilized races call the Known Lands home, and have been surviving and thriving there for centuries, there are many secrets locked away in remote places and deep recesses. The more that is uncovered, the more dangerous the region becomes.

In *Ancient World*, magic is real and quite dangerous. It's much safer to harness the power of the elements using alchemy and herbalism than it is to tap into the volatile nature of the spirit realm. The other option is to wield the mysterious power of the runes, a power that few understand.

Across the Known Lands, there is a stark difference between the civilized and uncivilized races. Civilized races are those that fight for the good of the people and live within the confines of true villages, towns, and cities. (These are the "civilized

places” as defined by these civilized races.) The civilized races are dark elves, dwarves, gray elves, halflings, and humans. Although they may squabble and fight amongst themselves, from time to time, they are allied with each other to battle the threats they all face on a daily basis.

Uncivilized races are those deemed a threat to the civilized races’ way of life. Another threat besides the indigenous creatures across the wilderness and the supernatural forces that plague the land, these humanoid beings have created their version of civilization that goes against the principals of the so-called civilized races. The uncivilized races include the crowmen, goatmen, harlocks, mongrels, pygmies, ragbahals, ragfowdos, raiders, ratmen, and seadogs. This doesn’t include any of the peoples from the Land of the Barbarians and the Land of the Pharaohs.

Threatening the people of Dhuran, both civilized and otherwise, is a horrific mixture of denizens. Even many of the indigenous creatures that lived beside the humanoid races for centuries are being threatened and must fight for survival. Since the discovery of Drak’tau, Dhuran has become a haven for plagued monsters, diseased creatures, undead beings, and demons. It is as if the more the civilized races uncover of Dhuran’s secrets, the more the planet rebels against those discoveries.

There is an ancient world to unravel, and the Known Lands need warriors brave enough to discover the truth.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

In *Ancient World*, player characters assume the role of explorers, warriors, adventurers, and saviors adventuring and ridding the world of everything that threatens the Known Lands. However, there are many political and social battles going on amongst the civilized races, and they could instead assume the role of diplomats that serve as liaisons between the villages, towns, and cities. Although it may seem there are more than enough horrors to threaten everyone’s way of life, noble machinations often pay little regard to the wellbeing of the rest of society, causing internal conflict to arise.

The call for brave warriors came when the outlying areas began to be continually attacked or threatened by malevolent beings. Most farmers, foragers, hunters, fishermen, miners, and axemen are simple folk; helpless in the face of these dangers. Capable of protecting themselves from only the smallest of threats to their homes, they rely on others to protect the valuable land that provides food for everyone, wood for their homes, and metal for the tools they need. It is the souls of these saviors that ensure the survival of everyone.

Dhuran may sound like a hopeless case, but in the midst of it all, there is hope: hope for a better world. The discovery of Drak’tau spoke about great beings that protect the people; beings that no scholars had ever heard of. It is as if there was a layer of protection, perhaps in the form of these good beings, that was stripped away. The more writings that are deciphered, the more the scholars learn, and the more faith they provide to the



people. The possibility of being protected by a being greater than any civilized person was previously unfathomable. From this nascent body of faith, a religion of sorts is beginning to form, and the people have begun looking toward the great warriors to uncover more, urging them to push the boundaries of safety and sanity.

These saviors, as many are beginning to call them, have a great mission ahead of them. Not only do the people rely on these intrepid heroes, the PCs to save them from the terror that sickens the land, they also rely on them to bring these protective beings to Dhuran in the hopes of saving everyone. But the task of nurturing this hope will not be an easy one; it is fraught with danger at every turn. Once the heroic PCs leave the security of the city walls, they are on their own amongst a world that would rather see them fail.

KNOWN LANDS

The homeland of the civilized races goes by many names. Whether it is the Known Lands, the Civil Lands, the Low Plains, the High Plains, or the Blue Gulf, the region is but a small portion of the continent, and an even smaller portion of all of Dhuran.

The inhabitants of the Known Lands know they are but one small part by a much larger planet. They don't know how big the planet is, but they understand their region is but one of many. Without knowing how far away other regions are or what inhabits those other regions, the people are determined to survive within the only place they call home.

The Known Lands are a mixture of forests, plains, mountains, rivers, and jungles residing between a pair of blue seas. Travel throughout is difficult, although a series of trails mark the paths between the few villages, towns, and cities that exist. The majority of the population lives near the Inner Sea, although new settlements are being founded away from the sea and away from the human urban centers.

The Known Lands, their most common name, reside between the Land of the Barbarians and the Land of the Pharaohs. There are many still unexplored areas, but the general lay of the land has been mapped and defined as follows:

BELMEAD MOUNTAINS

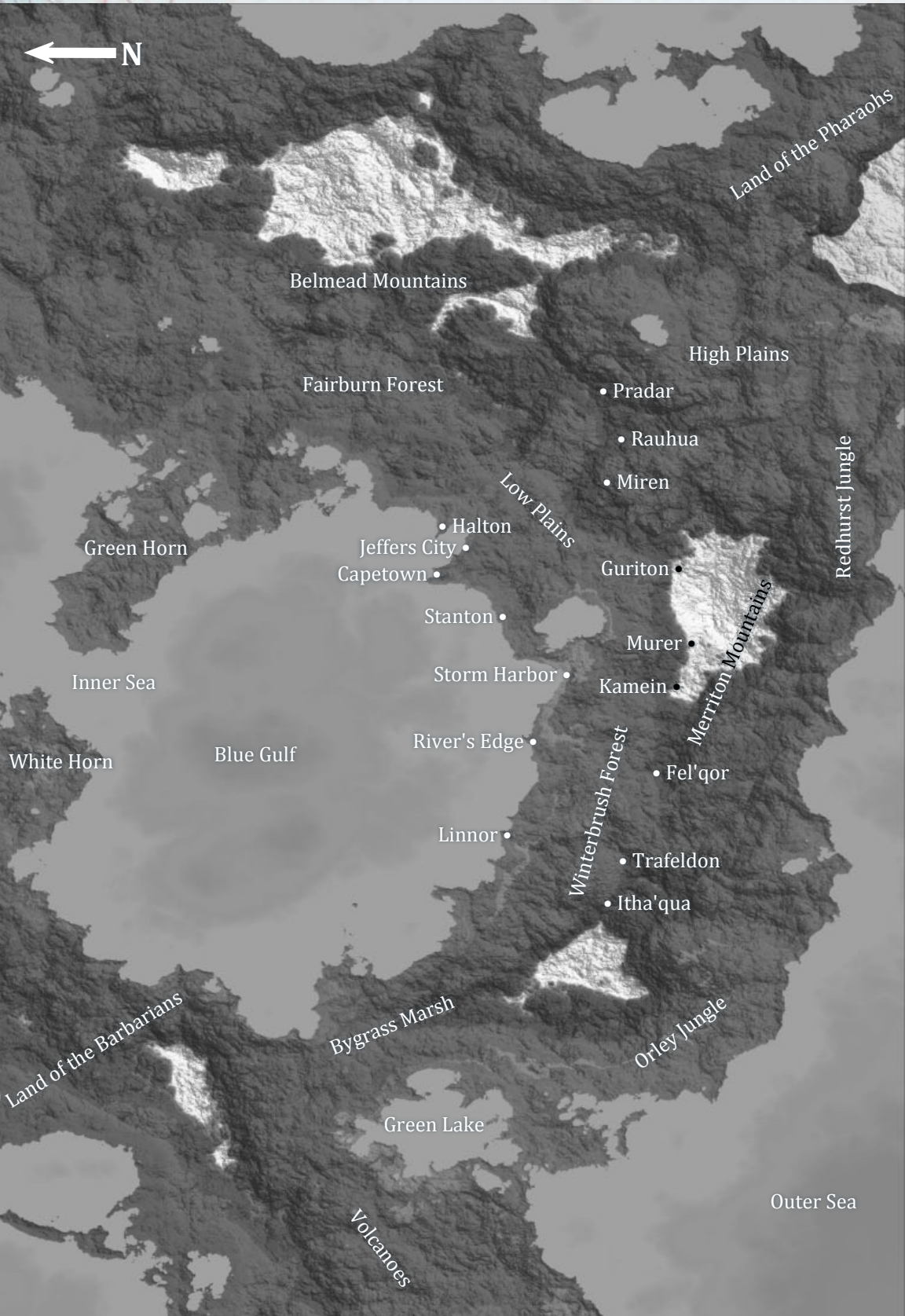
The Belmead Mountain range is the easternmost range that divides the Known Lands into its Northern and Southern regions. They provide a natural barrier between the Known Lands and the Land of the Pharaohs to the southeast and help to create the high plains where the halfling villages are located.

Very little is known about the Belmead Mountains. Few have ever ventured much farther than the last hunting grounds of the halflings, as the terrain becomes quite rugged and the peaks are high enough to be covered with snow almost all year round.

BLUE GULF

The Blue Gulf forms the shoreline that encompasses the majority of the Known Lands' population. This large gulf is part of the Inner Sea and provides an abundance of fish and water passage to all human urban centers and gray elf towns. Although home to numerous pirates, it is along the southern shores that civilization thrives and markets burst with all manner of goods and food. Many rivers from the Merriton Mountains end near or at one of the urban centers along the Blue Gulf's banks, allowing quicker passage to and from these markets.

The Blue Gulf ends at a pair of horns that jut into the Inner Sea, creating a small strait between them. The White Horn to the northwest is covered in high mountains. The Green Horn to the northeast is covered in lowlands and dotted with islands. Many of the pirates in the Blue Gulf make their home somewhere on one of these horns.





BYGRASS MARSH

On the westernmost end of the Known Lands, north of the Merriton Mountains, sits a very large swampland known as the Bygrass Marsh. This marshland provides sanctuary to many indigenous creatures and creates a secondary natural barrier between the Known Lands and uncivilized humanoids that come from the south (such as the harlocks). The thickets throughout the marsh are extremely dense and the water becomes quite deep at times.

FAIRBURN FOREST

The Fairburn Forest occupies a large tract of land in the eastern half of the Known Lands. The forest is bordered by the high and low plains to the east and the south respectively, the Belmead Mountains to the east, and the Blue Gulf to the west. No one knows what lies on the northern fringes of the Fairburn Forest, or even how far the forest goes before giving way to a different terrain.

GREEN LAKE

Green Lake is a large lake on the western edge of the Known Lands. It marks the border of the Known Lands, as what lies beyond is mostly unknown (other than spotting the mountains in the distance). Few have ever ventured as far as Green Lake as hundreds of dangerous creatures call the surrounding area home and the vicious harlocks are nearby.

HIGH PLAINS

The High Plains are nestled amongst the area where the Merriton Mountains meet the Belmead Mountains. The area is high and relatively flat with many bluffs that drop off onto the Low Plains. This is the homeland of the halflings, and the remaining low peaks that remain from the mountain ranges offer a modicum of protection from the Land of the Pharaohs.

INNER SEA

The Inner Sea is the large body of saltwater that resides north of the Known Lands. Although it's marked by the Blue Gulf, no one has ever traveled far enough to see what lies beyond the two horns that encircle of the Blue Gulf.

LAND OF THE BARBARIANS

To the northwest of the Known Lands lies the Land of the Barbarians, where the steppes are located. The barbarians have only ever been encountered once in significant numbers, but the battle was bloody and brutal. The remaining force of barbarians was driven back into the steppes with few civilized soldiers surviving. Since then, only small bands of barbarians have ever been spotted.

LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

To the southeast of the Known Lands lies the Land of the Pharaohs, home to the anubi and the hori. Anubis and horus warriors are often encountered in the High Plains where the natural barrier between the two lands is relatively permeable. The halflings defend this territory ruthlessly alongside a large garrison of dwarven guards picked from their Merriton Mountain kingdoms.

LOW PLAINS

The Low Plains meander casually throughout the Known Lands, forming the backbone of farmland. Many predators hide amongst the tall grasses of the plains, forcing travelers to be cautious when searching for the wild game found throughout. Many different terrain features border the Low Plains, including the High Plains, Winterbrush Forest, Merriton Mountains, and the Inner Sea.

MERRITON MOUNTAINS

The Merriton Mountains form the westerly mountain range that divides the Known Lands in half. Their eastern reaches help form the High Plains and their western reaches create a natural barrier between the civilized areas and the Orley Jungle. Its many cliffs and peaks in the center of this region are home to the dwarven kingdoms. Its many valleys west of the dwarven kingdoms allow for the underground homes of the dark elves. Some of its southern reaches stretch to the Outer Sea, although this area has barely been explored.

ORLEY JUNGLE

The Orley Jungle is home to the harlocks and other, uncivilized, beings. It lies within the southwestern reaches of the Known Lands. Created by the significant rainfall it receives due to the mountains on the other side of Green Lake, it's bordered on its northern and eastern edges by the Merriton Mountains. During periods of severe flooding, parts of the Green Lake meet the Outer Sea within the Orley Jungle.

OUTER SEA

The Outer Sea is a large body of saltwater that forms the southern shore of the Known Lands. The water is so large that nothing can be seen past its horizon, other than the occasional unexplored island. Only a handful of explorers have ever made it to the Outer Sea, although it can be seen off in the distance while perched on one of the Merriton Mountain peaks.

REDHURST JUNGLE

The Redhurst Jungle lies off the southeastern edges of the Merriton Mountains, bleeding into the Land of the Pharaohs. No one knows what lives within these jungles as no one has ever returned from an expedition.

WINTERBUSH FOREST

Winterbush Forest constitutes much of the land not covered by the Low Plains. This forest stretches from the northern slopes of the Merriton Mountains out to the Inner Sea, though cut deeply into by the Low Plains at times, and west to the Bygrass Marsh. It is here that many of the Known Lands' dangerous creatures reside. There are few trails that cut through the forest to reach the dark elf underground cities and dwarven Cliffside kingdoms, forcing creatures to meander through the forest before reaching civilization. This slows them down just enough to allow the bands of warriors to encounter, and do battle with, these creatures before they reach the farmlands.

Exploration

Many gray elf scholars have jested that the Known Lands should truly be called the Unknown Lands. Although most people have a relative understanding regarding the lay of the land and can spot the major landmarks, most of the region remains unexplored, as the risks are quite high. Over the course of the past few decades, many explorations have launched with a result of few or none of the explorers returning. Those that manage to survive the ordeal return with incredible stories about long lost ruins, abandoned towns consumed by chaos, dusty villages now home to Dhuran's indigenous fauna, haunting spirits, and the ever-increasing numbers of plagued, diseased, undead, and demonic beings.

Townfolk continually question why these explorations need to be undertaken, but the gray elf scholars stand by the line; "To save Dhuran's future, we must learn of its past." In order to understand that past, explorations must be launched far from the protection of the city walls where the wilderness rules. Thrill seeking warriors and adventurers often join these exploration bands in the hopes of becoming great heroes, or incredibly wealthy (there must be treasure out there somewhere). Although their motivations may be selfish, explorers are scholars, not warriors, and they need others to protect them.

The secrets of Dhuran's hidden past continue to surface with each passing year and each successful exploration. However, the grand puzzle that is Dhuran's history is so vast that each exploration only adds a small answer where thousands of questions still remain. There is much to be discovered and along with these discoveries comes the hope that uncovering these secrets will lead to the purification of the lands. But sometimes, the opposite is true.

Explorers often enter territory where civilized races are not meant to be. These territories seem willing to accept the foreign intruders, but only for a fraction of time. As the days crawl along, the territory becomes more and more fraught with danger as vile beings rise from the depths of the chaos realm to enslave or kill the civilized explorers. Many of these beings had never been encountered before, leading to the discovery of new denizens to add to Dhuran's growing collection of malevolent beings.

Not all is gloom and doom though; some explorations uncover vast deposits of knowledge, supplies, crafts, weapons, armor, or treasure. Setting foot into an abandoned town from unknown history may lead to the cache of a great blacksmith who forged incredible weapons with resilient tools. Stumbling upon a hidden complex, which the ancient races referred to as temples, may uncover libraries filled with books written in an unknown language. Digging down into the depths of the planet may reveal a vast civilization that thrived for what could have been millennia.

There is much to be found and much to be learned from these explorations, so the gray elves urge everyone to continue the efforts. Yes it may be dangerous, but it might only take one discovery to learn how to purge the lands of all dangerous creatures.

Denizens of the Deep

There are many indigenous creatures across Dhuran; some are harmless and some are quite deadly. The deadly ones can be quite frightening to the common folk, but it is the denizens of the deep that terrify everyone, even the bravest warriors.

Gray elf scholars have coined the phrase “denizens of the deep” as these creatures are truly so monstrous that they could not be a product of nature or natural causes. They must come from the bowels of the earth, deep where chaos spreads like wildfire. These depths are often referred to as the chaos realm.

Few have ever gazed upon the chaos realm, and even fewer have lived to tell about it, for it is only visible when one of these denizens of the deep is emerging from it. The scene is at once both blackness and piercing light, swirling through a miasma of energy that radiates from the ground, or what passes for ground in that realm. It is a thing of awe to behold, but observers much take care not stare too long for the emerging denizens will rip the captivated one to shreds.

To better understand what comes from the chaos realm, gray elf scholars have devised a method of identification under the terms: demon, diseased, plagued, and undead. By understanding what these beings look like, citizens across the Known Lands and the brave warriors protecting them can quickly determine what the best course of action would be.



DEMONS

Of all the denizens of the deep, demons are the largest and most dangerous. They also appear to be the ones in charge. Determining whether the being spotted is truly a demon can be difficult as other creatures appear to have demonic tendencies and features, but slight variances set them apart. In part, this is because there are varied potential appearances for demons. Some are giant lumbering beasts that look like oversized humans, others are short awkward beings with unnatural features, and there are still many others.

There is one common thread amongst all demons though: they are all intelligent, with some of them appearing to be far more intelligent than the civilized races of the Known World. Many demons have civilized qualities in that they appear to command subordinates, form tactics, execute strategies, and function well beyond primitive instinct.

Many demons are much larger than the civilized races. The largest appear to be in charge with hordes of smaller demons or other chaotic kin swarming their feet, waiting to strike at whatever they can. Amongst these larger demons are weapons of unwieldy sizes. They are clearly the proper size for the creature, and no civilized being could possibly lift such a weapon. Most of the smaller demons use claws and teeth as their only weapons, while some demons appear to draw energy from the chaos realm, producing extraordinary abilities that rival even the greatest shamans.

DISEASED

Diseased beings are difficult to comprehend as they sometimes appear similar to regular humanoid beings. Differences always exist, however; they no longer appear to have the same level of intelligence and they move about like hordes of small demons. The eyes of the diseased are black and empty, as if they no longer need them to see. Their skin has turned to muted hues of brown, green, blue, purple, or a combination thereof almost as if they died and were brought back to life after the onset of decomposition.

Diseased creatures always give off a foul odor, leading to their moniker “diseased”, much like the putrefaction of bodies after a particularly nasty battle. It is unclear if their bodies are decaying or if the stench is one that simply emanates from their skin.

PLAGUED

Plagued creatures can be a truly off-putting sight: they look like oversized or engorged versions of their non-plague ridden selves. The



plague can infect nearly any creature (other than demons), including all humanoid and indigenous beings. They are always larger than their uninfected kin, making them easier to distinguish compared to the diseased beings (which are the same size as their non-diseased kin).

Plagued creatures also show a level of civil intelligence, regardless of what form they take. It is quite shocking to encounter a plague ape speaking Trade Speak; whatever plagues these creatures seems to have has its own essence or purpose that overrides that of the shell it possesses (giving them the moniker “plagued”). Unfortunately for all civilized beings, they also appear to be driven by an insatiable desire to kill every last one. No one has been able to determine why.

Besides the swollen size of the being, most plagued creatures have either red pupils or eyes that are completely white. The eyes are believed to still be functional they always look at their target as if they’re staring deep into that victim’s essence. Their skin appears similar to that of the diseased with muted hues of brown, blue, or green as if it’s decayed, but they don’t give off the same stench as the diseased.

Their high tolerance of pain makes them difficult to defeat in combat, but they do appear to succumb to the occasional psychological trickery. They have many qualities akin to the civilized races, but with a ferocious anger attached to them.

UNDEAD

Undead beings appear to be neither dead nor alive as they appear like the empty shells of those who have rotted in graveyards for decades or centuries. They lack any sense of intelligence or what would ostensibly appear to be sentience. Those with skin and muscle still remaining on their bones emit an offensive odor, similar to a diseased creature, while those appearing like skeleton puppets have no smell at all. They seem to have little else in the way of unifying features other than each looking like a humanoid that died many, many years ago.

Undead creatures show no care for whom or what they attack. They appear to be driven by a less-than-primitive instinct unless prodded along by a demon master (who is somehow able to connect with these creatures). Some are fast moving, some are quite slow, but they all wander widely, searching for new victims. It may be the smell of the living that drives them toward a new target, or it may be the simple desire to cause more death, possibly propagating their species (if they can truly be called that).

Although it’s believed by gray elf scholars that all undead beings were once civilized or uncivilized humanoid beings, their decrepit state makes it difficult to accurately pinpoint their origins and they instead defined by new, mostly generic nomenclatures. This taxonomy defines the capability and drive of the being rather than its previous existence.

Undead creatures can often be identified by their sagging skin, dripping muscle tissue, or ragged bones. Those with eyes exhibit black eyeballs with red, sometimes glowing pupils. Those without eyes have blackened holes where the eyes used to be. Sometimes these blackened holes glow red, sometimes white. However, most scholars agree that undead creatures don’t truly see through their eyes and instead have some type of preternatural senses that allows them to know what’s around them.

Undead creatures that exhibit the least amount of putrefaction have body features that have lost their definition and mostly blend into each other. This would be what one might expect should a body be exsanguinated and not filled with any other type of fluid. If the hands are still intact, they are capable of brandishing real weapons and shields; some are even still capable of wearing armor. Those who can no longer handle a weapon often have distended claws on their fingers, and all have jagged teeth they use for biting.



CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS

Characters in *Ancient World* can vary depending on their design and physical characteristics. Players are not limited to creating only humans as other humanoid races are provided. All other humanoids throughout the Known Lands are hostile and unfit for standard play. Follow the standard **Savage Worlds** character creation rules.

Character Concepts

Assassin: In a world of politics and subterfuge, assassinations are a somewhat frequent occurrence to hush the loudest opposition or resistance. Assassins are skilled in stealth tactics and understand how to hunt their prey without getting caught. **Suggested Skills:** Climbing, Fighting, Stealth, Tracking

Barber: Barbers are the most common type of medical practitioner across the Known Lands. They typically perform the most basic medical functions even though they're not as well received as a physician (and definitely not as respected as a surgeon). **Suggested Skills:** Healing, Investigation, Persuasion

Beast Master: Beast masters have a certain way with animals. Not only can they tame wild beasts, they're capable of becoming handlers for violent creatures that are only subservient to a select few. **Suggested Skills:** Intimidation, Notice, Riding, Taunt

Black Knight: Black knights are the less-than-honorable version of knights known for their prowess on the battlefield. As self-appointed knights (there aren't truly any real knights in Dhuran), their title of "black knight" borders on insult. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Persuasion, Riding, Taunt

Cataphract: Cataphracts are the true knights of Dhuran, known for their ability to charge forth and cause the enemy to break and flee. They are quite skilled, albeit a bit reckless, and always lead the combat from the frontline. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Intimidation, Riding

Charlatan: There are many who look for the quick coin and love to cheat others out of those hard earned. These charlatans use trickery and guile to make their way through life, becoming masters of their trade. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Gambling, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Stealth, Streetwise

Crusader: The noblest of all warriors is the crusader, or at least they think so. They are part of the mission to "reclaim Dhuran" in the hopes of bringing the supposed life written about in the ancient texts back to the Known Lands. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Investigation, Persuasion, Survival, Tracking

Farmer: Farmers are the hardworking laborers ensuring everyone's survival by providing food and drink. Their way of life is continually threatened by the many creatures across the Known Lands and desire little more than the protection of their families. **Suggested Skills:** Riding, Streetwise, Survival

Gladiator: The gladiator pits are filled with brave warriors who fight for praise and purse. Those who fight well live extravagant lives; those who don't often die quickly. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Intimidation

Gypsy: Urban centers are always home to bands of gypsies. These semi-nomadic people love to move about through civilization fleecing whatever they can from its residents. The biggest difference between them and charlatans is that gypsies provide obscure services, such as fortune telling, where people willingly hand over coin. **Suggested Skills:** Gambling, Persuasion, Stealth, Streetwise

Inquisitor: While crusaders try to bring back ancient times, inquisitors have launched a region-wide campaign against all denizens of the deep. They care very little about hurting indigenous creatures, no matter how dangerous they are, and see the true threat as anything associated with the chaos realm. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Intimidation, Shooting, Tracking

Marshal: Large urban centers have a full watch to guard the city, while smaller towns have marshals. Marshals are charged with keeping the peace and often serve as every aspect of the law known to the town. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Investigation, Persuasion, Shooting, Streetwise, Tracking

Mercenary: Mercenaries are highly skilled, and highly prized, warriors for hire. They fight bravely and overcome many odds, as long as they're paid handsomely. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Notice, Shooting, Survival, Tracking

Miner: The mountains are filled with deposits of ore and many miners toil away day after day extracting precious minerals. Most metals are used for creating tools, household goods, and weapons. **Suggested Skills:** Investigation, Notice

Noble: Nobles run the Known Lands. They serve as the heads of every political body and vie for power amongst their kind. They rarely make quality warriors as they're

busy being wrapped up in house politics, but some spend a lot of money to be educated in hunting and fighting. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Knowledge, Persuasion, Shooting

Seneschal: Seneschals are the masters of a noble house, just beneath the nobles themselves. Few decisions are ever made without the consultation or direction of the seneschal and little is ever executed that doesn't come from their command. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Intimidation, Knowledge, Persuasion

Scholar: Scholars have become increasingly important throughout the past years given the discovery of ancient documents detailing an unknown history. With the increased need to protect the civilized lands, scholars are also busy cataloging the Known Lands vast collection of indigenous flora and fauna. **Suggested Skills:** Investigation, Knowledge, Persuasion, Streetwise

Thief: Charlatans may try to swindle through subterfuge, but thieves will steal using little more than a dagger and intimidation. Many of them join the bands of warriors to escape the wrath of a marshal. **Suggested Skills:** Fighting, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival



Skills

DRIVING

The Driving skill is limited to Carriages (horse-driven, two-or four-wheeled vehicles).

GUTS

Ancient World is a dark fantasy setting where Fear and Terror are frequent. It is suggested to add the Guts skill, but not required.

KNOWLEDGE

The following Knowledge Specialties may be helpful to the characters.

CRYPTOZOLOGY

Cryptozoology is a new area of study implemented by gray elf scholars. This area of study was in response to the demands of the inquisitors to document the various diseased, plagued, and undead beings encountered on a hunt. Knowledge (Cryptozoology) can be used to identify these types of creatures along with understanding their basic taxonomy.

DEMONOLOGY

Demonology is the study of the chaos realm and the demons and demonic beings that exist within it. It was the basis for the creation of the first inquisitors and is used to better understand the chaotic beings they hunt. Knowledge (Demonology) can be used to identify demons along with understanding their basic taxonomy.

HISTORY

After the discovery of Drak'tau and the many ancient texts it contain, the need for historical studies became vital. History is what drives the crusaders as they attempt to "bring Dhuran back to its former glory" according to those ancient texts. History is still very blurry and very little of it is properly under-

stood, but Knowledge (History) can be used to better understand Dhuran's ancient (and recent) past according to the ancient texts.

RUNOLOGY

Runology is the study of the symbols found in ancient places, such as Drak'tau. It forms the basis for runicism and appears to be a form of symbology. Knowledge (Runology) can be used to decipher what those symbols mean, or at least theorize what they mean as most have yet to be properly identified.

SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is the study of the spirit realm. It forms the basis for shamanism and allows scholars to better understand the ethereal beings dwelling in the spirit realm. Knowledge (Spiritualism) can be used to identify ethereal beings and better understand the purpose of the spirit realm.

ZOOLOGY

Zoology was one of the first gray elf areas of study as they began investigating and documenting Dhuran's indigenous animals. Knowledge (Zoology) can be used to identify these types of creatures along with understanding their taxonomy.

LANGUAGE

The only spoken language amongst the civilized areas of the Known Lands is Tradespeak. However, uncivilized humanoids have their own languages, such as giants and harlocks, as do those hailing from the Land of the Barbarians and the Land of the Pharaohs. Additionally, the ancient texts discovered in Drak'tau exhibit a previously unknown language, now referred to simply as the "ancient language." Characters can use these Language skills, such as Knowledge (Giants), Knowledge (Harlocks), and Knowledge (Ancient), to somewhat translate those languages. However, no one can be considered fluent as none of those languages have been fully translated by any scholars in the Known Lands.

PILOTING

The Piloting skill is not used in *Ancient World*.

Equipment

Ancient World uses three different types of coins as currency: copper (cp), silver (sp), and gold (gp). All costs listed in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook are in silver. Anytime a cost is given without a suffix, it defaults to silver (sp). The exchange rate is as follows:

- 10 copper = 1 silver
- 10 silver = 1 gold
- 1 gold = 100 copper

Hindrances

EASILY FRIGHTENED (MINOR)

Dhuran is a dangerous place to live, and those with a weak will don't always make the greatest warriors. The character is a bit jumpy when it comes to traversing the wilderness and always cowers in the face of terror. He suffers a -1 penalty to all Fear rolls.

FALSE FAITH (MINOR)

The character has chosen to pursue the scholarly studies regarding the beliefs of ancient, greater beings as written about in the ancient texts. Very few amongst the Known Lands share her beliefs and instead accuse her of having faith in something completely absurd. When dealing with those who don't believe in religion, the character suffers a -1 penalty to Charisma.

WEAK WILLED (MINOR)

The character is easily pushed around. He has a difficult time choosing his actions and seeks others for guidance. He lacks any measure of assertiveness and easily succumbs to persuasion and intimidation. When making a roll against the Fright Table, he suffers a +1 penalty, the same as if the creature had an additional -1 to its Fear rating.

Edges

UNUSED EDGES

The following Edges are not allowed for player characters:

rock and roll, adept, champion, gadgeteer, holy/unholy warrior, mentalist, mr. fix it, rapid recharge, improved rapid recharge, soul drain, wizard, arcane background (magic), arcane background (miracles), arcane background (psionics), arcane background (super powers), and arcane background (weird science)

NEW EDGES

ALCHEMIST

Type: Professional

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Alchemy), Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Chemistry) d8+, Transmutation d6+

Alchemists use their knowledge of chemicals to create an art form for changing one ingredient into another. They gain a +2 bonus to Transmutation rolls when creating alchemical mixtures. Additionally, each Raise on a Transmutation roll reduces the Power Points required by 1, to a minimum of 1.

AMBUSER

Type: Combat

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Stealth d6+

Some warriors are particularly skilled in the art of getting the drop on a target. Maybe they have a knack for moving about quietly without being heard, or maybe they know the best way to camouflage the body to blend into the scenery. Whichever it is, his target won't know until it's too late. He gains a +1 bonus when testing for Surprise or The Drop.

APOTHECARY**Type:** Professional**Requirements:** Novice, Arcane Background (Herbalism), Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Medicine) d8+, Compounding d6+

Apothecaries use their knowledge of herbs to create medicines that aid or heal their allies. They gain a +2 bonus to Compounding rolls when creating herbal mixtures. Additionally, each Raise on a Compounding roll reduces the Power Points required by 1, to a minimum of 1.

CRUSADER**Type:** Professional**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d8+

Crusaders scour the land, searching for undead creatures to slay. They are convinced a greater power will return if the people of Dhuran rid the land of these particular Denizens of the Deep. They gain a +2 bonus to Fear rolls against creatures with the Undead trait.

DIPLOMATIC**Type:** Social**Requirements:** Novice, Charisma 0+, Persuasion d6+

The character knows how to befriend others using natural charm and her friendly personality. Her soothing words not only reduce anger, they have a natural tendency to persuade others in believing what she has to say. She receives a +2 bonus to Persuasion when dealing with members of another race.

EDUCATED**Type:** Racial**Requirements:** Gray Elf, Novice, Smarts d8+

Gray elves are known for their ability to educate their youth. Most gray elves are provided with specialized in-home education from a gray elf professor, embracing their natural ability to understand things better than others. Whenever acquiring a new Knowledge skill focus, it starts at d6 instead of d4.

FARMER**Type:** Background**Requirements:** Novice, Survival d8+

The character has chosen the simple life of a farmer often leading to great survival struggles compared to those in the urban centers. The relative peace of being away from the hustle and bustle provides him comfort as does the thought of working hard for the rewards you receive. He gains a +2 bonus to all Survival rolls.

FLEET-FOOTED

Due to their Racial Template, dark elf characters cannot take this Edge.

HISTORIAN**Type:** Background**Requirements:** Novice, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (History) d6+

The character has joined the ranks of scholars digging deep into Dhuran's history to recover any minute pieces of knowledge capable of unlocking the secrets of its past. He hopes one day to reclaim Dhuran as described in the ancient texts. He gains a +2 bonus to all rolls, including Common Knowledge rolls, relating to recalling or understanding history.

INQUISITOR**Type:** Professional**Requirements:** Novice, Spirit d8+

Inquisitors have devoted their lives to ridding the land of those they consider to be plagued. These particular Denizens of the Deep are clearly the biggest threat to the fledgling cities and the prosperity of Dhuran. They gain a +2 bonus to Fear rolls against creatures with the Plagued trait.

MARSHAL**Type:** Leadership**Requirements:** Veteran, Command, Natural Leader, Smarts d8+, Charisma 0+

Marshals are known for their leadership prowess on the battlefield, especially when facing down the Denizens of the Deep. They may share Bennies with any allied companion within their command radius.

MERCHANT

Type: Professional

Requirements: Novice, Charisma 0+, Streetwise d6+

The markets rule the urban centers and only the best merchants survive the seemingly cutthroat trade industry. The character knows how to properly buy and sell, always managing to get the best deals. He gains a +2 bonus to all rolls related to mercantile activities within the Known Lands, including negotiating with another merchant.

NOBLE

The Noble Edge can only be taken by dark elf, dwarven, and human characters.

PERSEVERANCE

Type: Background

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

The character is extremely resolute when it comes to seeing a task to completion. Despite any difficulties or obstacles, she plows through them with ease and always encourages others to do the same. Once per day, she may re-roll any failed, non-combat dice roll.

RICH

The Rich Edge can only be taken by dwarven and human characters.

FILTHY RICH

The Filthy Rich Edge can only be taken by human characters.

RUNE PRIEST

Type: Professional

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Runic), Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Runology) d8+, Scribing d6+

Rune priests are trained to harness what little power comes from the runes they discover during their travels. They gain a +2 bonus to Scribing rolls. Additionally, a Raise doubles the duration of the power.

SHAMAN

Type: Professional

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Shamanism), Spirit d8+, Knowledge (Spiritualism) d8+, Invocation d6+

Shamans tap into the spirits contained within their fetish, unleashing havoc upon those threatening Dhuran. All rolls on the Retaliation Table are reduced by -2, to a minimum of 1.

TRADER

Type: Professional

Requirements: Novice, Charisma 0+, Streetwise d6+

Merchants sell goods within the marketplace, but it's the traders who provide goods from foreign lands. The character often travels great distances to buy and sell goods from various locations, keeping all of the Known Lands connected no matter the distance is between them. She gains a +2 bonus to all rolls related to mercantile activities outside of the Known Lands, including negotiating with merchants.

TRADESMITH

Type: Professional

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Choose a craft) d6+

The character is particularly skilled at crafting items desired by townsfolk or required by warriors. Her craft may provide them with quality weapons and strong armor. She gains a +2 bonus to all rolls related to her chosen craft. This Edge may be taken multiple times with a different craft chosen each time.

TWO-HANDED FIGHTER

Type: Racial

Requirements: Halfling, Novice, Strength d6+, Fighting d8+

Just because they're short doesn't mean they have to struggle when wielding larger weapons. The character is capable of wielding single-handed melee weapons one die higher than his strength by using two hands instead of just one. He ignores the Minimum Strength penalty, but only for single handed melee weapons wielded this way. Penalties still apply when wielding melee weapons that normally require two hands to wield.

CONNECTIONS EDGE

The following Connections Edge focuses are appropriate for *Ancient World* and may provide a benefit to the characters.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society was formed by gray elf scholars and consists of open enrollment to all those curious about Dhuran's ancient past. There is a fair amount of written material regarding the past 500 years, but beyond that the texts are sketchy and still require a lot of translation. However, tapping into the knowledge of the Historical Society may allow the party to better understand a location that was previously unknown.

MERCHANTS' GUILD

Merchants seeking the best prices – and highest profit – throughout the urban centers would be wise to join the Merchants' Guild. This guild makes many decisions about buying and selling prices in the human urban centers and knows the best traders to speak with for obtaining the highest quality merchandise.

PIRATES

Pirates are dastardly humanoids roaming about the Inner and Outer Seas looking for ships and weak towns to plunder. They care for very little other than coins and goods and are believed to have settled pirate villages on the other side of the Blue Gulf. However,

they also appear to have civil contact with those from the Land of the Barbarians and the Land of the Pharaohs and have even been known to sell goods claimed to come from distant lands.

THIEVES' GUILD

Thieves, charlatans, and gypsies have to stick together to avoid the gaze of the Watchmen. These bands are essentially lorded over by the Thieves' Guild which can offer protection and sanction to those in trouble. They also know the best secrets and have heard the sweetest rumors.

TRADERS' GUILD

Traders are those who travel between locations to obtain goods for selling. They are responsible for the spreading of goods, tools, weapons, armor, and even livestock across the land. Their career is one filled with danger, often forcing them to hire mercenaries for treks through dangerous wilderness. As such, they demand fees for this service and those fees are guaranteed by the Traders' Guild. Merchants wishing to purchase from a trader must adhere to the rules established by the Traders' Guild. Those who ignore the Guild become blacklisted and are never allowed to do business with the Traders' Guild again. However, this hasn't stopped a black market from appearing which operates outside the Guilds. (The black market is believed to be run by the Thieves' Guild, but no one has been able to prove it.)

Race

In *Ancient World*, player characters come from one of the civilized races in the Known Lands. Each race is unique with a Racial Template pertaining to how they differ from the standard human.

DARK ELF

Dark elves are a dark-skinned race of humanoids dwelling in cities located in large, underground caverns. They have a matriarchal society in which an empress assumes the throne, females are scholars and high priestesses, and males serve as workers and warriors. They are easily agitated and often make hasty decisions, although they have proven themselves time and again to be fierce warriors and

reliable allies (as long as one does not get on their bad side). Even though they're reliable, many dark elf warriors lean toward the chaotic side of life, causing many of their allies to frown upon their acts.

UNDERGROUND CITIES

The city of Drak'tau is a perfect model of a dark elf underground metropolis. Upon finding an ideal location, typically a very large cavern or lengthy series of caves, the dark elves enlarge the underground space to make way for a city able to hold 10,000 or more. These newly created caverns stretch 100ft high and 2,000ft across to hold the new settlement.

The center of the cavern holds the most important buildings: a large palace for the empress, military barracks, marketplace, and housing for the nobles, merchants, honored warriors, scholars, high priestesses, and those who in the lower echelon who warrant a place in the center of the city. All others dwell in small caves carved into the surrounding cavern walls. A multitude of bridges illuminated by hanging lanterns connect the collection of cavern-wall abodes to the city proper.

CASTE

Dark elves follow a fairly simple caste system. Sitting atop the caste is the empress, the only one considered to be a higher being. Below her are the noble houses, where desires and attitudes collide frequently. Parallel to those are the high priestesses serving the empress. Below them are those honored by the upper echelon, including powerful merchants, scholars, and esteemed warriors. Underneath them is the working class, wherein the bulk of the population exists. Some of them are well-known and invited to live in the center of the city. Others are looked upon as grunts and only allowed as far as the marketplace.

Amongst the echelons of dark elf society are the warlords. Warlords might be nobles or wealthy merchants with an incredible amount of power over people and land. Some are dark elves, some are humans. Regardless, they commingle with the noble houses and often serve as the first line of defense for an allied noble house. They frequently sponsor warrior activities in the hopes of uncovering great weapons and amassing wealth.

Female dark elves can become high priestesses acting as liaisons between the empress and the rest of society. These high priestesses lead the people during the worship of the empress and have a certain level of control over various aspects of daily life (such as governing the marketplace). While the nobles concentrate on politics and the warlords concentrate on conflicts, the high priestesses focus on the social and societal concerns within each dark elf city.



The dark elves' middle caste comprises of warriors, merchants, scholars, and priestesses. Such folk report to the nobles, warlords, or high priestesses and are permitted to deal with those from outside of the city. Dark elves residing within the lower caste are forbidden from dealing with anyone outside the city and those caught doing so are sacrificed. When dark elves flee their empress due to such forbidden dealings, they spend the rest of the lives dodging the hunters looking to return the guilty parties for immediate execution.

RELATIONS

Dark elven attitudes often make them difficult to deal with. Relations with halflings and dwarves are strained at best, but humans seem to have a much easier time handling these attitudes. It may be that humans are more flexible in their beliefs and value their alliance or that humans can be as depraved at some level as their dark elven friends.

The bond between humans and dark elves has been strong for a few centuries. Many children of both races found themselves growing up together, creating a sort of kinship that sometimes turned into something more. This led to the birth of the gray elves, a race half-human and half-dark elven. However, not everyone within dark elf society (and human society) is accepting of the other races, especially the birth of a mixed race. This often brings about conflict, further straining the already delicate relationship between dark elves and humans. Despite these misgivings, dark elves regularly trade with humans abroad and find ways to tolerate the presence of dwarves and halflings. Most are accepting of their gray elf brethren, especially those who deal regularly with human society. Some stick to the noble ideals within their caste system and instead see gray elves as a blasphemous union between their precious race and such lesser beings.

RUNIC SYMBOLS

Ancient dark elf cities, such as Drak'tau, are covered in what is colloquially referred to as runic symbols. The origin of these symbols is unknown as is their purpose. Some people are able to see lines of energy emitting from particular runes and use that energy to create extraordinary effects. Often called rune priests by dark elf society, these gifted individuals are able to manipulate whatever power lies within these ancient symbols.

What the symbols are and what they represent is a complete mystery to everyone, even scholars and rune priests. No one knows what each symbol means nor do they know why some of them give off energy and others don't. Many scholars speculate the runes are part of an ancient language, but they have yet to make any firm connections.

PHYSIOLOGY

Dark elves are the tallest of all civil races. They average 6–6.5ft tall and 150–175lbs, and are typically more agile than the average human. Their skin is a dark muted brown with dark hair, pointed ears, and dark-colored eyes.

RACIAL TEMPLATE

When choosing dark elf as a player character race, use the following Template:

- **Age:** The average dark elf lives for 350-400 years, typically becoming an explorer at 80 years old. A young dark elf is around 40-60 years old and an elderly one is around 250-300 years old.

- **Dark Elf Temperament:** Dark elves are easily agitated and have difficulty interacting with those from other races. They gain the Mean Hindrance.
- **Common Knowledge:** Dark elf characters consider the following to be common knowledge: dungeons, caves, underground navigation, and all indigenous creatures living underground or in caves.
- **Low Light Vision:** Dark elves gain Low Light Vision, ignoring penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Quick Feet:** Dark elves are naturally quick and excellent runners. They gain the Fleet-Footed Edge.

DWARF

Dwarves are a stark reflection of the earth they live within: unwavering, stoic, firmly planted in their beliefs, physically resilient, and proud. They build grand kingdoms to demonstrate devotion to their kings and queens with an entire society revolved around the earth that protects them. They are extremely brave and known to stand strong against the worst of terrors. To have a dwarven ally in a fight means to have someone who will always offer their aid and protection. They are also known as the most stubborn of all the civilized races.

CLIFF-FACED KINGDOMS

Dwarves live within earthen kingdoms carved into the face of the land's largest cliffs. These dwarven kingdoms are immense cities beginning on the face of a cliff and ending in a spider-web of cavities stretching for miles within the mountain. Unlike the dark elves, these cities are meant to be seen as vast strongholds of power and awe. From the valleys below, these cliff-faced kingdoms are a sight to see.

Many dwarven kingdoms reach great heights with each level serving a unique purpose. The king and queen reside on the highest level with members of the gentry and warrior castes in the levels directly underneath. Dwarves have an extremely strict caste-system and each level within the kingdom is designed to house and segregate the different castes. This gives a semblance of rising in power the higher in caste-level one goes; the king and queen can look down upon their entire kingdom from dizzying heights.

From the outside, the only visible portions of the cliff-faced kingdom are military, nobility and, of course, royalty. The lower levels of the kingdom along the cliff face contain open markets and walkways for those above to travel to lower levels. Vigilant guards are placed throughout to prevent the riff-raff from traveling to a level where they do not belong and carefully watch the valleys below as visitors draw near.

CASTE

Dwarves adhere to a very strict caste system and can only rise in caste after proving their worth due to extenuating circumstances (rising to royalty is nearly impossible). Dropping to a lower caste is a cause for great shame and is a punishment for non-serious crimes. The different castes, from highest to lowest both physically and socially, are as follows: royalty, gentry, warrior, tradesmith, merchant, scholar, worker, and servant.



The royalty caste is reserved for the king, queen, and royal family. This includes all children and siblings serving in ambassador positions. The highest level of the cliff-faced kingdom houses all members of the royalty caste. Meetings with members of other castes are strictly performed in the lower levels as only royalty are allowed on this level.

The gentry caste includes nobles, warlords, generals, and leaders of the guilds. If the king and queen's family members are not serving ambassador positions, they would instead be found in the gentry caste. Members of the gentry only hold meetings with those above them and those reporting directly to them. As such, all gatherings with the gentry are held in special rooms within their estates.

The warrior caste is a truly honored group as they are the dedicated dwarven warriors handpicked by the warlords and generals to serve the kingdom. These are no mere foot soldiers; they are the elite and required to pass a test of skills before being admitted to the caste.

Dwarven kingdoms pay much respect to their various tradesmiths as the different crafting arts – such as armor and weaponsmithing – are extremely important to them. Due to this respect, the tradesmith caste falls immediately be-

neath the warrior caste and above the merchants and scholars. It comprises highly talented dwarves who have proven their skills to the guild leaders.

The merchant caste is the only one given blanket permission to travel the land, trading with all other races and kingdoms in the Known Lands. They are skilled negotiators and spread high-quality dwarven wares everywhere.

Scholarly knowledge is not very important to the dwarven kingdoms and thus the scholar caste falls directly beneath the merchant caste. The scholars are the only ones able to join expeditions alongside the kingdom's greatest warriors to seek knowledge of a long forgotten past and to learn more about nearby kingdoms and cities.

The worker caste is the largest of them all, consuming three levels within the kingdom. These are the dwarves performing all the mundane tasks, including farming, hunting, foraging, and mining. They are also called upon in times of war to serve in the army with males attending soldier training twice per year.

The servant caste is the lowest of the entire dwarven kingdom. No one chooses to be a servant; the position is often either punishment for non-serious crimes or one belonging to a completely unskilled person. In their youth, many dwarves perform duties as a servant to learn the skills of a worker.

RELATIONS

When one makes friends with a dwarf, they have found an ally for life. Dwarves are extremely loyal, almost to a fault, but also extremely cautious over whom they befriend. Because of this, they are rarely found in the company of other races. They are hesitant toward others and believe only true bonds should be formed through friendship.

Due to their desire for dwarven-made goods, humans have the best relations with the dwarven kingdoms. While the warlords may not run out to support human causes, they are more than willing to listen to their pleas for help and assess the situation. Should the need arise, the kingdom will assemble a grand army led by elite warriors and generals to assist its allies. Should they find the humans' needs are not to their benefit, the dwarves will give their warriors and warlords the decision to provide individual aid or not, without the help of the dwarven army. This produces a working relationship with each side showing respect toward the other.

Most dwarves despise the dark elves encroaching upon the borderlands and frown upon their tendencies toward chaos, believing that strength will prevail over anger. Few dwarven kingdoms purposely ally with the dark elves, considering them an annoyance. Instead, they tolerate the presence of the dark elves and avoid seeking any trade with them unless necessary. Should the dark elven cities expand into dwarven territory, a war may ensue.

Dwarves and halflings are completely neutral toward each other. Halflings have little or no need for dwarven goods and have little to nothing to offer in return. The two races rarely come to conflict and rarely become allies. More often than not, they find themselves on the same side of a conflict against the Land of the Pharaohs and reluctantly work together for the betterment of both.

PHYSIOLOGY

Dwarves are shorter than humans, but typically much stockier. They average 4-5ft tall and 175-190lbs. They have light colored skin, sometimes pale, with thick brown or red hair. Their ears are rounded and their eyes are generally darker.

RACIAL TEMPLATE

When choosing dwarf as a player character race, use the following Template:

- **Age:** The average dwarf lives for 280-320 years, typically becoming an explorer at 60 years old. A young dwarf is around 30-45 years old and an elderly one is around 200-240 years old.
- **Hardy:** Dwarves are particularly tough and gain a +1 bonus to Toughness.
- **Common Knowledge:** Dwarf characters consider the following to be common knowledge: crafting, rock, metals, and can identify all manner of weapons and armor.
- **Low Light Vision:** Dwarves gain Low Light Vision, ignoring penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Loyal:** Dwarves are extremely loyal to their kingdom and their companions. They gain the Loyal Hindrance.
- **Resilient:** Dwarves are able to resist environmental effects and gain a +2 bonus to Vigor to resist them.
- **Slow:** Dwarves have short legs; their Pace is 5.

GRAY ELF

Gray elves are the product of a union between a human and a dark elf. Although hereditarily tied to both races, they are often shunned by individuals of either kin as the product of an unacceptable union. In centuries past, alliances between humans and dark elves were much stronger, giving rise to the first gray elves. Nowadays, those alliances aren't nearly as strong and most gray elves are strictly the product of gray elven parents.

As tension rises, more humans and dark elves see gray elves as a blasphemous union between races. Some cities go so far as excluding them from many public facilities and educational institutions that only "pure" humans or dark elves are allowed to enjoy. This has led to the rise of gray elven towns where everyone is accepted, regardless of heritage.

GROWING UP

The life of a gray elf youth can be a difficult one. They are not allowed to attend human schools, nor are they allowed in dark elf classes. Although they may have friends of both races, they are only allowed to see them during non-school days. Typically, gray elf youth are forced to be home-schooled by their parents or a gray elf scholar or attend one of the open institutes accepting members of all races (of which there are only two).

Although this education may seem repressive, it has created youth that shine above and beyond in learning compared to their dark elf or human friends. Gray elven youth are known for their ability to learn and solve problems quickly. Other scholars believe this is the result of being forced to survive within a society that rarely accepts who you are.

SOCIETY

Gray elves don't have a societal caste. Most of them are not allowed to incorporate themselves into dark elf or human castes and thus spend much of their time as warriors, scholars, advisors, professors, merchants, or people of ill-repute. They are only able to integrate into other societies if they have valuable skills. Instead of settling with this type of life, gray elf scholars, professors, and merchants populate the outlying towns.



RELATIONS

Gray elves are neutral to all other races. While many from those races may look down upon them and treat them as outsiders, there are no real hostilities between them. This accepted neutrality is due to how well gray elf scholars are at collecting information, the quality of their merchants, the schooling of their professors, and their innate ability to be diplomatic. Some see this as a weakness, yet most humans and dark elves still treat the gray elves as a neutral party. Ironically, many debates between races use gray elves as advisors and referees.

The most valuable relation gray elves have with the other races stems from their extreme curiosity. They are always looking for better ways to do common tasks or searching for clues to unlock the ancient past. This extreme curiosity does come at a small price: gray elves are easily distracted. It is not uncommon for one to get side-tracked during important times or lose focus on important matters as they investigate something rather mundane, potentially creating tension between the distracted person and those around him.

PHYSIOLOGY

Gray elves are between humans and dark elves in stature, being around 6ft tall and weighing around 150lbs. Their ears are either rounded or pointed with eyes typically colored blue or green. Their hair exhibits many different shades of brown and they have olive skin tone.

RACIAL TEMPLATE

When choosing gray elf as a player character race, use the following Template:

- **Age:** The average gray elf lives for 210-240 years, typically becoming explorers or scholars at 45 years old. A young gray elf is around 25-35 years old and an elderly one is around 150-180 years old.
- **Common Knowledge:** Due to their varied upbringings, gray elf characters can choose five common knowledge areas amongst the dark elf and human Racial Templates.
- **Low Light Vision:** Gray elves gain Low Light Vision, ignoring penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Racial Segregation:** Gray elves are rarely fully accepted when traveling outside of the gray elf towns. They gain the Outsider Hindrance.
- **Scholarly:** Due to their isolation from many skilled jobs, gray elves have become accustomed to educating each other. They start with a d6 in Smarts instead of a d4.

HALFLING

Halflings are a tribal race with villages located in thin woods and throughout the plains. They are considered to be the race most in-tuned with nature living simple lives in simple surroundings, eschewing most types of conveniences. Their villages are always busy as everyone works together to better the village and aid in its survival.

Halflings are the only race living in small huts within small villages. They never build a settlement housing more than a few dozen families and only perform tasks benefitting the entire village. They are primarily self-sufficient and rely upon other races only during times of famine, extreme weather, conflict from the Land of the Pharaohs, and occasionally when supplies run low. Their ability to survive is due to their strong connection with the natural world instead of relying on the latest conveniences.

VILLAGES

Halfling villages are small, family-driven communities where everyone has a role benefitting the rest of the community. These villages remain small (by choice) with new villages formed every twenty years or so. This size allows the village to be completely self-sufficient by only needing to feed a limited number, never leaving a job undone, and never allowing a halfling to be without a job.

Each village is led by a group of elders. This group can be as small as two or as large as ten, depending on the age of the elders. Each elder provides guidance without being seen as a greater person (as human nobles are regarded). They are simply the ones who know and have experienced the most and are sought out for advice and guidance in day-to-day activities.

When major decisions are necessary, the village brings together an assembly of the most able-bodied halflings, facilitated by the elders, to discuss the event. Decisions require a majority vote, although most lead to days of discussion before a unanimous vote. Halfling villages tend to be very democratic and at the same time very stubborn. Everyone's opinion matters and should a decision affect at least one person in an important way, it needs to be discussed before them all. Giving everyone a voice helps to maintain harmony within the village.

CASTE

There are only two types of halflings in every village: elders and workers. The elders are the most experienced in terms of survival, experience, and knowledge. They don't need to be the oldest, but they do need to be the strongest mentally. They are the ultimate advisors and guides of the village.

Everyone else within a halfling village is considered a worker. Every worker has an important job and everyone is always provided for. These workers perform all types of tasks including hunting, foraging, farming, animal handling, guarding, teaching, and everything else required to run the village. Halflings don't need merchants, although they do have traders to deal with other races; typically they use what they make and make what they use. If they are in desperate need of assistance from outside the village and have nothing to offer in exchange, they instead present their own people as servants, guards, or warriors in return for those needed items. Additionally, during times of great abundance, some of their people turn to the warrior trade to build relations with other races. There are no halfling ambassadors and instead these brave warriors form the bonds between halflings and other races called upon in the future.

RELATIONS

Halflings are extremely fickle. They make efforts to remain as neutral as they can toward other races while often battling with their own kin over tribal rights and

village politics. Their constant stance of isolation until dire events demand otherwise is often seen as threatening to others attempting diplomatic measures. They don't mean to insult other races, or even each other, but they often do, resulting in conflicts that can drag on for years. This often drives the need for additional warriors to help rebuild any damaged relations.

In addition to this strange behavior, halflings are very protective of their land and Dhuran's indigenous flora and fauna. If they feel someone is threatening the natural world, they lash out violently. Due to their stealth tactics, gained from centuries of tribal living, these violent outbreaks occur swiftly and seemingly come from nowhere. Halflings are extremely good at hiding and ambushing as they know a frontal assault will most likely lead to disaster.

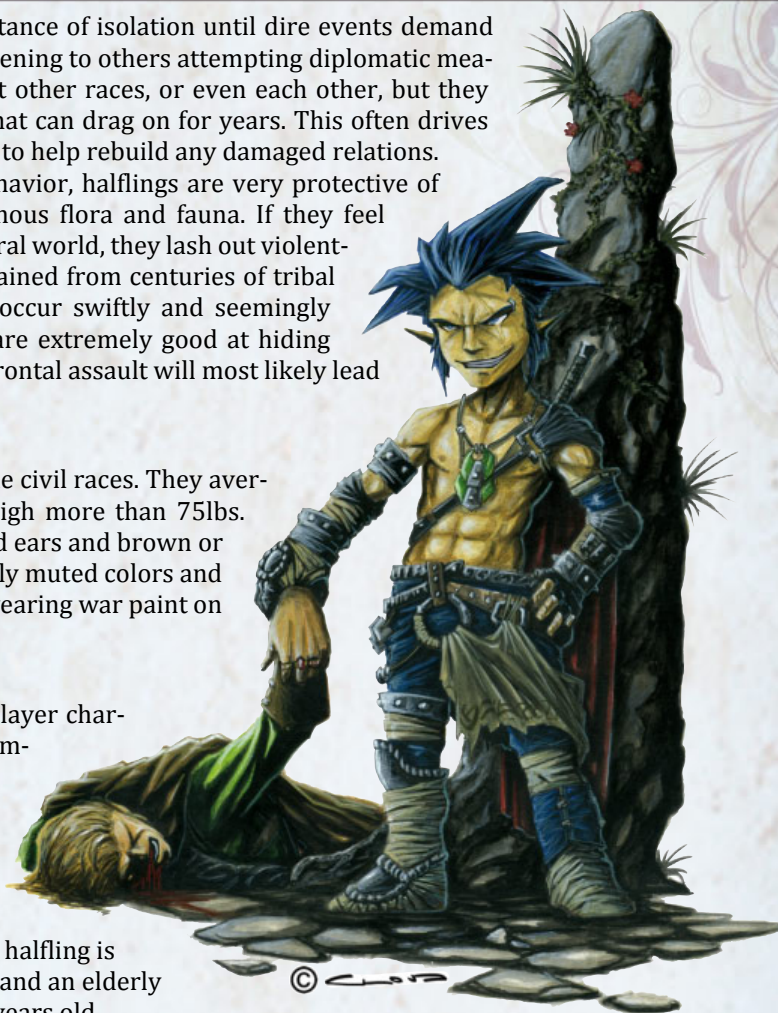
PHYSIOLOGY

Halflings are the shortest of the civil races. They average 3ft in height and rarely weigh more than 75lbs. They have fair skin with rounded ears and brown or black hair. Their eyes are typically muted colors and they can often be encountered wearing war paint on their face.

RACIAL TEMPLATE

When choosing halfling as a player character race, use the following Template:

- **Age:** The average halfling lives for 140-160 years, typically becoming an explorer at 30 years old. A young halfling is around 15-25 years old and an elderly one is around 100-120 years old.
- **Hard to Hit:** Due to their smaller size and quick feet, halflings gain a +1 bonus to Parry.
- **Common Knowledge:** Halfling characters consider the following to be common knowledge: nature, hunting, terrain, and navigating by the stars.
- **Short:** Halflings are considered Size -1, subtracting 1 from their Toughness.
- **Spiritual Upbringing:** Halflings have always been raised to better understand the natural world around them. They start with a d6 in Spirit instead of a d4.



HUMAN

Humans are focused on the grandeur of themselves and their cities, repeatedly attempting to outdo each other and the previous generation. They strive for improvement and a “better” way at all times, even if the current one works perfectly. They are a race continuously dealing with change as societal, political, and military balance has little to no meaning for them.

CITIES ON THE BAY

Human cities are large, sprawling urban areas coinciding with the ever-growing egotistical nature of those living nearer to the Inner Sea.

Along the coastline, large sprawling estates can be found capable of housing an entire halfling village. They are a thing of awe for those who rarely get the chance to see one, filled with the hustle and bustle of a hectic life: packed markets, stores selling everything you'll ever need, busy shipping ports, rowdy taverns, luxurious inns, and fine stonework.

Unlike dwarven kingdoms and dark elf cities making use of vertical space, humans do not like to share their space with others and choose to build outward instead of upward. Most homes are two- to three-stories high (wealthy humans may have castles or strongholds with numerous floors) with those in the surrounding farming areas being one to two floors high. The cities swell outwards from their center and consume a large amount of the surrounding land.

In addition to sprawling cities, humans tend to overpopulate. Throughout their cities can be found the homeless and downtrodden. Crime only gets worse where the population is denser, especially around the busy marketplaces. Due to this need for population growth, human cities are built on or near the water for easier import and export of goods and people (such as halfling servants).

CASTE

Humans have a class system where someone in one class can potentially change to a higher or lower class simply due to the actions they take in life. Sometimes members of higher classes can be viewed poorly by others due to political relations or unfavorable deeds performed (such as a lord angering

all his vassals, who in turn revolt against him, casting him out of the city). Humans do not recognize anyone of royalty, only nobility. Members of the upper class are either part of the nobility, powerful political figures, wealthy merchants, military generals, prosperous sea-captains, guild leaders, or lucky explorers.



Each city is managed by an elected mayor, who in turn chooses city officials. However, some nobles have political and physical power over the city due to land ownership and others have gained their upper class position due to wealth or prestige, thus providing social, political, and economic influence over the city and the mayor. It is a constant cold war amongst the upper classes.

The majority of humans fall into the middle class, which comprises all tradesmen, scholars, professors, warriors, guards, merchants, guild members, and countless other professions of repute. Most are treated fairly by those in the upper class partially for political purposes and partially for monetary purposes. Without the workers, the upper class would have to do all the work themselves.

Those humans who do not offer value to the city or who act in unlawful ways are considered part of the lower class. Although a valuable part of society, farmers in the city are often treated like lower class. This is why few actually visit the city.

There is hope for those in the lower class. Even though many humans snub them, if one is a particularly good warrior, he can rise from the lower class all the way up to upper class. For this, humans value prowess in many ways, regardless of what station one is born in.

RELATIONS

Humans strive to be everyone's ally. As such, their relations with other races are in constant fluctuation, often relying on the views of the other race instead of their own. Humans try hard to treat everyone as equal in the hopes they will benefit from the human cities through trade or servitude. However, many humans snub the gray elves in disgust of their mixed roots.

Fortunately for many, human cities have small districts carved into their urban scenes. These districts allow non-humans to live amongst the human population regardless of the great relations of the races. Squabbling is common, but overall those who contribute to the urban scene are viewed much higher than those who don't.

PHYSIOLOGY

Humans are the average humanoid that all other humanoids are measured against. They average 5.5-6.5ft in height and most weigh 125-175lbs. Their skin is fair with round ears and an array of eye and hair color.

RACIAL TEMPLATE

When choosing human as a player character race, use the following Template:

- **Age:** The average human lives for 80 years, typically becoming an explorer at 18 years old. A young human is around 14 years old and an elderly human is around 55 years old.
- **Adaptive:** Humans start with an extra Edge.
- **Common Knowledge:** Human characters consider the following to be common knowledge: trading, negotiating, politics, and farming.



EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT

Weapons, armor, and gear are essential to surviving as a warrior. All manner of equipment is crafted and sold throughout the markets, making them quite common and easy to acquire. However, hidden deep within the wilderness lays the true power of the ancient world; the relic weapons from a lost time.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons are used in hand-to-hand combat. They can be wielded with one hand or two. The greatest of these weapons are designed and crafted by artisans.

AXES

Axe, Battle: A single-headed axe, with a long shaft, that is relatively light

Axe, Great: A double-headed axe, with a long shaft, that is heavier than a battle axe.

Bardiche: A single-headed axe with a very broad head and a thicker, long shaft.

BLADES

Dagger: A small, light blade that is easily carried.

Falchion: A one-handed, single-edged sword that is typically made in mass quantities. It is the easiest to obtain.

Shamshir: A one-handed, single-edged sword with a very pronounced curve. They are best used when slashing opponents while mounted.

Sword, Great: A two-handed, double-edged sword. They are typically only hand-crafted by the greatest artisans.

Sword, Long: A hand-and-a-half, double-edged sword for thrusting and stabbing.

Sword, Short: A one-handed, double-edged sword for thrusting and stabbing. They are the second most common blade made and are typically mass produced.

BLUDGEONS

Club: A thick wooden weapon often hand-carved by the lower class.

Flail: A one-handed weapon derived from a threshing tool. It has a striking head attached by chain or flexible rope. It is barbed or studded for lethal damage.

Hammer, Great: A double-headed hammer, with a long shaft, that is heavier than a war hammer.

Hammer, War: A single-headed hammer, with a long shaft, that is designed to damage metal armor.

Mace: A one-handed club with a round or shaped metal head.

Mace, Flanged: A mace with flanges on the metal head to increase damage to metal armor.

Mace, Studded: A mace with studs on the metal head to increase damage to exposed areas.

Maul: A two-handed, single-headed hammer, with a long shaft, that is designed to damage metal armor.

Morning Star: A club with sharp spikes on the head for lethal damage.

IMPLEMENTS

Pitchfork: An agricultural tool with a long handle and long prongs used to lift and throw loose material. They are often used by farmers as rudimentary weapons.

Poleaxe: A single-headed axe, two-handed axe designed to fell trees. They are not properly balanced for combat, but make quick weapons when needed.

Scythe: An agricultural tool with a very long handle used for mowing grass or reaping crops. They are often used by farmers as rudimentary weapons.

Trident: A three-pronged spear used for fishing. If properly maintained, they can be used as pole weapons.

POLE ARM

Fauchard: A single-edged, concave blade with a single lance point on the back of the blade.

Glaive: A single-edged blade with a hook on the back of the blade to pull riders from horses.

Halberd: A versatile polearm with a small axe head, a spike on the end of its shaft, and a hook on the back side of the head to pull riders from horses.

Scythe, War: A modification to the traditional scythe with a handle and concave blade designed for combat instead of farming.

Spear: A common stabbing pole weapon with a pointed head affixed atop a long shaft.

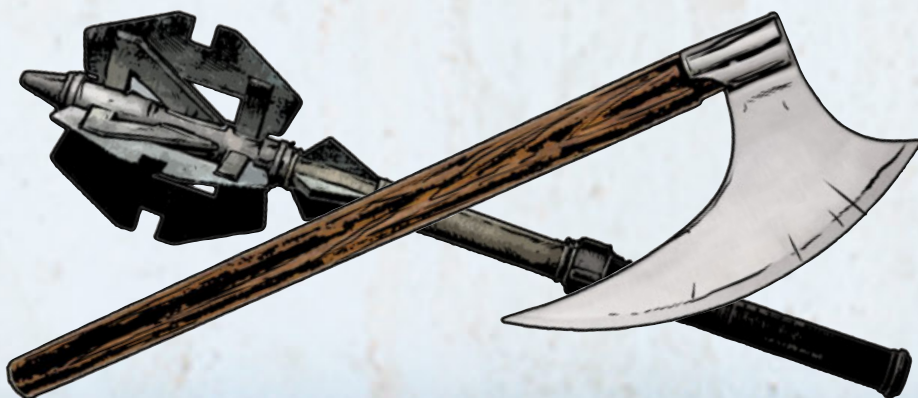
Staff: A long, straight pole with no additional weapon attachments.

MATERIAL

Weapon material denotes what material the weapon is made from. From a rules standpoint, it can be applied to non-implement weapons with some type of metal blade or edge. Each material is useful against particular targets.

Cold Iron: Cold iron weapons are forged at lower temperatures for a longer period of time. They are effective against demons, but tend to break if not used properly. Besides exploiting a demon's weakness, the weapon has a 50% chance of breaking on a Fighting roll that results in a 1 (regardless of the result on the Wild Die). Additionally, the weapon's cost is increased by x1.5.

Wootz Steel: Wootz steel weapons are manufactured by artisans who intermix alloys to thicken and harden the steel. This allows them to sharpen the edge to a finer tip, increasing its penetration. Only axes, blades, and some pole arms (those with a blade or axe head) can be made from wootz steel (although not falchions as they are mass produced), but those that are gain AP 2. Additionally, the weapon's cost is increased by x2.



MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Axes				
Axe, Battle	Str+d8	10	300	
Axe, Great	Str+d10	15	500	AP 1, Parry -1, 2 hands
Bardiche	Str+d12	20	800	Parry -2, 2 hands
Blades				
Dagger	Str+d4	1	25	
Falchion	Str+d6	4	100	Breaks when a 1 is rolled on the Fighting die
Shamshir	Str+d6	6	250	+1 damage while mounted
Sword, Great	Str+d10	12	400	Parry -1, 2 hands
Sword, Long	Str+d8	8	300	
Sword, Short	Str+d6	4	200	
Bludgeons				
Club	Str+2	5	5	Parry -1
Flail	Str+d6	8	250	Ignores shield parry and cover bonuses
Hammer, Great	Str+d10	16	550	AP 2 vs. rigid armor, Parry -1, 2 hands
Hammer, War	Str+d6	8	250	AP 1 vs. rigid armor
Mace	Str+d4	4	25	
Mace, Flanged	Str+d4	4	100	AP 1
Mace, Studded	Str+d4	4	100	+1 damage versus unarmored target
Maul	Str+d8	20	250	AP 2 vs. rigid armor, Parry -1, 2 hands
Morning Star	Str+d6	6	300	AP 1
Implements				
Pitchfork	Str+d6	8	5	Improvised weapon
Poleaxe	Str+d8	12	25	Improvised weapon
Scythe	Str+d8	10	10	Improvised weapon
Trident	Str+d6	9	50	Improvised weapon
Pole Arms				
Fauchard	Str+d6	12	300	Reach 1, +1 damage when set against a charge, 2 hands
Glaive	Str+d6	12	300	Reach 1, +2 to dismount a target, 2 hands
Halberd	Str+d6	14	400	Reach 1, +1 damage when set against a charge, +2 to dismount a target, 2 hands
Scythe, War	Str+d6	10	200	Reach 1, 2 hands
Spear	Str+d6	5	300	Reach 1
Staff	Str+d4	8	10	Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands

Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons allow for attacks from a distance. This includes bows, slings, and thrown weapons such as daggers, hatchets, and javelins.

Bow, Short: A small bow that can be fired on foot or while mounted. Although its range is less, its size allows for a wider range of use.

Bow, Long: A larger bow designed for distance. It cannot be fired while mounted.

Crossbow: A handheld device that fires a tipped bolt using a tension string.

Dagger: Most daggers are well-balanced for ease of throwing.

Hatchet: A small axe that can be thrown or used as a one-handed weapon.

Javelin: A type of spear designed to be thrown.

Sling: A simple missile weapon that allows the wielder to fire sharpened rocks. Blunt rocks are considered non-lethal damage. Sharpened rocks are considered lethal damage.

RANGED WEAPONS TABLE

Type	Range	DMG	Cost	Weight	Min Str	Notes
Bow, Short	12/24/48	2d6	250	3	d6	
Bow, Long	15/30/60	2d6	300	5	d8	
Crossbow	15/30/60	2d6	500	10	d6	AP 2, 1 action to reload
Dagger	3/6/12	Str+d4	25	1	-	
Hatchet	3/6/12	Str+d6	200	2	-	
Javelin	3/6/12	Str+d6	200	5	d6	
Sling	4/8/16	Str+d4	25	1	-	



Armor

Armor offers the wearer protection, as do shields which can be used to parry ranged attacks.

Gladiator Helmet: Enclosed helmet that offers additional protection to the head, but limits viewing. The wearer incurs a -2 penalty to Notice versus flanking targets.

Hide: Treated and layered leather armor to make it thicker than standard leather. It offers greater protection but is heavier.

Leather: Standard leather armor created from the skins of various animals.

Padded: Simple cloth armor that provides maximum maneuverability but limited protection.

Pot Helm: Helmet that covers the top of the head, providing no protection to the face and ears.

Scale: Consists of thin metal scales sewn to a leather backing, arranged in overlapping rows much like fish scales. It offers better protection, but is much heavier.

Buckler: A small shield that can be strapped to the arm to allow the hand to continue using a weapon.

Round Shield: A larger, wooden shield that must be held in the hand, offering protection from ranged attacks.

Kite Shield: A large, wooden shield shaped like a reverse teardrop. It offers greater protection of one whole flank with a shape that better matches the contours of humanoid torsos. Although it's strapped tight to the arm, it doesn't allow the hand to utilize a weapon, but it can still be used to grip the reigns of a horse.



ARMOR TABLE

Type	Armor	Weight*	Cost	Notes
Gladiator Helmet	3	6	150	Head, see description
Hide	2	20	300	Torso, Arms, Legs
Leather	+1	15	100	Torso, Arms, Legs
Padded	+1	0	25	Torso, Arms, Legs, only effective against Str+d4 or less weapons
Pot Helm	3	4	75	Head, 50% chance that it protects vs. a called head shot
Scale	+3	25	900	Torso, Arms, Legs
Shields**				
Buckler		8	25	Parry +1
Round		12	50	Parry +1, +2 Armor versus ranged attacks
Kite		20	200	Parry +2, +2 Armor versus ranged attacks

*Weight shown is for worn armor. If carried, weight is at least double.

**Shields do not protect against called shots or attacks from the rear.

Mundane Equipment

All mundane equipment from the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook that could feasibly exist within a fantasy setting is available in *Ancient World*. Modern items, such as cameras, do not exist nor do they have an equivalent. Instead of recreating that list, here is a list of additional items useful within *Ancient World*.

Alchemist's Kit: A semi-portable chemistry lab for creating alchemical concoctions. Alchemists must have access to their alchemist's kit when creating alchemical objects. Only 50% of the kit is portable, inferring a -4 penalty when creating alchemical objects away from the alchemist's lab. An alchemist's kit cannot be carried; it requires a cart to be moved about. It costs 500cp, but is provided for free with Arcane Background (Alchemy) upon character creation. If the kit is damaged, a new one must be purchased.

Amulet: Amulets are fetishes used by shamans to house the spirits they've captured. They are typically attached to a chain and worn around the neck or affixed to a staff or mace. However, they cannot be used as bludgeons as they will break on impact. The amulet does not infer any encumbrance and costs 100cp, but is provided for free with Arcane Background (Shamanism) upon character creation. If the amulet is damaged, a new one must be purchased.

Apothecary's Kit: A semi-portable medicinal lab for creating herbal concoctions. Apothecaries must have access to their apothecary's kit when creating their herbal Talent objects. Only 50% of the kit is portable, inferring a -4 penalty when creating herbal Talent objects away from the apothecary's lab. An apothecary's kit cannot be carried; it requires a cart to be moved about. It costs 500cp, but is provided for free with Arcane Background (Herbalism) upon character creation. If the kit is damaged, a new one must be purchased.

Chalk: Chalk can be either a white stick or black powder and is used by rune mages to draw runic symbols when recreating Talents. Chalk is the preferred medium of rune mages as it adheres to many surfaces and is easy to apply using broad strokes. Chalk does not infer any encumbrance and its cost is related to the character's Power Points.

Parchment: Good for delivering messages non-verbally. It costs 5cp per scroll and can hold up to 400 words.

GMs are encouraged to create entire adventures revolving around the recovery of an ancient relic that can be used by the PCs to further their campaign. When creating a unique relic, keep in mind the baseline mechanics presented herein, as each relic should be unique with a history of its own.

Ancient Relics

Weapons from ancient times have been recovered during the exploration of ancient cities and structures. Gray elf scholars have labelled these weapons as ancient relics and claim that each was designed for a specific purpose. Although it often takes weeks to unlock the true potential of a weapon, once the mystery is solved, the weapon is given back to the group or individual that discovered it (after charging a fee of 50gp) who are then free to do with it as they please. Sometimes these weapons are auctioned off to the highest bidder. Other times they're placed in the hands of the greatest warriors to use against the terrors that plague the Known Lands.

Here is a small selection of those ancient relics.

BONE CRUSHER

There are caves in the western reaches of the Merriton Mountains that appear to have housed small settlements for short periods of time. Signs of campfires are still present, in the form of ashes being buried beneath the soil, there are faded drawings on the wall, and the occasional item that has been left behind. Although there are no writings that signify who were the occupants of these caves, gray elf scholars theorize they were forward camps for warriors from the Land of the Barbarians during raids throughout the Known Lands.

The main driving factor for this belief is the high degree of similarity between the weapons and armor have been found and the equipment still worn by the barbarians. One of the most well-preserved of those weapons was an ornately decorated club now known simply as Bone Crusher.

Unlike many clubs carved from large branches and shaped into a usable weapon, Bone Crusher is finely crafted much like an artisan's sword. The handle of the club features decorative iron with a leather wrap to allow for a firm grip. The shaft consists of a finely shaped, polished, and coated piece of wood that resists cracking and splintering. Covering the top third of the wooden shaft is a decorative iron piece that has been fastened at the bottom. The iron covering has small indentations that keep the iron in-place.

Artisans in the Known Lands have been unable to recreate the iron sleeve that covers the wooden shaft, creating the damaging portion of the weapon. Additionally, no barbarian has ever been seen in recent centuries carrying a weapon such as this. Although little is understood about the purpose of creating such a weapon, it has been deemed an ancient relic from the days spoken about in the ancient texts.

BONE CRUSHER (CLUB)

Damage: Str+d4

Weight: 5

Properties: +2 damage versus skeletons, -1 damage versus non-skeleton creatures with the Undead trait.

CHAOS SWORD

Locked in a vault within the heart of Drak'tau, explorers found a black sword with a leather-wrapped hilt. The sword was taken to gray elf scholars, who discovered the sword was made from hardened obsidian that seemed impossible to break. Upon inspection, it was discovered the edges of sword were jagged, as if the sword was carved directly from a block of obsidian, much like one would whittle a stick. Although the sword was unaccountably durable, it was also incredibly light.

Every time a scholar gripped the hilt of the sword, their vision would become cloudy, while their mind was bombarded with white noise. The source of these ailments was the sword, as if a dark energy resonated from within it. Given the dark color of the sword and the psychological effect it had on the wielder, it was given the name chaos sword.

Despite the sword's positive qualities, it has a lack of uniformity. When peering down the blade, its jagged shape and edges is obvious, although this seems to have no effect on the sword's effectiveness. If the wielder can overcome the psychological noise, he finds the sword almost anticipates the wielder's moves, gliding through the air like a soaring eagle. It is as if the sword becomes a part of the wielder; an extension of prowess in combat.

The jagged edge of the obsidian blade retains its sharpness and never degrades. No matter what the wielder strikes, the sword retains its capabilities. The obsidian doesn't appear to be regular obsidian, possibly being cured in an intense fire and glazed with dark energy, preserving it indefinitely.

CHAOS SWORD (LONG SWORD)

Damage: Str+d8

Weight: 6

Properties: AP 1, Parry +2, the hilt is such that the chaos sword can only be wielded with one hand. Whenever the wielder first grips the sword's hilt, he must make a Spirit roll. Failure means he drops the sword and gains one level of Fatigue from the psychic noise that resonates from the sword. Success means he may wield the sword and gain its bonuses.

DEMON SLAYER

Little is truly known about the beings that reside within the chaos realm. Most of them have natural weapons, but those who don't have handheld weapons that mystically dissipate into nothingness, often turning into ashes first, upon being dropped or lost by their wielders. It is as if the chaos realm calls to even those weapons, demanding they return to it.

After a particularly vicious battle with an enslaver and his large force of mindless thralls and horned devils, the surviving warriors were taken aback by the sight of a sword left behind. One of the survivors seized the sword and inspected it closely, finding it to be little more than a short sword made from metal. The metal did not have the same luster as typical swords, appearing slightly darker and seemingly dull. When tested, the sword appeared to be nothing more than a typical short sword.

The warrior sheathed the new sword, discarding his broken one, and began the long journey back to civilization. After a mile or so of walking, the group came upon a lone, horned devil stalking through the woods. Since the remaining group had been heavily thinned, they became immediately concerned about another encounter with a being from the chaos realm, even if it was only one. The brave warrior unsheathed his new sword and stood tall as the horned devil drew near.

The horned devil raised a great axe into the air and swung it down towards the warrior. The warrior sidestepped to the right, spun around, and plunged the drab sword into the stomach of the beast. To the astonishment of all, the creature dropped to the ground; withering away and turning to ash. The remaining warriors approached the brave fighter and one exclaimed, "This blade is a true demon slayer!"

After 100 years, the Demon Slayer short sword has retained its capacity for cutting down demons with deadly efficiency. Many vie for the privilege of carrying such a weapon when facing a demon, but the sword is kept in a sealed vault, only to be released when another chaotic army rises. A sword such as this cannot be risked against anything less.

DEMON SLAYER (SHORT SWORD)

Damage: Str+d6

Weight: 4

Properties: AP 4 versus targets with the Demon trait. Demon Slayer is made from an unknown metal source. It acts like a cold iron sword (being able to exploit a demon's weakness) without the fragility of cold iron (no chance of breaking when a 1 is rolled on the Fighting die).

ROSEWOOD BOW

While exploring the underground city of Drak'tau, a pair of curious humans searched the depths of every building, looking for new treasures to recover. After coming upon what appeared to be a training center, the humans discovered a trapdoor covered by a large rug. Signs of the trapdoor were visible due to the rusting of its hinges, causing the rug to exhibit orange staining that could only have come from beneath.

After moving the rug and descending a flight of stairs, the humans came upon a hidden cache of weapons. Most of the weapons had deteriorated beyond the point of use or repair, but mounted proudly on the wall was a pair of finely crafted bows. Clearly made by the hands of an artisan, and stained a deep reddish-brown, the bows were magnificent to behold.

The humans removed the bows from their perch and brought them to the gray elf scholar that had accompanied expedition. The scholar claimed the bows were crafted from extremely rare wood called rosewood. Rosewood trees are much stronger than other trees, allowing the bows to be crafted for maximum tension. The glossy coating appeared to have preserved them through the ages they had been stored, and they appeared as effective as they were when Drak'tau was still inhabited.

Neither of the humans had use for the bows, so they were left in the hands of the gray elf scholar. The scholar held onto them for a short period of time for proper study until releasing them into the hands of the most capable rangers he knew of. An archery contest was called for and the top two finishers were each presented one of the rosewood bows. Upon acceptance of the bows, both rangers agreed that once they reached the age where they could no longer use the bows, they would offer them up to the most capable rangers of the next generation, being done so through another archery contest.

ROSEWOOD BOW (LONG BOW)

Range: 20/40/80

Damage: 2d6

ROF: 1

Shots: -

Weight: 5

Properties: AP 1, +2 bonus to Shooting when performing a called shot.

RUNIC STAFF

The mountains across the Known Lands have many unexplored areas. It's not unheard of to come across an ancient structure in serious need of repair. Some have become the homes of various indigenous animals and denizens of the deep, while others have become sanctuaries for only vines and thick plants.

One day, a group of warriors were called to action to search for a group of missing dwarves and halflings. After searching the land and following mysterious tracks, they came upon an ancient structure high in the mountains. The structure had a stone wall that had long since seen better days, and beyond the wall was a large complex with many different rooms, a courtyard, and a large room where benches had once been arranged, facing a dais at the head.

The purpose of the building was unknown to all, but the denizens of the deep had turned it into their home. After the brave warriors cleared out the chaotic incursion, they encountered a terrible, mutated being that looked like it had once been a dark elf. Victory was hard fought, but the warriors survived and rescued the hostages being held there. While searching through the large complex, one of them came upon an ornate staff with runic symbols engraved in the shaft.

The warriors brought the staff to a rune mage and asked if he recognized the symbols. Though he did not, he did feel the staff energy radiating from within. Knowing the power of runic symbols, the rune mage assumed these new symbols were permanently empowering the staff. However, when he attempted to recreate the symbols on his own, nothing happened.

Although perplexed by the nature of the staff, the rune mage kept it and brought the staff with wherever he went. What he found was the ability to channel his magical ability through the runic staff, creating a weapon of awesome power.

RUNIC STAFF (STAFF)

Damage: Str+d4

Weight: 8

Properties: Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands; in the hands of a rune priest (i.e. a character with the Scribing skill), the spellcaster is able to channel his abilities through the staff, gaining a +2 bonus to damage.



THE DARK ARTS

For the sake of determining magical attacks, all forms of the dark arts are considered magic, even if they don't outright appear so (such as alchemy and herbalism).

THE DARK ARTS

Magic is dangerous. Arcane signatures throughout Dhuran are faint and volatile. One must use caution extracting only the slightest amount of arcane energy to delicately weave it for the sake of creating extraordinary effects. Many see this as a reckless art form that often leads to the destruction of other people's assets. Some go as far as banning the practice of the dark arts due to the volatile nature of the arcane energy.

The utilization of Powers within *Ancient World* is done through one of the dark arts: alchemy, herbalism, runicism, and shamanism. Each one is unique in its governing mechanics, representing the difficulty in harnessing the faint, volatile arcane energy.

Arcane Background (Alchemy)

Arcane Skill: Transmutation (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 2

Allowed Powers: *barrier, blast, bolt, boost/lower trait, burst, confusion, fear, light/obscure, slumber, slow, smite, speed, summon ally*

Alchemy is the mixing of chemical ingredients before weaving a slight amount of arcane energy into the concoction for the purpose of creating by-products that can be stored and used at a later time. This includes vials of liquid, ceramic balls filled with explosive gas, combustible paste, and much more. Powers are a representation of the by-product, but must be created ahead of time and stored for later use. All properties of the Power are effectively split between preparation and use, depending on how that particular property applies.

Characters that use alchemy are called alchemists.

POWER POINTS

Because each Power has to be prepared ahead of time, Power Points are a representation of ingredients available to the character for the preparation of alchemical concoctions. These ingredients must be purchased ahead of time at a rate of 10cp per 1 Power Point. When an alchemist drops to 0 Power Points, he no longer has enough ingredients to create alchemical concoctions.

Maximum Power Points are a representation of the character's knowledge of creating alchemical by-products and the capacity of his alchemist's kit. He can purchase ingredients at any time, but only up to that maximum amount. Increasing Power Points is a representation of increasing the proper storage capacity of his alchemist's kit, allowing him to retain additional ingredients without them spoiling.

ACQUISITION

Alchemists may acquire new Powers by learning them from another alchemist, purchasing an alchemical recipe and spending time to understand it, or developing their own alchemical recipes through trial and error. When purchasing a new Power through character advancement, the alchemist should put some time into how that new Power was acquired.

PREPARATION

Alchemical Powers must be prepared in advance and then stored for later use. The method of storage is at the imagination of the player, but should correlate with how the Power is utilized. For example, if choosing the *blast* Power, an alchemical grenade housed in a ceramic ball can be created.

To prepare an alchemical Power, the alchemist must first define the number of enhancements desired for the Power, which defines the total Power Point cost for creating the alchemical concoction. If the Transmutation roll to create the concoction is successful, the resulting by-product has all those defined enhancements and cannot be altered any further. It's all or nothing!

After the desired enhancements are defined (e.g. Additional Damage, Additional Targets, etc.), the character must spend the total number of Power Points (effectively depleting his ingredient supply) and make the standard Transmutation roll. On a success, the Power Points are depleted as normal and the concoction is created. On a failure, only one Power Point is depleted and the remaining ingredients may be used again as the first attempt failed. On a critical failure (rolling a 1 on both the Transmutation die and Wild Die), the full Power Points are depleted as normal and the mixture explodes doing 2d6 damage to everyone within an area equal to the LBT. The ingredients may not be reused.

Successfully created concoctions must be stored in a belt, bag, pack, or whatever that can be carried to the alchemist's next destination.

UTILIZATION

Utilizing an alchemical concoction truly depends on the target and how it's being delivered as follows:

- Thrown alchemical concoctions have a Range of 3/6/12. When the concoction lands, its housing shatters and its effects occur.
- Throwing an alchemical concoction at an enemy requires a successful Throwing roll. Failure means the object misses the target by d4" in a random direction. Then roll a d8 to determine the direction of the missed attack whereas each result on the die moves the direction clockwise 45° starting with the direction farthest from the alchemist. Critical failure doubles that distance.
- Applying an alchemical concoction to an enemy (effectively touch Range) requires a successful Fighting roll. Failure means the alchemist missed the target, but the concoction is reusable. Critical failure means the alchemist missed the target and the concoction is ruined.
- If the target is an ally (or the alchemist himself), no roll is necessary if the target is within Short Range. Past Short Range requires a Throwing roll with the standard range increment penalties. Failure means the concoction misses the ally by d4" in a random direction, but only has a 50% chance of breaking, becoming unusable. Critical failure doubles that distance and the concoction's housing shatters.

Alchemical concoctions do not have a Range value (except *summon ally* which has a Range of hearing). Range is limited to how far the resulting by-product can be thrown. Each concoction only affects one target (unless it has an area-effect), but multiple versions of the same concoction can be created.

TRAPPINGS

Alchemy Powers are a by-product of combining different ingredients with arcane energy. Each one must then be stored for later use, carrying some type of physical trapping. The aforementioned Powers are the only ones available to alchemists. Here is a list of example trappings.

Barrier: Foam quickly bubbles out of the shattered ceramic ball, growing into a large wall and hardening as it settles.

Blast: Once this ceramic ball hits the ground and shatters, it explodes in all directions with red-hot ceramic fragments that can burn through armor.

Boost Trait: One drink from this vial invigorates the recipient, causing his muscles to swell.

Burst: Bursting this papier-mâché-like substance causes a shower of acid to burst forth, bathing all those in the way.

Confusion: The ceramic ball is thrown into the air and begins to spin and glow.

Lower Trait: As the vial shatters, a sticky substance adheres to the target, impeding his reflexes.

Obscure: A cloud of dark smoke bursts out of this vial as it impacts the ground.

Slow: The contents of the vial spill out and form a liquid and foam mixture that causes the target's feet to somewhat stick to the ground.

Slumber: A vapor cloud forms from this ceramic ball, assaulting the nostrils with a potent knock-out gas.

Smite: After spilling the contents of the vial on the weapon, the metal becomes warm to the touch and turns an odd shade of red, increasing its lethality.

Summon Ally: Shattering this ceramic ball sends out a deafening "boom" that can be heard a great distance away, calling an ally to provide aid.

Arcane Background (Herbalism)

Arcane Skill: Compounding (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 2

Allowed Powers: *blind, boost/lower trait, confusion, darksight, fear, greater healing, healing, quickness, slow, slumber, speed, succor*

Herbalism is the mixing of herbal and medicinal ingredients and then weaving a slight amount of arcane energy into the concoction to create by-products that can be stored and used at a later time. This includes ointments, pills, creams, and vials of liquid. Powers are a representation of the by-product, but must be created ahead of time and stored for later use. All properties of the Power are effectively split between preparation and use, depending on how that particular property applies.

Characters who use herbalism are called apothecaries or herbalists.

POWER POINTS

Because each Power has to be prepared ahead of time, Power Points are a representation of ingredients available to the character for the preparation of herbal concoctions. These ingredients must be purchased ahead of time at a rate of 5cp per 1 Power Point. When an apothecary drops to 0 Power Points, she no longer has enough ingredients to create herbal concoctions.

Maximum Power Points are a representation of the character's knowledge of creating herbal by-products and the capacity of her apothecary's kit. She can purchase ingredients at any time, but only up to that maximum amount. Increasing Power Points is a representation of increasing the proper storage capacity of her apothecary's kit, allowing her to retain additional ingredients without them spoiling.

ACQUISITION

Apothecaries may acquire new Powers by learning them from another apothecary, purchasing an herbal recipe and spending time to understand it, or develop their own herbal recipes through trial and error. When purchasing a new Power through character advancement, the apothecary should put some time into how that new Power was acquired.

PREPARATION

Herbalism Powers must be prepared in advance and then stored for later use. The method of storage is at the imagination of the player, but should correlate to how the Power is utilized. For example, if choosing the *slumber* Power, an herbal salve can be created and housed in some type of tube.

To prepare an herbalism Power, the apothecary must first define the number of enhancements desired for the Power, which defines the total Power Point cost for creating the herbal concoction. If the Compounding roll to create the concoction is successful, the resulting by-product has all those defined enhancements and cannot be altered further. As with alchemy, it's all or nothing!

After the desired enhancements are defined, the character must spend the total number of Power Points (effectively depleting her ingredient supply) and make the standard Compounding roll. On a success, the Power Points are depleted as normal and the concoction is created. On a failure, only one Power Point is depleted and the remaining ingredients may be used again as the first attempt failed. On a critical failure (rolling a 1 on both the Compounding die and Wild Die), the full Power Points are depleted as normal and the ingredients combine in an unexpected manner. This causes a noxious gas to be emitted within an area equal to LBT. Everyone within this area gains one level of Fatigue that recovers as normal. The ingredients may not be reused.

Alchemy and herbalism Powers with an "on a Raise" property apply when being used. The Raise comes from the Throwing or Fighting roll to throw or apply the concoction. In the case where "no roll is necessary," no Raise is possible unless a roll is attempted. In this particular case, the roll automatically succeeds, but the player is attempting to get a Raise to increase the effects of the concoction.



Herbal concoctions do not have a Range value. Range is limited to how far the resulting by-product can be thrown. Each concoction only affects one target, but multiple versions of the same concoction can be created.

Successfully created concoctions must be stored in a belt, bag, pack, or whatever that can be carried to the apothecary's next destination.

UTILIZATION

Utilizing an herbal concoction truly depends on the target and how it's being delivered as follows:

- Thrown herbal concoctions have a Range of 3/6/12. When the concoction lands, it bursts out and its effects occur.
- Throwing an herbal concoction at an enemy requires a successful Throwing roll. Failure means the object misses the target by d4" in a random direction. Then roll a d8 to determine the direction of the missed attack whereas each result on the die moves the direction clockwise 45° starting with the direction farthest from the apothecary. Critical failure doubles that distance.
- Applying an herbal concoction to an enemy (effectively touch Range) requires a successful Fighting roll. Failure means the apothecary missed the target, but the concoction is reusable. Critical failure means the apothecary missed the target and the concoction becomes degraded and unusable.
- If the target is an ally (or the apothecary herself), no roll is necessary if the target is within Short Range. Past Short Range requires a Throwing roll with the standard range increment penalties. Failure means the concoction misses the ally by d4" in a random direction, but only has a 50% chance of bursting, becoming unusable. Critical failure doubles that distance and the concoction bursts out.

TRAPPINGS

Herbalism Powers are a by-product of combining different ingredients with arcane energy. Each one must then be stored for later use, carrying some type of physical trapping. The aforementioned Powers are the only ones available to apothecaries. Here is a list of example trappings.

Boost Trait: A pill is swallowed, providing a surge of adrenaline.

Darksight: This salve is smeared on the eyes, allowing them to reduce the amount of light needed in the dark in order to see.

Fear: A small drop of this salve is smeared behind the ear, causing the mind to begin reeling in some type of psychotic attack.

Greater Healing: The arcane weave glows incredibly bright as this paste is applied to the missing limb, causing it to regrow in an incredibly painful fashion.

Healing: Herbs turned into a salve quickly cauterize a wound.

Slumber: Applying the salve to back of the head or neck forces the body to slow down and the target quickly falls to sleep.

Succor: This pill replenishes the recipient's energy.

Arcane Background (Runicism)

Arcane Skill: Scribing (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 15

Starting Powers: 2

Allowed Powers: *bolt, boost/lower trait, burst, confusion, deflection, disguise, dispel, elemental manipulation, environmental protection, fear, fly, light/obscure, pummel, smite*

Runicism is the harnessing of energy through symbols originally found in various ancient structures. The source of the energy is completely unknown, but is believed to be an extension of the same energy that comes from the chaos realm. Drawing these symbols requires perfect accuracy and a substance that allows the symbol to be drawn in broad strokes on almost any surface. The most common substance is a form of chalk as a white stick or black powder.

Characters that use runicism are called rune priests or sword mages.

POWER POINTS

The power of runicism actually lies within the symbol being drawn. Power Points are a representation of how much medium the rune priest has to use to create the symbols. This medium must be purchased ahead of time at a rate of 5cp per 1 Power Point.

Maximum Power Points are a representation of the character's knowledge of the various symbols and how much medium they can purchase at any time or use effectively. He can purchase supplies at any time, but only up to that maximum amount. Increasing Power Points is a representation of finding better materials, better vendors, or finding a way of using the medium more sparingly.

ACQUISITION

Rune priests may acquire new Powers by learning them from another rune priest, purchasing a scroll that depicts the runic symbols and spending time to understand it, or develop their own through trial and error. When purchasing a new Power through character advancement, the rune priest should put some time into how that new Power was acquired.

UTILIZATION

Utilizing runic Powers is much different than regular Power due to several limitations. This is due to the rune priest having to touch a surface on which to draw the correct runic symbol and the number of runic symbols available.

Other than *burst* and *bolt*, runic Powers are limited to Range: Self, Range: Sight, or Range: Touch. However, both *burst* and *bolt* originate from the rune priest. Powers that benefit the rune priest have Range: Self. Powers that benefit allies or are a detriment to enemies have Range: Touch. Powers that involve or potentially involve a visual component (such as *confusion*) have Range: Sight, with Sight being the distance at which the recipient can be seen.

Increasing the effects of a runic symbol is actually represented by drawing a different form of that symbol to alter its effects. This may be a combination of symbols, slight changes to a given symbol (such as three swirls instead of two), or a larger version of the symbol.

To utilize a runic Power, make the standard Scribing roll when the Power is to be utilized with the following outcomes:

- On a success, the Power works as normal and the Power Points are expended.

ANIMATE

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points:

3/skeleton

Range: Smarts

Duration: Special

Trappings: Animated skeleton bones

When cast, *animate* controls a number of mostly intact skeletal remains specified by the character when he spent his Power Points. The skeleton warriors are immediately obedient, although unable to discern difficult commands.

Skeletons are not summoned by this Power, they have to present in order for *animate* to work. The skeletons should be 90% there, allowing for a capable of skeleton to form.

With a success, the undead remain animated for 1 hour. With a Raise, they remain animated for 1d6 hours. With two raises, they remain animated for an entire day.

Use the standard skeleton entry from the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

- On a failure, the Power doesn't work, the Power Points are expended, and the medium must be cleaned off the surface in order for that surface location to be used again.
- On a critical failure (rolling a 1 on the Scribing die and Wild Die), the Power doesn't work, the Power Points are expended, and the energy explodes as the wrong runic symbol was drawn. This does 2d6 damage ignoring armor to everyone within an area equal to MBT. Additionally, that surface location is charred and may not be used again until it's thoroughly cleaned.

TRAPPINGS

Runic Powers require the proper runic symbol and the energy then emits from that symbol. Each one should exhibit this behavior with the effects originating from the symbol itself.

Bolt: This runic symbol is often drawn on the hand, projecting a small amount of energy that travels the desired distance depending on the angle of the arm to the target.

Burst: When drawn on the hand, this runic symbol projects a burning energy from the rune priest's hand toward whatever direction it's facing.

Disguise: When the correct symbol is drawn on the face, it alters its appearance.

Dispel: When drawn on the forehead, this runic symbol provides incredible willpower to allow the recipient to overcome magical attacks.

Elemental Manipulation: This runic symbol can be drawn on the hand to produce hardened sand.

Fear: When drawn behind the ear, this runic symbol assaults the target's mind, driving him insane.

Fly: This runic symbol is drawn on the recipient's boots, projecting a small amount of energy allowing that recipient to fly.

Light: When drawn on the wall, this runic symbol glows, providing light to the immediate area.

Arcane Background (Shamanism)

Arcane Skill: Invocation (Spirit)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 2

Allowed Powers: *animate, banish, blast, bolt, boost/lower trait, confusion, darksight, detect/conceal arcana, darksight, disguise, divination, farsight, fear, fly, havoc, mind reading, pummel, puppet, slumber, speak language, stun, zombie*

Shamanism is the harnessing of spirits to perform acts most are unable to perform. One cannot simply ask a spirit to perform a deed and have it completed appropriately; the spirit must be invoked properly, a process that borders on enslavement. Since spirits are generally unwilling subjects, this process becomes quite difficult and dangerous. Each Power is a representation of summoning a spirit from the spellcaster's fetish and manipulating its energy to act upon a requested command. This is a two-step process that first requires the spellcaster to enter the spirit realm and collect the spirits into his fetish. Once the spirits are collected, he can then use those trapped within his fetish to fulfill those commands.

Characters that use shamanism are called shamans or priests.

POWER POINTS

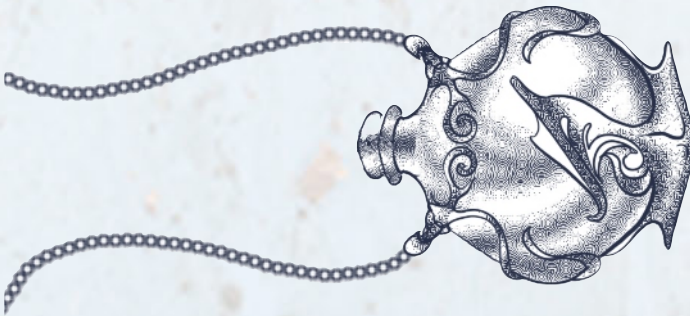
Power Points are a representation of the amount of spiritual energy contained within the shaman's fetish. This spiritual energy doesn't replenish itself and must instead come from spirits willingly or unwillingly becoming a part of the fetish. Once the shaman taps into the fetish to expend its spiritual energy, by spending Power Points and utilizing a Power, one or more spirits are freed from the fetish and sent back to the spirit realm.

Increasing Power Points is represented by acquiring a more powerful fetish or better understanding how to use the spiritual energy more efficiently.

In order to replenish the fetish, the shaman must travel to the spirit realm and acquire the spirits he needs to fill the fetish. This is done as follows:

- The shaman must first find a quiet place with no external distractions. He must then meditate, concentrating on the spirit realm.
- After 10 minutes, the shaman's spirit separates from its mortal body and enters the spirit realm.
- Once in the spirit realm, the shaman must locate spirits and get them into his fetish. This can be done in a number of ways such as fighting the spirit (using Fighting – unarmed combat only), persuading the spirit (using Persuasion), or through trickery (using Taunt).
- For each spirit encountered, the shaman must make a standard roll according to the strength of the spirit located. The strength of the spirit determines how many Power Points are replenished.
- The stronger the spirit, the more difficult it is to overcome and the greater the consequences for failing. Use the Spirit Acquisition table to determine the time required, difficulty level, and consequences for failing at each level of Power Points collected. All difficulty levels are cumulative with any Fatigue incurred.
- If the shaman should become Incapacitated, his spirit returns to his mortal body and he remains unconscious for 24 hours. All levels of Fatigue gained from acquiring spirits recover at the normal rate.
- The shaman is allowed to recover as many Power Points as desired, up to his maximum amount. He does not need to recover full Power Points, nor does he need to completely run out before attempting to recover some.

The term priest came from an ancient temple stumbled upon by a group of explorers. The temple contained a large painting depicting a man raising his hands toward the sky with large white humanoids swirling about them. This was believed to be a depiction of shamanism with an inscription beneath it that read "Priest" along with a name that was unintelligible to the explorers.



Shamans cannot die while in the spirit realm. Instead, every time they fail to acquire a spirit, they acquire Fatigue due to the encounter. This could be from combat or the spirit mentally assaulting the shaman.

SPIRIT ACQUISITION

WP	Difficulty	Time	Consequence of Failure
1	0	10 minutes	Nothing
2	-1	10 minutes	Gain one level of Fatigue
3	-2	15 minutes	Gain one level of Fatigue
4	-3	15 minutes	Gain two levels of Fatigue
5	-4	20 minutes	Gain two levels of Fatigue
6	-5	20 minutes	Gain three levels of Fatigue

ACQUISITION

Shamans may acquire new Powers by learning them from another shaman, purchasing a scroll that describes the Power and spending time to understand it, or by coaxing the spiritual energy into doing new things through trial and error. When purchasing a new Power through character advancement, the shaman should put some time into how that new Power was acquired.

UTILIZATION

Utilizing spiritual Powers is done using a standard Invocation roll. However, spirits don't just provide their services willingly. Whenever a shaman uses a Power beyond Rank: Novice, he gains Corruption Points. See below for further description.

- Novice Powers incur 0 Corruption Points.
- Seasoned Powers incur +1 Corruption Point.
- Veteran Powers incur +2 Corruption Points.
- Heroic Powers incur +3 Corruption Points.
- Legendary Powers incur +4 Corruption Points.
- On a critical failure (when rolling a 1 on the Invocation die and Wild Die), the shaman must roll on the Retaliation Table. Retaliation always occurs, even if the character recovers the roll by spending a Benny.

CORRUPTION

Corruption is an unfortunate by-product of manipulating spirits and spiritual energy. Spirits often lash out, making the shaman's mind vulnerable when pushed too far. **Example:** If the shaman wishes to turn his adversary into a puppet, he casts *puppet*. By doing so, he gains +2 Corruption Points because it's a Veteran Power.

Corruption Points represent the taint of the shaman's psyche in regards to overcoming the effects of fear and evil. These points have two detrimental effects:

1. Corruption Points serve as a negative modifier to resist a Taunt Test of Will. The more tainted the shaman's psyche becomes, the more willing he is to let anger overcome him.
2. Corruption Points serve as a positive modifier on the Retaliation Table, increasing the result of the d20 roll.

RETALIATION TABLE

d20	Result
1-10	Near Miss: The spirit's mind assault is no match for the willpower of the shaman. Although he will forever remember the spirit's attempt, it shows no long lasting effects.
11-13	Mental Fatigue: The shaman's mind becomes instantly worn down by the assault, causing him to gain one level of Fatigue.
14-16	Temporary Anxiety: The shaman has a hard time disseminating what is going on around him. The mind assault strikes terror into his psyche, causing him to gain a phobia as a Hindrance and one level of Fatigue. This phobia lasts for 72 hours.
17-18	Overwhelming Panic: The spirit is able to cause the shaman to panic, experiencing a fear he's never experienced before. He incurs two levels of Fatigue, spends the next combat round attempting to flee, and gains a phobia as a Hindrance. This phobia lasts for 2 weeks.
19-20	Psychosis: The spirit's mind attack is too much for the shaman to handle. He incurs two levels of Fatigue, spends every combat round fleeing from the encounter, and gains a phobia as a Hindrance. This phobia is permanent.
21-22	Heart Attack: The shaman's body cannot handle the mental assault, causing his heart to stop. He starts dying and must make a Vigor (-2) roll. On a success, he stabilizes but is Incapacitated for 48 hours. On a Failure, he dies in 1d6+6 Combat Rounds. He may be healed, but the standard penalty applies and he is still unconscious.
23-24	Swift Death: The shaman's mind is overwhelmed by the spirit realm and can't handle the assault. He dies in 1d6+1 rounds and cannot be saved.
25-26	Undeath: The shaman becomes a beacon to the spirit realm and his soul is devoured, leaving an empty shell to be used like a puppet by the spirits he commanded. He immediately rises as a zombie, considered to be an Extra under the control of the spirit realm, attacking his allies.
27-28	Reanimation: The shaman's mind shatters under the pressure of the spirit realm as his soul is replaced by an enslaved spirit. He immediately becomes an undead version of himself, gaining the Undead trait and considered to be an Extra, retaining all Attributes, Skills, and equipment and attacks his allies.
29-30	Possession: The shaman's body cracks open and light from the spirit realm spills out as his soul is instead enslaved. He immediately becomes an undead Wild Card, gaining the Undead trait and considered to be a full NPC, retaining all Attributes, Skills, and equipment and attacks his allies.
31+	Demonic Possession: The shaman's soul glows fire red within the spirit realm, grabbing the attention of a demon from the chaos realm. His body serves as a vessel into the realm of the living as the demon breaks through the fabric. He immediately becomes a darkspawn Wild Card, gaining all applicable traits, but retaining all equipment and attacks his allies.

When a shaman gains a phobia due to rolling on the Retaliation Table, it should be related to circumstances that surround him when the phobia is incurred. This ties in the fear he now has to events taking place when it occurred. **Example:** The shaman is struck down while in a very dark cave. He incurs nyctophobia – a fear of darkness. Or maybe the shaman was attempting to overcome a massive fire. He incurs pyrophobia – a fear of fire.

There are many different beings within the spirit realm. When manifesting a Power, the shaman could call upon a bestial spirit instead of a humanoid one to create the extraordinary effect. For instance, he could call upon the spirit of an eagle to gain the ability to fly. Or maybe he consumes the spiritual energy of a cat, gaining *darksight*.

TRAPPINGS

Spiritual Powers are a manipulation of spirits and spiritual energy, projecting it towards the target. Each one should exhibit this or similar behavior with the outcome of the Power.

Animate: White energy extends from the shaman's fetish and wraps around a set of skeletal remains, turning it into a fighting skeleton.

Blast: The spiritual energy bursts out of the fetish and lands with an explosion of radiating light and heat.

Conceal Arcana: Energy radiates from the fetish, blurring the air so that the colors run into each other and hide the object in plain sight.

Confusion: A spirit flies out of the fetish, completely distracting the target from what he was doing.

Detect Arcana: Ethereal hands extend from the fetish to search the surrounding environment.

Disguise: A spirit from the fetish melds with the shaman's face, altering its appearance and allowing him to look completely different.

Fear: A spirit changes shape into a hideous demon, burning the target's psyche, driving him insane.

Light: A spirit dances in the air, glowing brightly to light the way.

Mind Reading: Ethereal tendrils reach out and caress the target's mind, reading everything it can.

Pummel: Ethereal energy radiates from the fetish, shooting out toward the target in the hopes of knocking it down.

Puppet: An ethereal energy washes over the target, silencing his soul and taking over his body like a puppet.

Zombie: A spirit flies out of the fetish, searching for the recently deceased. It enters the body and raises, allowing it to fight once again.







GUIDE TO THE KNOWN LANDS

GUIDE TO THE KNOWN LANDS

Dhuran is clearly a large planet. Gray elf scholars don't know how big it is, but they have formed many theories that the Known Lands is but a small part of the larger Dhuran. The problem is no one knows anything outside of the Known Lands and the lands immediately next to it.

Scholars have spent countless hours hypothesizing on what else is in Dhuran. Brief expeditions have found that the Inner Sea stretches a vast distance, leading to the two horns that form the border of the Blue Gulf. There is clearly much more water beyond the two horns and land can be seen in the distance, but pirates roam the waters and it's too dangerous to go any farther.

From the jungles along the Outer Sea, the land stretches to the horizon on the west, but none have traveled to it. The area is infested with dangerous creatures and humanoid beings; traveling further would mean certain death.

The Land of the Pharaohs and the Land of the Barbarians certainly must be large enough to house their respective populations and definitely stretch past what can be seen from the mountains. Venturing into those lands will almost certainly end in one's demise, although traders have been known to do it regularly.

There is much to be learned about the territories outside of the Known Lands, but the current blight that has infected Dhuran makes it all but impossible to explore. For now, the civilized people are forced to contend solely with living in the Known Lands and defending themselves from anything that invades from abroad.

The Great Seas

There are two great seas that encapsulate the Known Lands: the Inner Sea and the Outer Sea.

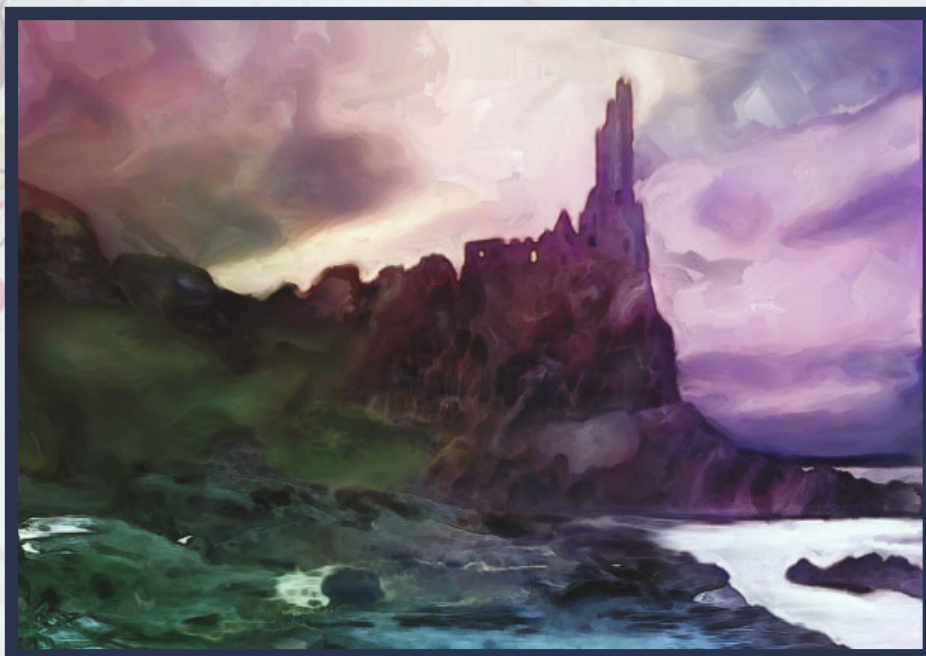
INNER SEA

The Inner Sea comprises the large body of water that rests along the northern coast of the Known Lands. It appears to be two separate bodies of water connected by the coral reef laden strait that exists between the two horns that protrude into the Blue Gulf. The Blue Gulf is the portion of the Inner Sea that forms the Known Lands' northern coastline. Past the two horns, the water is simply referred to as the Inner Sea and no one has ventured far enough to see what else is out there.

Besides offering easy trade routes to port cities along the northern shores, the Inner Sea is also home to innumerable pirates. The worst pirates make their home along the eastern and northeastern shores of the Blue Gulf while the lesser threats, such as the seadogs, make their home along the southeastern and southwestern shores.

The water of the Inner Sea is quite calm except during a storm. Sometimes it's also called the Peaceful Waters, as opposed to the Restless Waters of the Outer Sea. During storms, the waves crash violently along the coastline of the Known Lands. Gray elf scholars claim the worst of the waves hit the Known Lands due to the storms always coming from the west and northwest. This has given rise to the superstition that storms are formed by the barbarians as a means of attacking the Known Lands. Gray elf scholars give no merit to these claims and state they are nothing more than silly folklore. They claim it is impossible to control the weather.

The coasts of the Inner Sea are a mixture of rocky outcroppings and sandy beaches. The rocky outcroppings form when the mountains meet the sea, while the



sandy beaches from when the forests separate the mountains and the sea. The southern shores of the Blue Gulf (which form the northern coastline of the Known Lands) are mostly sandy, while the rocky outcroppings begin along the southeastern and the southwestern edges. These outcroppings create large sea caves that house the lesser pirates of the Inner Sea.

The first thousand feet or so from the coastline is a bright vivid blue with very clear water. After the first thousand feet, the sea bottom drops off and the water appears darker. A great number of marine life call the Inner Sea home, and only a handful of them are dangerous to divers. None are considered a threat to ships; that is solely the purview of the pirates that come from across the Blue Gulf.

Several mountain rivers snake down from the Belmead and Merriton Mountains. Most of them end at the Blue Gulf where the land is partially fed by the tide, forming salt marshes that can be farmed for hay. One particularly large river, the Bygrass River, flows from the Merriton Mountains to form the Bygrass Marsh where the land turns into swampland. The Bygrass River ends at a large tidal estuary that connects to the Inner Sea.

The climate along the Inner Sea coastline is humid subtropical, which keeps the coastline mild in winter and moderate, albeit humid, in summer. The lands are caught between the weather influence of the Inner Sea and the colder weather patterns that come from the mountains. Where the forests meet the sandy beaches, the climate is more influenced by the Inner Sea. Where the mountains meet the rocky outcroppings, the climate is more influenced by the mountains. The Bygrass Marsh, by contrast, is much warmer with oppressive humidity in the summer.

The southern shores of the Blue Gulf stretch for 500 miles with Stanton at its edge, meeting the southeastern shores. However, Linnor is the western-most city of the Known Lands, residing 200 miles from where the southwestern shores begin. This marker is where the Bygrass Marsh ends and the Land of the Barbarians begins.

OUTER SEA

The Outer Sea comprises the seemingly never-ending body of water that sits along the southern coast of the Known Lands. Besides the coastlines to the west and east, no other land formations are discernable. Few ever venture past the Outer Sea coastline and those that do typically end up the victims of deadly creature attacks. Although it's unknown what creatures dwell in the Outer Sea, they prevent anyone from traveling its waters.

The Outer Sea offers little to the Known Lands other than fish. It's not used for trade and its rocky shoreline makes it hazardous to traverse. There are many points where underwater rocks are so high that they scrape boats and can rip holes in their hulls. When this discovery was made, sailing even near to the coastline was abandoned.

The water of the Outer Sea is a savage place with large waves crashing along the rocky outcroppings and sweltering heat where it nears the jungles. The lands southwest of the Known Lands are even worse due to active volcanoes that spew ash that collects on the water and washes ashore near the Green Lake. Gray elf scholars hypothesize that much of the water is acidic, but those who've entered the water have never complained of burning on their skin.

The coastal areas of the Outer Sea are a mixture of rocky outcroppings, sandy beaches, and volcanic soil. The rocky outcroppings form when the mountains meet the sea, while the sandy beaches occur where the rainforest meets the sea, and the volcanic soil comes from the regular lava flow. Most of the coastline southwest of the Known Lands is a mixture of rocky outcroppings and lava soil. The rainforest's sandy beaches are on the edges of the southern coastline, divided by part of the Merriton Mountains. There is a band of rocky outcroppings where the Merriton Mountains meet the Outer Sea, but this is a much smaller region than the rainforest beaches. Unlike along the Inner Sea, these rocky outcroppings are solid, jagged rocks that rise into large cliff faces, preventing the water from boring caves into the rock face.

The sea bottom drops off much more quickly than the Inner Sea, and the waves are considerably larger. The sandy beaches embrace a much larger population of marine life that spends part of their day on or near the beach along with the animals from the rainforest that feast on the sunning marine life. The harlocks use the beaches as hunting grounds for food.

The climate along the Outer Sea coastline is a mixture of tropical monsoon and tropical rainforest. The monsoon winds have a slight effect as they come across the volcanic peninsula, but otherwise the area leans toward tropical rainforest with continuously warm temperatures and lots of rain. The area relatively lacks a change of seasons, although the winter months are much more effected by the monsoon winds than the rest of the year. The winds generally come from the east and move up and over the mountains, moving north and northeast, but when the monsoon winds change direction, they come from the west over the volcanic peninsula. Gray elf scholars call these the volcanic winds as observed from the Merriton Mountains, where the majority of their climate survey of the region is performed.

The northern shoreline of the Outer Sea is about twice as long as the southern shoreline of the Inner Sea. However, no one has been able to measure it, as the Land of the Pharaohs is a dangerous place and not welcoming to visitors. The northern shoreline ends just past Green Lake where the volcanic peninsula juts out from the Known Lands.

Calendar

Gray elf scholars spent nearly five years creating a calendar to better observe planting and harvesting times. This was a request from farmers to maximize their crop yields. This is what they created:

- 1 hour has always been 60 minutes, and it takes roughly 12 hours for high tide to reappear. Given the cycles of day and night, it was deemed that each day would be 24 hours long.
- It takes 400 days for the cosmic bodies to realign. This was decided to be the length of 1 year.
- The year was quartered into 100 days per season.
- Each season was then divided into 3 months with the first day of the season marking the hearkening of the season. Thus, the season would be 99 days long plus 1 Calling Day. These 99 days were then divided evenly into 33 days, forming 1 month.
- Each month is divided into 3 weeks of 11 days each. There are 9 days of working and 2 days of rest. Each week begins with a day of rest with day six being the second day of rest.
- The days of the week are, in order from one to eleven: Rèsjou [REZ-zhew], Dezjou [DEZ-zhew], Travjou [TRAV-zhew], Navjou [NAHV-zhew], Inyonjou [EN-yun-zhew], Segonnjou [sə-GOHN-zhew], Ma-chejou [mah-SHAY-zhew], Komèsjou [koh-MAY-zhew], Chevaljou [she-VAHL-zhew], Wajou [WAH-zhew], Lòjou [LOH-zhew]

FRÈTSEZON

Frètsezon [fret-SAY-zahn] is the cold season. The Frètsezon Calling Day marks the beginning of the new year and the day with the least amount of light in the Known Lands. The last of the indigenous animals begin their cycle of hibernation on this Calling Day and the cold predators shed the last of their Grandisezon fur. The cold season is not that cold within the Known Lands, but the heaviest snow falls amongst the mountains occur during this time and volcanic activity drops to nearly nothing.

NOUVOMWA

Nouvomwa [noo-VOH-mwah] is the first month of Frètsezon, marking the new year. It is a time of celebration when the harvests have been plentiful, and a time of conservation when the harvests have been lacking. Rèsjou, Nouvomwa 1 also marks the beginning of the new political year where the nobles vie for social and political power within the urban centers year after year.

FREDIMWA

Fredimwa [fray-DEE-mwah] is the coldest month of Frètsezon. Temperatures sometimes dip below zero, but otherwise most of the Known Lands remain above zero, typically hovering around freezing. Caches of wood built-up during Rekòtsezon are opened up with increased prices, sometimes doubling earlier prices before.

FONNMWA

Fonnmwa [FAHN-mwah] is the thawing month of Frètsezon when what little ice on lakes and ponds melts away and the ground dirt begins to loosen in anticipation of the sowing season. Supplies are typically plentiful during Fonnmwa in preparation for the sowing season before any harvesting can begin.

SIMENSEZON

Simensezon [see-MEN-SAY-zahn] is the sowing season. The Simensezon Calling Day marks the beginning of cultivation when the fields are tilled to prep them for sowing. No cultivation is actually done on the Calling Day, but supplies are purchased and beasts of burden are prepped for the work to come. Sowing season is also when trees and bushes begin showing signs of their first buds that will grow into fruit.

PLANTEMWA

Plantemwa [PLAHNT-ay-mwah] is the first month of Simensezon. Temperatures become much more comfortable and the ground finishes thawing. All farms are tilled and sowed and all orchards are prepped for the growing season.

LAPLIMWA

Laplimwa [LAP-lee-mwah] is the rainy month of Simensezon. The farms and orchards are fully quenched as the rivers brim with rainwater combined with mountain runoff. Swamplands fill up again and all water reserves are replenished.

ÈRBMWA

Èrbmwa [ERRB-mwah] is the budding and greening season where plants begin to show signs of life after receiving ample rain. The grass and trees complete their transformation to bright green and the Known Lands celebrate the coming of Grandisezon when the temperatures are the warmest.

GRANDISEZON

Grandisezon [GRAHN-dee-SAY-zahn] is the growing season. The Grandisezon Calling Day marks the end of cultivation when all fields should be planted and all orchards should be cleaned up. It is the day with the most light during the year where a grand celebration occurs to honor the workers during the sowing season. Grandisezon is a bit of a misnomer as some plants are also harvested during Chomwa and Sèkmwa.

CHOMWA

Chomwa [CHOH-mwah] is the first month of Grandisezon. Temperatures become warm and plants show healthy signs of growth. Rain is off and on during this time with steady rainfalls that last several hours, typically no more though. The last of the snow below the mountain frost line melts with most rivers hitting their peak depth at this time.

SÈKMWA

Sèkmwa [SAYK-mwah] is the dry month where little rain falls. This rarely concerns the citizens of the Known Lands though as their water reserves are typically full and well rationed. In fact, if it wasn't for the dry month, the water reserves and the rivers would probably flood. Sèkmwa is also punctuated by volcanic activity, as lava flows are a common sight throughout the month. Some gray elf scholars believe the volcanic activity keeps the air dry during the month, producing the dry month.

IMIDMWA

Imidmwa [I-meed-mwah] is the hot, humid month where the heat from Sèkmwa meets the steady rains of Grandisezon. It also marks the transition from Grandisezon as plants harvested during the growing season are done before Imidmwa and those harvested during the harvesting season are done after Imidmwa. Diseases often plague the Known Lands during Imidmwa, with outbreaks being most likely during this time. Disease-bearing bugs, rats, and other pests reach their peak in population, before large swaths of them die out during the cold season.

REKÒTSEZON

Rekòtsezon [RAY-koht-SAY-zah] is the harvesting season, although some harvesting is actually done during Grandisezon. The Rekòtsezon Calling Day marks the day when the first sowed fields are ready for harvesting. It is a day of preparation as the upcoming days will be filled with hard work. Rekòtsezon is also a month of great bounty and feasts as the major hunting season occurs, due to migration patterns, alongside the harvesting of the crops.

TRAVAYMWA

Travaymwa [TRAH-veye-mwah] is the first month of Rekòtsezon. It is considered the month of hard labor when all civilizations became incredibly busy harvesting, processing, and storing what the farmers reap. It is also the month in which the indigenous animals begin their migration to either warmer areas or places of hibernation. The meat acquired during the big hunts must also be processed and properly stored. Although people hunt all year long, Travaymwa presents an optimal time to gather enough meat to make it through the cold season.

GERIMWA

Germwa [GARR-ee-mwah] is the month of cleansing, when all food must be fully processed for storage and all houses must be prepped for the colder weather. Most hunters turn to lumbering during these times to gather enough wood to last through the cold season to avoid having to gather it again when the temperatures drop. Although temperatures don't change much during the cold season, dangerous creatures roam the woods during these times, making lumbering risky.

REPOMWA

Repomwa [rə-POH-mwah] is called the month of rest as everyone finishes their duties during the harvesting season. However, it should be called the month of turmoil as it's also the most dangerous month for living in the Known Lands. Many vicious predators stalk the land searching for the last of the migrating and hibernating animals. These creatures are often drawn to the various civilizations, often attacking them to get at the food inside. City guards are on full-time watch with twice their normal force to ensure no creatures get past the city's defenses. Unfortunately, they often do, causing massive panic in the streets. Although these creatures always pose a threat to civilization, they are the most active and hunt much closer to the various civilizations during Repomwa.

Dark Elven Cities

Dark elves build their cities in hilly areas where the bedrock is extremely thick. Cave entrances are built in the side of one or more hills and vast caverns are excavated to construct the entirety of the city underground. Sometimes these cities are built using preexisting caves and caverns, especially those with underground



rivers. The largest city was built in a huge cavern where the ceiling reaches upwards of 100ft from the floor.

There are only three dark elven cities: Itha'qua, Trafeldon, and Fel'qor. All three are located in the foothills of the Merriton Mountains, between the eastern and western peaks where the elevation is much higher. Gray elf scholars often argue that the foothills should mark the territory between two separate mountain ranges, but for now the entire range remains as the Merriton Mountains. This area has a hot summer continental climate where the temperature during the warmest months is greater than 70°F and the temperature during the coldest months averages below -5°F. The forest is thick, although not nearly as thick as the Winterbrush Forest.

ITHA'QUA

Itha'qua is the westernmost occupied city in the Known Lands. It is built inside a 50ft high cavern with many lesser caverns radiating outward from the center. Two rivers flow around the fortified walls of the urban center and another river flows around the surrounding cavern abodes.

Miles and miles of bridges connect the scattered cavern abodes to each other. Four bridges connect the urban center. This bridge system serves as the main lifeline for those within the cavern abodes as the marketplace is located within the urban center.

Only two of the web-like caves in the area reach the surface. One is large and used by merchants while the other is small and used by soldiers. The smaller entrance is hidden within the nearby woods while the large one is set inside a rocky outcropping.

The Empress All'yesh rules in a fairly strict manner with an urban center controlled by a cadre of ten warlords, who often feud over control of the people. Itha'qua has the largest unified dark elf army, although no one has yet tested its might. Unfortunately, they lack organization and discipline; the warlords spend too much time vying for control and not enough time training their soldiers.

TRAFELDON

Trafeldon is the smallest dark elven city and considered the weakest by those in Itha'qua. It was carved beneath the foothills with miles of tunnels required to reach the nearest source of usable fresh water. Two warlords and two high priestesses live with Empress Dereleas in a small fortress, but most of the city's activity occurs within the tunnels. Instead of building housing that surrounds the fortress, the dark elves of Trafeldon built the housing in the tunnels, to make better use of the space.

This method of city design has produced a small population that extends deep into the underground. While they are considered the smallest dark elven city in terms of population, the geographic area is larger than in any other city. However, the size of their population and the power of their warlords is what Trafeldon is constantly judged on.

The city's long reaching tunnels traverse a number of underground environments including rivers, springs, several small sets of caves, and a lake. Other than the rivers, these additional areas have barely been explored as many fear what may lie within.

FEL'QOR

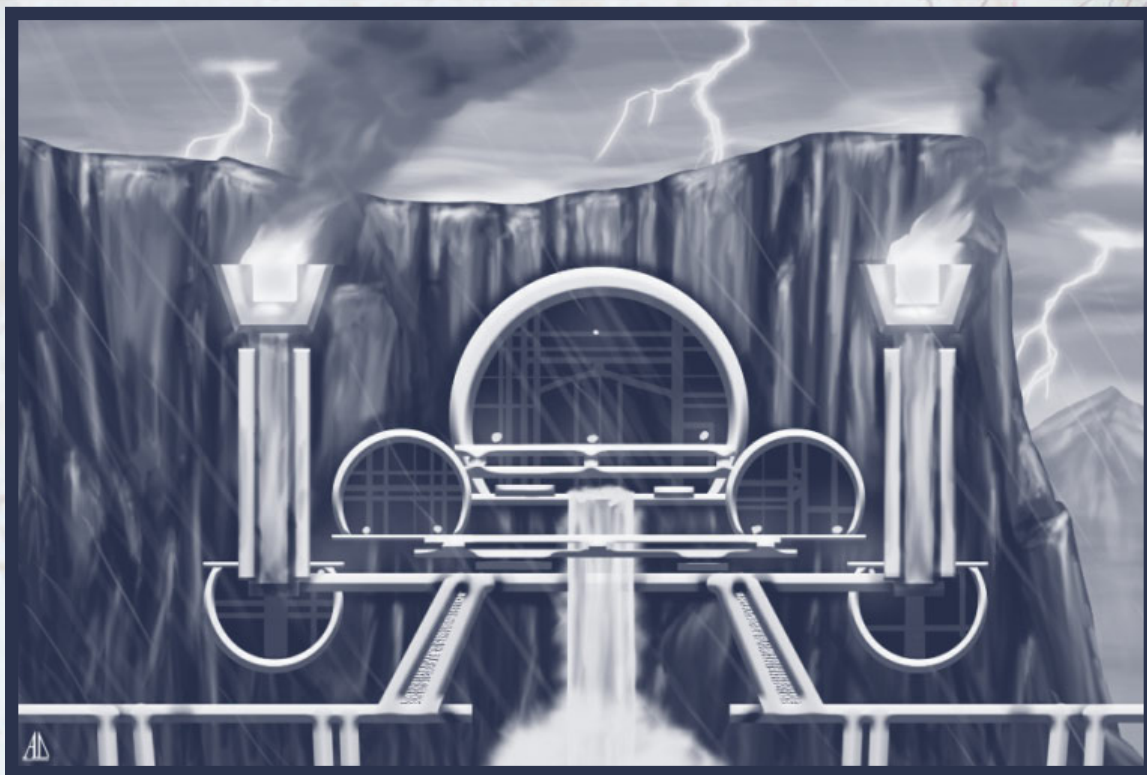
Fel'qor is the best organized dark elven city and the closest in grandeur to the dwarven kingdoms. The city lies in the center of a now mostly dried-up lake in which Empress Huairia's fortress reaches 80ft, nearing the ceiling. A slow river runs lazily through the cavern, meeting and exiting what remains of the underground lake (now little more than a large pool).

Surrounding the fortress are many cavern abodes with typical bridges connecting them, though none of them connect to the fortress, and a market and soldier training encampment built around the shores of the former lake. The five warlords of Fel'qor run their individual soldier encampments in the strictest of manners, resulting in highly trained and disciplined soldiers. It is said that the only dark elf army able to withstand the might of other armies in Dhuran are the squads of the Fel'qor warlords. If their petty squabbles could be put aside and the squads were united into a single army, they would be unstoppable.

Dwarven Kingdoms

Dwarves build their kingdoms inside the mountains where large cliffs exist. The cliff is hollowed out from its outward facing, allowing the kingdom to look out at the land below it while the bulk of the kingdom is hidden inside the mountain. Large walkways are built on the cliff face to allow the dwarves to travel to and from the land below, providing limited access to the kingdom. Inside the mountain, a lot of effort is done to reinforce the structures to prevent cave-ins.

There are only three dwarven kingdoms: Kamein, Murer, and Guriton. All three are located in the easternmost peaks of the Merriton Mountains, overlooking the northern forests that blend into the Winterbrush Forest. The areas surrounding the peaks of the mountains are considered semi-arid, continental where the warm season ranges from warm to hot and the cold season ranges from mild to cold. The climate in the valleys throughout this region, where necessary farming is done, is considered hemiboreal with a similar cold season, but a longer warm season. There is more rainfall in the valleys.



KAMEIN

Kamein is located near the dark elven city of Fel'gor. It is built into the north-western extremes of the easternmost peaks of the Merriton Mountains, and it was designed as a powerful keep to protect the mountains behind it. King Nalias has expended much effort to make his warriors the best in the dwarven lands through rigorous training and only the best training grounds. A one-mile square area just outside Kamein is reserved for warrior training.

Kamein is constructed in the traditional dwarven kingdom manner. It exhibits all the typical levels and design, but has added fortification from spires at its edges. These spires serve as keeps, when necessary, and as a menacing landmark when times are peaceful. Lately it has been used as a guard outpost for monitoring bestial activity as Kamein soldiers have come under attack during recent patrols.

MURER

Murer is located east of Kamein where the peaks form something of a "V" shape. The cliff face is shaped like a broad arrow pointing south with Murer straddling both sides. King Arak and the gentry claim most of the center, while caste levels diminish the farther one travels from the center. This is different from the traditional level construction of dwarven kingdoms in that the levels are not built on top of each other, but rather next to each other. Each of the original dwarven kings wanted to represent his kingdom like arms stretched wide, encompassing everyone in the kingdom.

Like traditional dwarven kingdoms, the farther one is from the royal homes, the less luxurious the accommodations are. As such, the point of the arrow-shaped kingdom is decorated in the most lavish way while those on the outskirts are hardly noticeable.

Murer is a kingdom more concerned with luxuries and wealth than military force. It is the weakest of all racial settlements (even compared to the halflings) and relies heavily on mercenaries to keep it safe. Instead of training their own soldiers, the wealthy of Murer prefer to buy them.

GURITON

Like Kamein, Guriton is a traditional dwarven kingdom in its design and construction. King Thoric prefers to keep his kingdom as a stark reflection of dwarven culture, but lacks the wealth to make it as powerful as Kamein. Guriton has military strength, but without aid, it would most likely fall quickly to a siege from any other army. The people of Guriton keep close ties to the halflings and humans for protection and offer their allies assistance, if needed.

Guriton's strength comes from trade. It is said the greatest artisans live there, as their artisans forge the highest quality weapons and armor. While they don't have the manpower to create their own army, they are more than able to outfit those who can, even the Kamein kingdom. To bolster this aspect, Guriton resides next to the Known Land's largest deposit of iron ore.

Gray Elven Towns

Gray elves build their towns along the coastline of the Inner Sea. Although many of them come from one of the human urban centers, the hustle and bustle of city life doesn't appeal to them. Preferring the scholarly life where research can be done in relative quietness, gray elves established these much smaller towns along the same coastline as the humans for those seeking a life away from the big cities. Since they don't have established armies or trade routes, these new towns had to be built with easy access to the larger urban centers, relying on the humans for protection and basic necessities. This easy access is provided by numerous ships traveling across the Inner Sea.

There are only two gray elf towns: Linnor and Halton, although additional towns are being planned. Both are located along the Inner Sea coastline with a humid subtropical climate. Due to their distance from the mountain ranges, Linnor has hotter summers than Halton. Halton is located much closer to the Belmead Mountains than Linnor is to the Merriton Mountains. Both experience mild winters with the coldest temperatures dipping just below freezing, but not for very long. The Inner Sea keeps the summer months relatively consistent with and average around 80-90°F.

LINNOR

Linnor is the westernmost gray elven town in the Known Lands. It resides on the coastline of the Inner Sea, is larger than Halton, but is the quieter of the two. The people of Linnor, mostly gray elves and humans, prefer a more laid-back atmosphere and avoid the tropes of urban life. Buildings are spaced relatively far apart and the nobles all live in estates that resemble large houses instead of small castles.

Linnor is an inviting town due to its welcoming culture. As long as an individual is willing to live the quiet, simple life of Linnor, they are greeted with open arms and treated as an equal. As such, Linnor has the highest population of gray elves and contains the gray elf council which plans the settlement of new gray elven towns. Although predominantly a gray elf and human town, Linnor serves as home to several dark elves, dwarves, and halflings.

HALTON

Halton is the easternmost gray elf town in the Known Lands, and the easternmost civilization along the Inner Sea. It's a small community nearing the Green Horn and primarily serves as a commonplace for the surrounding farmlands. The people of Halton prefer the serenity of their small town and often make sure outsiders understand that. Halton has been known to be the least open to non-gray elves and most citizens detest dark elves.

Some say Halton is filled with bigots and extremists who find ways to unravel ancient beliefs from what they find in unearthed tomes. The town has become increasingly dutiful; although few outsiders understand what duties they're compliant to. Most of the townsfolk have become outcasts in the eyes of the greater Known Lands due to these actions and beliefs: a choice that suits the townsfolk just fine. Those who are accepted into Halton as welcomed guests, or future townsfolk, are rarely interested in what the rest of the Known Lands believe; they are also rarely interested in making friends with non-gray elven races.

Rumors abound of adventurers traveling to Halton and never returning. None of these rumors have been confirmed, although a large group of halfling slaves were said to have been purchased by the town for use on its farms. No one outside of Halton has ever seen a halfling in or near there, but then the town seems to be shrouded with many secrets.

Halfling Villages

Halflings build their villages within large tree groves scattered across the High Plains. These tree groves sprout up where the low hills are while the open plain is mostly flat with only sporadic savannas. The High Plains consists mostly of very tall grass which halflings are able to capitalize on due to their size. Like many predators amongst the tall grass, they can move about without their heads being visible. This creates a natural watch system as it's easy to spot when taller humanoid enter the area.

There are only three halfling villages: Miren, Rauhua, and Pradar. Each one is tightly packed into a tree grove with a large marketplace in the center for gathering and trading. Traders from abroad regularly come to the marketplace to do business. Surrounding the marketplace are hundreds of hovels, placed close together to form a natural defense against creatures that enter the tree grove. There are no palisades that bar entry into the tree grove, but rows of thorny bushes usually make a good deterrent.

The High Plains are considered semi-arid, continental where the warm season ranges from warm to hot and the cold season ranges from mild to cold. This is very similar to the temperatures in the mountain valleys, but with more variability due to the openness of the plains.



MIREN

Miren is the closest halfling village to the Merriton Mountains, where the dwarves dwell, residing at the confluence of the foothills and the prairie. Directly west of the village is a dense forest while to the east rolling hills run end at the High Plains proper.

When looking at halfling villages, there's little to distinguish one from another. Miren mirrors the simplistic features of the other villages in its use of simple construction and basic amenities. It is built near a fresh water supply and the lands surrounding the village are filled with crops, tended to by the village folk, and long stretches of fields with fruit for foraging. The nearby foothills serve as hunting grounds for wild game.

RAUHUA

Rauhua is the centermost of the three halfling villages, residing amongst the High Plains and surrounded by several miles of prairie. Farming is commonplace as is foraging, but hunting is much more difficult on the prairie. Many Rauhua halflings travel miles on foot tracking down migrant herds.

Meat is not as abundant as it is in Miren or Pradar. Rauhua is better known for the great stands of wild bushes growing nearby, providing fruit that can be traded to other halfling villages and human traders. The people of Rauhua planted an orchard on the north side of the village for additional fruit and protection from lands north of the High Plains.

PRADAR

Pradar is the easternmost halfling village. It atop where the High Plains meet the foothills of the Belmead Mountains. Lands east of Pradar are rarely traveled and barely explored as the village gets the majority of its food from lands to the south and southeast. These lands are abundant in fruit for foraging and the soil is rich for crops. Large herds of migrating animals spend time in the lands between Pradar and Vedrig Lake, a very large lake to the southeast of Pradar.

Pradar is known for its hunters. They are taught from a very young age to track and hunt the wild game that cluster around Vedrig Lake. They are masters at using the tall prairie grass to their advantage, using the sporadic savannas as cover for tracking the animals.

Human Cities

Humans build large urban centers along the coastline of the Inner Sea to allow for sea trade. These large cities are large not only to house the high population, mostly humans, but they are also a grandiose display of noble wealth and power. Additionally, humans are the most accepting of all races, often inviting non-humans to call one of these urban centers home; as long as they have the money for it.

There are five predominantly human urban centers: River's Edge, Storm Harbor, Stanton, Capetown, and Jeffers City. Each one is unique while also the other cities through standard features in each. The cities are all loosely broken down into districts with the poor districts being the most densely populated. A noble family's estate often defines a district, partially to delineate political power and partially to "mark their territory," much like a wolf peeing on a tree in the forest. There is a constant ebb and flow of political and social power amongst the noble houses, with the most powerful one typically taking over the mayor's seat.

All five human cities are located on the coastline of the Inner Sea. This area has a humid subtropical climate with cities in the east being cooler in the winter due to being in closer to the Belmead Mountains. The Inner Sea tends to regulate temperatures along the Known Lands northern coastline.

The districts within each city can be as different from each other as day and night. Some districts are riddled with crime and vice due to unfavorable living conditions, cheap rent, poorly paid residents, or just a general lack of care. Some districts are upstanding models of law and order, due to a desire to live worry-free. Some districts are wealthy with the decorated walkways and cobblestone roads. Each city is a societal melting pot with some being more drastic than others.



RIVER'S EDGE

River's Edge is the second largest human city and is widely thought to be the best organized. It was built atop what gray elf scholars believe to be ruins of an ancient city. The ancient city (whose name is unknown) had little remaining of it, most likely after years of neglect. Instead of building around what little remained, the humans burned and pilfered everything, then planned a 'proper city' that all could be proud of. This new city was designed with navigation and convenience in mind, producing a grid-like network of main roads and two main thoroughfares that allow for quick navigation to the edges of the city. These thoroughfares are designed to allow quick and easy deployment of soldiers to the bastions on the southeast and southwest corners of the city during battle.

River's Edge is not actually built on the edge of the river, but rather near to it. The Snake River that comes down from the mountains runs along the eastern edges of the city and is used as a natural defense against attacks. The eastern end was built 100ft from the banks of the river to allow for the gathering of troops should the need arise. It also allows for entry via the bridges to be well-guarded before entering the city proper.

STORM HARBOR

Storm Harbor is the densest, wealthiest, and possibly most chaotic of the human cities. It stands on the southern edges of Storm Bay and is the de facto capital of power. All the wealthiest and most influential people of the Known Lands live in Storm Harbor, each attempting to outdo each other with more and more lavish abodes. Politics run deep, and one would be hard-pressed to spend an entire day there without witnessing some type of social conflict.

Storm Harbor is also a city of extremes. Wealthy nobles and merchants have made their homes lavish and excessive while most residents live in 2- or 3-story buildings. The poor district is quite large, with crime and vice being the worst in all human centers. There is a gray elf saying that "Storm Harbor is the city of thieves. It may be a thief picking your pocket, a merchant selling you goods you don't need, or a noble loosening your coin purse."

Storm Harbor is named for the violent reaction of the bay during the worst storms. Due to the v-like shape of the land, storm season waves are amplified in the southern reaches of the bay. Storm Harbor has defended itself from the sea by building large retaining walls along the coastline where the water meets the city, while short bluffs provide additional protection. The docks are built on the east side of the city, where Storm Lake sits. A set of locks enables ships to move from Storm Bay to Storm Lake, providing access to and from the Inner Sea.

STANTON

Stanton is the youngest human town, situated just north of Storm Lake and northeast of Storm Harbor. It was established as a refuge for Storm Harbor residents who no longer wished to deal with the crime and politics of the large city. It was also designed to provide living conditions that avoided the claustrophobic feeling of Storm Harbor's crowded streets.

Stanton has now become a refuge for those who couldn't make it in Storm Harbor. Some nobles and merchants attempt to drive out the poor residents either out of the city or onto the streets as they tear down community housing to build new homes for the middle and upper class. Stanton thus has a very poor section of town filled with small shacks and community housing for the downtrodden. While the image may not be what the residents' desire, they find it comforting to help their fellow humans, and any race for that matter. To provide some type of job for the truly poor, the wealthiest of Stanton have been establishing fishing and trading companies.

Unfortunately, many pirates have been born in the poor areas of Stanton as a way of "getting back" at the rich of Storm Harbor.

CAPETOWN

Capetown is the most sprawling human city, although far from the most populated. It was built on Green Cape, which extends the coastline into the Inner Sea. It's home to some of the most beautiful human homes, although not the most expensive. They are typically 1- or 2-story houses built for luxury or relaxation as opposed to showing off one's social or political power. Most of these homes were designed and built by a group of dwarves living in Capetown who pride themselves on their architectural prowess; a skill they rarely practiced during their days in the dwarven kingdoms.

Capetown was built in a fairly popular area to humans, halflings, dwarves, and gray elves alike. The coastline can be quite breathtaking and many travel to the cape to escape the darkness that haunts the land. The horrors of the Known Lands generally avoid Green Cape, although no one truly knows why. In addition to the picturesque landscape, Capetown is home to one of the Known Lands' busiest marketplaces. Halflings frequent this marketplace to trade meat and fruit with the humans who bring fish and the dwarves who bring supplies.

JEFFERS CITY

Jeffers City is a busy town residing on the shores of Green Bay, southeast of Capetown. It's studded with many docks and is known to produce the best fish and lobster. While open to anyone, Jeffers City is primarily a merchant town that uses the Capetown marketplace as its primary outlet for selling, buying, and trading goods. The use of the Capetown marketplace means those within Jeffers City are free to concentrate on their own business while traders bring the goods to and from the marketplace outside of town.



An extensive amount of land dedicated to farming and ranching, which supports Jeffers City. These lands are extremely dangerous due to frequent attacks from both indigenous and exotic creatures. The bulk of the farming land is enclosed within a far-stretching palisade, though some of the farmland has spilled outside it. A large group of watchmen patrol this area all day and night, but even they are frequent victims of attacks that result in death. Due to the richness of the land, however, the money from the markets far exceeds the dangerous cost of farming.

Jeffers City is rich with job opportunities. Those without work often travel there to replace those who fell victim to an attack, continue swelling the area's farmland, or work for one of the business that support the market activities. Although none of these jobs will make anyone wealthy, they are the easiest to come by and serve to harden a great explorer before he ventures off into the hinterlands.

Hinterlands

The Known Lands have a large tract of hinterlands that stretch from the coastal city and town borders out to where the Winterbrush Forest becomes so dense that even traversing it becomes a difficult task. Small paths are carved throughout, but many become quickly overgrown due to little use. The hinterlands are mostly covered by the Low Plains and thinner wooded areas where travel is easier.

The hinterlands stretch the length of the Known Lands northern coastline, but are only about 5-10 miles deep until reaching the Winterbrush Forest proper. However, this long and narrow stretch of land is extremely dangerous. While farmland dots the hinterlands near the cities and towns, past that is space where many predators lurk. Because this land is thinner than the Winterbrush Forest, predators roam about it much more frequently given the ease of travel and the large amount of prey, including herbivores, rodents, small carnivores, unlucky explorers, and farmers.

Many explorers refer to the hinterlands as the “Hunting Grounds” due to the high number of predators that emerge from the Winterbrush Forest to hunt for food. Many of these predators live within the hinterlands, but some make the first mile or so of the Winterbrush Forest their home, only coming out to hunt.

The value of the hinterlands lies in the ruins that have been discovered there. What appear to be the remnants of small towns, manor estates, and isolated compounds have been located in various places across the hinterlands. Gray elf scholars claim these are most likely a part of the ancient times associated with Drak'thau, but no one is sure. So far, none of these places have yielded any written information regarding the locale and only a few have produced drawings or paintings of some type. Their purpose and former inhabitants are quite unknown.

Beyond the Known Lands

There are two major territories known to be beyond the Known Lands: the Land of the Barbarians to the northwest and the Land of the Pharaohs to the southeast. The lands to the southwest are volcanic and believed to be inhabited. The lands to the northeast are mostly unknown, but pirates often come from that general area, although it's not known if they live there or within one of the horns.

LAND OF THE BARBARIANS

Little is known about the Land of the Barbarians. A stretch of mountains, simply referred to as the Barbaric Mountains, separates it from the Known Lands with few successful explorations. Most explorations of the mountain range result in explorers never returning, but a handful have returned with reports of what they've seen from whatever vantage point they can gain.

It takes a long time to traverse the Barbaric Mountains before reaching an open area much like the High Plains. This open area is pretty much devoid of trees as far as the explorers could see, although they couldn't see that far and were frightened to venture farther. The barbarians appear to build their villages amongst the foothills of the Barbaric Mountains with little visible signs in the open flatland. Herding animals were spotted, but no one was able to discover where they came from.

Many signs of the barbarians' presence can be found throughout the Barbaric Mountains. None of them point to a long-term occupation, but it does appear as though the barbarians traverse the mountains often, making camp in regular locations. It's believed that they come to the Known Lands to hunt the civilized people.



LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

Much more is known about the Land of the Pharaohs thanks to the traders who are able to travel there. After dropping down from the High Plains and through the forests, the land becomes increasingly arid until opening onto a large desert. The desert is dotted with savannahs where the pharaohs build their cities. These cities are constructed mostly of desert-materials and populated by the people of the desert.

The most populous desert-race is the anubi, who look much like bipedal canines with no hair and very dark skin. They seem generally subservient to the pharaohs, and their armies always seem to be commanded by a hori. The hori are bird-like humanoids without feathers, although there is the occasional winged horus amongst them.

None of the traders have ever seen an actual pharaoh, wondering if they even exist. They are continuously spoken about and the anubi clearly worship the pharaoh as an emperor of sorts, though there are clear religious connotations. Traders always deal with hori advisors and not with the city's pharaoh leader. These pharaoh leaders have also never been seen within their own armies.

Although traders are allowed into the cities to trade for necessary items, and bring back exotic goods, the people of the desert are not friendly and generally act hostile to all those within the Known Lands. They frequently raid the High Plains, clashing with the halflings and dwarven kingdoms. A keep has been built amongst the High Plains, manned by halfling and dwarven guards. If one of the pharaohs' armies is seen in the distance, the guards can alert their respective generals to assemble an army for an incoming attack. If necessary, a rider may then travel the path to Stanton to alert the humans of the incoming army.





RAZIEL'S SECRETS

When the gods arrived at Dhuran, it was populated with savage beings and creatures of all types. Humanoid species that exist within *Ancient World* but aren't player character races were part of those savage tribes living on Dhuran before the pantheon was formed.

RAZIEL'S SECRETS

Dhuran: a foreboding planet abandoned by the gods. But not all was dark and dangerous in the beginning, for the recorded history of Dhuran began 2,000 years ago.

When the gods arrived on Dhuran, they found a luscious planet, ripe for civilized peoples. Much of the land was ideal for farming, the seas were filled with fish, and animals of all sorts wandered the islands and continents, many ready to be domesticated. After millennia of searching, the gods had finally found the planet where they would create, teach, and nurture their followers. It was aligned with other cosmic planes, creating a untold opportunities.

The races of these new worlds were forged from the very elements of the cosmos. Dark elves were shaped from the fire of the Plane of Shadows, short in temperament but strong in willpower. Dwarves were mined from the earth of the Plane of Elements, formed with stoic behavior in mind. Halflings were plucked from the air of the Plane of the Fey, given a deep appreciation of the nature that surrounds them. High elves were condensed from the ether of the Plane of Light, giving them a divine presence. Duergars were forged from the metals of the Plane of Shadows, granting them strength of mind and body. Humans were birthed from the water of the Mortal Plane, the balanced race that would produce important technology to improve everyone's lifestyle. Tribal elves were grown from the trees of the Plane of the Fey, blessing them with survivability and perseverance.

When the gods and goddesses came to rest, they brought forth a messenger that could speak to the mortal races; his name was Raziel. The pantheon can project their likeness to an individual's mind, but seeing them would overwhelm the senses and drive the mortal insane. It was deemed that only Raziel could interact directly with the mortal beings, serving as a messenger of the gods and the only servant of the pantheon. With this great responsibility, Raziel also became the keeper of secrets and knowledge for both the pantheon and the planar realms.

The Planes

The cosmos have a fascinating way of creating life. There are multiple universes that overlap each other, and when each one creates a planet with optimal conditions in the same cosmic location, it creates a planar alignment. Each cosmically aligned planet is a plane that forms in its universe, but is linked to the other planets due to its cosmic location. Few planets exhibit this planar alignment, but when it occurs, cosmic energy forms and bonds the planes together. This cosmic energy swirls throughout each plane and can be weaved into the energy of each plane, creating magical effects. Weaving this cosmic energy has a different effect on each plane due to the differences in the inherent energy on that plane.

Dhuran is part of a planar alignment that consists of six planes: Mortal Plane, Plane of Light, Plane of the Fey, Plane of Elements, Plane of Shadows, and Plane of Chaos. Dhuran comprises the Mortal Plane, also called the mortal realm. It is the innermost plane on the cosmic alignment, resulting in the least amount of cosmic energy. However, it also serves as a passage between planes, allowing those from the lesser planes to travel to the higher planes.

The Plane of Light is considered the highest plane of them all, residing on the outermost fringes of the cosmic alignment. It is represented as purity in the cosmic

alignment where evil cannot exist. Cosmic energy is quite strong and the high elves living there are spiritually and physically closest to the pantheons.

The Plane of the Fey, also known as the fey realm, is the second higher plane, residing between the Plane of Light and the Mortal Plane. It is represented as good in the cosmic alignment where evil is often stopped, but impure thoughts and beliefs can still exist. Cosmic energy is strong and the tribal elves and halflings living there are connected to the wilderness.

The Plane of Elements is a parallel plane to the Mortal Plane, acting as a balancing plane amongst the entire cosmic alignment. It is represented as neutrality in the cosmic alignment where good and evil can coexist, as long as they balance each other out. When the plane becomes unbalanced, some type of destructive force must work to rebalance the plane. The dwarves living there are masters of the elements.

The Plane of Shadows is the first lesser plane, residing between the Mortal Plane and the Plane of Chaos. It is represented as evil in the cosmic alignment, but often times only evil from a good or pure perspective, much like a heretic's beliefs are considered evil. The dark elves and duergars that dwell there have strength of will, but their beliefs continually clash with those from the other planes.

The Plane of Chaos is the second lesser plane, residing on the outermost fringes of the cosmic alignment, opposite of the Plane of Light. It is represented as chaos in the cosmic alignment where all those who dwell there serve to oppose every belief of the pantheons and wish to enslave those from the other planes. Because it is the outermost lesser plane, traveling from the Abyss to another plane is extremely difficult, preventing most of these vicious beings from ever breaking through.

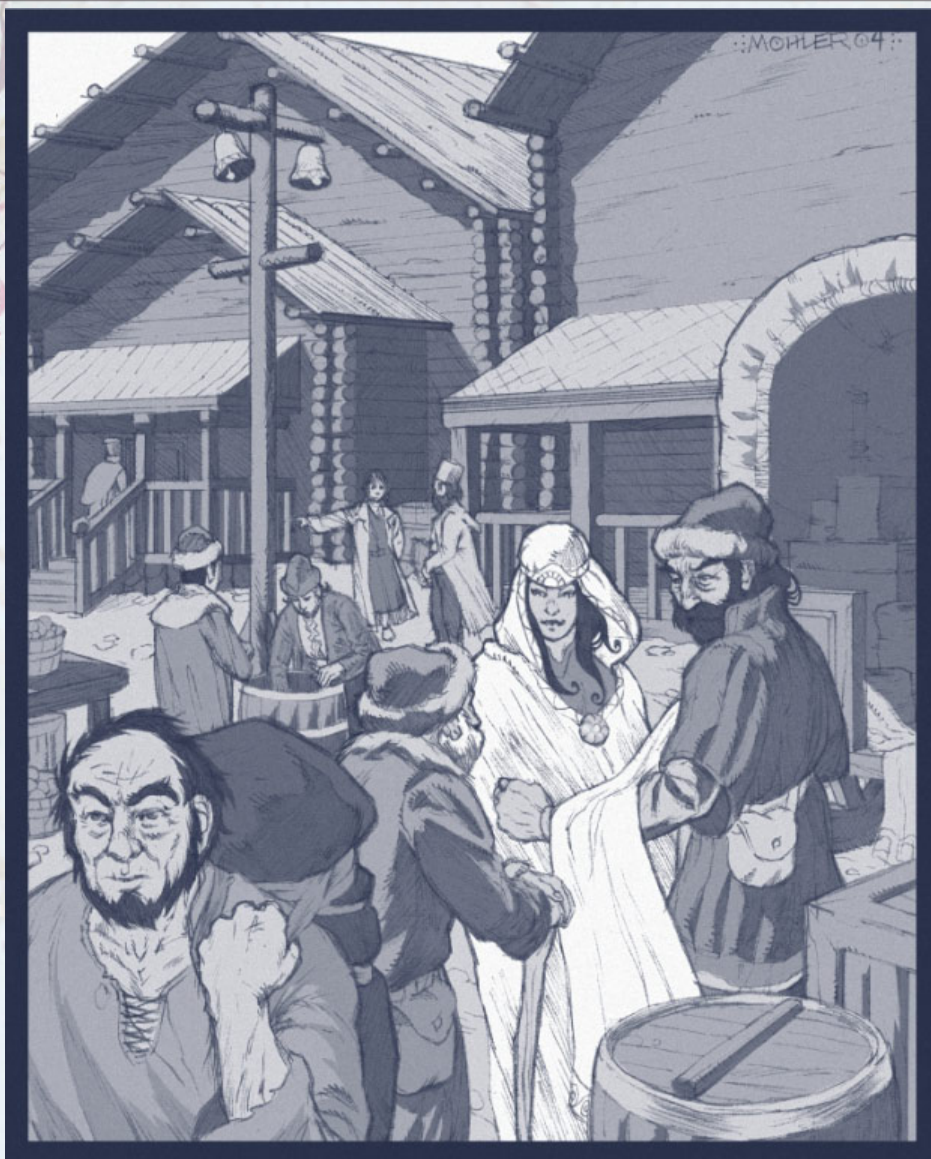
The mortal realm does not have a cosmic alignment. It sits in the perfect center, allowing all energy forces to counteract each other, eliminating any cosmic alignment (as opposed to simply balancing each other like they do in the Plane of Elements). This means the cosmic energy is everywhere in a constant state of flux due to the lack of balance. It is difficult to weave and is instead primarily absorbed by the spirit realm that encompasses the Mortal Plane. When those of the Mortal Plane die, their soul returns to the spirit realm to be cleansed and rebirthed. When those from a different realm die, their soul is returned to their plane.

The planes may be aligned, but it takes the pantheon to allow for passage amongst them. Once the energy from the pantheon fuses with the cosmic energy of the planes, it creates barriers that connect the planes, allowing passage between them depending on the strength of the barrier. The barrier of the Abyss is incredibly strong to prevent those creatures from entering the other planes. The barriers of the mortal realm are the weakest as the cosmic energy there is continually fluctuating. However, traveling to other realms must follow the cosmic alignment. One can only travel to the mortal realm from the Abyss by first passing through the Plane of Shadows. Traveling from the mortal realm to the Plane of Light requires passage through the fey realm. Passage to the Plane of Elements can only be achieved from the mortal realm as its naturally balanced energy cancels out the barriers between it and the Plane of the Fey and the Plane of Shadows.

These aspects of the planes create a cohesive planar alignment with the mortal realm serving as the core. The unfortunate part is that core can be influenced by beings from the other planes due to its unaligned status. Worshipers can communicate to the pantheon as easily as they can communicate to a demon lord, although demon lords are rarely listening. This creates a single plane with unfettered access to the influence of other planes, creating a diverse collection of religious beliefs, cultural beliefs, temperaments, vices, desires, and values. After 1,000 years, the mortal realm became a melting pot of sin.

Raziel plays an important part in the history of Dhuran. As the keeper of knowledge and secrets, he retains an unwritten record of history from the day the gods and goddesses arrived, knowing perfectly every event he's ever witnessed. He has traveled to every plane and is able to weave the cosmic energy with ease. He has created a runic language which he uses to subtly communicate with mortal beings. Each runic symbol is weaved with a minuscule amount of cosmic energy that can then be weaved with the energy of the plane. Sometimes Raziel uses these runes to provoke or manipulate mortal beings, leading to minor conflicts.

Mortal beings always retain the alignment from the plane their race originates. Although many have traveled to the mortal realm and established settlements there, they retain their cosmic connection to their native plane as long as the barrier to their plane exists. This barrier allows the essence of that plane to pass through and keep the mortal spiritually connected to that plane. Even if they are born in the mortal realm, their soul will pass to their native plane upon death. However, if the barriers are destroyed, the mortal being becomes forever disconnected from their native plane and their soul is left to wander the mortal realm for all of eternity or find passage through the pantheon and the greater cosmos, eventually reaching their native plane.



Ancient Kingdoms

For 1,000 years, the races generally lived in peace with only minor conflicts. Populations grew and families migrated across the land and through the barriers to other planes in search of new homes and challenges. Sea and river travel allowed the population to further expand; trade routes brought prosperity to all. Seeing new opportunities in the Mortal Plane, bands of dark elves, halflings, and dwarves migrated from their native planes to the Mortal Plane where they established settlements and trade with the humans living there or establish new kingdoms, birthing new royal or noble lineages. Amidst it all, a small band of tribal elves was beckoned to the Mortal Plane by the pantheon to study the flora and fauna there, documenting what they found and giving names to the unnamed.

With the growth of new kingdoms came differing attitudes, religious beliefs, and cultural beliefs. Friendships and alliance became strained and the people of Dhuran struggled to maintain peace. Even though they all worshipped deities of

the same pantheon, the ethos of each deity began to clash with the ethos of the others, causing conflicts between the civilized races.

Halfings did not like the land being cleared by the humans to make way for their ever-expanding cities. Dwarves did not like the dark elven encroachment on their land, claiming their underground passages destroy the rock used to forge the dwarven kingdoms. Humans did not like the dwarven kingdoms as they were unwilling to open their gates to regular human trade. And the dark elves – they didn't like anyone, given their flame-influenced temperament. Then, 400 years later, war dominated the planet, and the only race to flee back to its native plane was the tribal elves. All others stayed, claiming they had a right to live within the Mortal Plane.

Abandonment

The now four races of Dhuran descended into a bitter, bloody war. After 100 years of death and torture, the gods had enough. Vowing to end the rage and destruction consuming the beloved planet, the gods threatened to abandon their creations, leaving them alone to fend for themselves. But their creations scoffed and turned a deaf ear. The whole of divinity erupted in a cacophony of anger.

Driven by the ignorance of the very races they had forged, the gods unleashed an apocalypse onto the Mortal Plane. Explosions of fires raged within the underground cities of the dark elves. Inside the dwarven kingdoms, inhabitants were crushed by falling rock or suffocated by an inrush of sand. Pestilence spread quickly across the human civilizations. Showers of burning rock rained upon the halfings. The races were decimated, their bodies burning and their ashes being spread by the wind.

Only 1,000 children survived.

The gods were furious, and though they unleashed an apocalypse on their creations, their wrath was not quenched. Those who escaped the gods' rage were left to fend for themselves in a burnt, bleak world. Their blood ancestors, turned to ash by the fire and brimstone, were damned to an eternity of spiritual imprisonment.

The spirits of those whose bloodlines were completely destroyed by the apocalypse were left to wander the spirit realm of the Mortal Plane. Tethered to where their corporeal forms lie in ashes and divinely warded against leaving, the remaining spirits would not be released until their bloodlines ran dry. Only then would the divine intervention allow their spirits to find some sliver of peace within the spirit realm. However, the gods barred them from reaching the afterlife and all spirits on Dhuran became forever confined to the Mortal Plane's spirit realm. The barriers between the planes were destroyed, preventing passage between the planes and forcing the spirits of non-humans to remain forever trapped in the Mortal Plane.

Having destroyed their creation, the gods and goddesses left, leaving Dhuran an empty shell. The pantheon was destroyed, blocking the only alternate path a spirit could take to travel back to their native plane.

Years went by and the survivors struggled to live. The bodies of the dead were whisked away by the winds with their souls remaining quietly out of sight. The youth could not find their families. They could not find the clergy. They could not find anyone. They were forced to use their wits to survive on a planet that no longer wanted them there.

The thousand youth were strong and resilient. They fought the odds stacked against them and learned how to build new civilizations. A new world grew from the ashes of Dhuran, but this world was no longer lush and beautiful. The new

The damned spirits of those whose bloodline survive are referred to as bloodline spirits. These spirits seek out their bloodline to free them from the curse that keeps them tethered to the mortal realm, seeking release into the spirit realm. Those from other planes also seek to be free from the shackles of the Mortal Plane and travel back to their native plane for rebirth.

The message sent from the pantheon was delivered by Raziel. His observations of what was happening throughout the Mortal Plane became the fuel that enflamed the pantheon's anger toward their creations. The pantheon presented Raziel with the opportunity to trick the civilized races into standing down; forcing them to gather in clusters for what would become their demise. While it was easy to rouse the soldiers, leaders, and adults into listening to his words, the children couldn't have cared less. They continued in their innocence while Raziel turned a blind eye to their presence.

Dhuran was dark and foreboding, with vicious creatures – no longer restrained by the pantheon – lurking everywhere.

After 400 years, the people of Dhuran had forgotten their past. They had forgotten their gods and their goddesses. They knew nothing of their history before the apocalypse nor did they know if their bloodline went any further than that. They had built new settlements and found new leaders, and all of this was done with the help of each other. The four races became five as humans and dark elves interbred. These new races fought for survival together, acting as a mostly harmonious group.

Now forced to live together in relative peace, the people of the now Known Lands, because they have never been able to explore the lands beyond it, fight tooth and nail against a world that wishes them dead. Their survival would soon be tested when the first divine ward is broken.

The Old Ways

DARK ELVEN PAST

Before the gods decimated and abandoned the people of Dhuran, the dark elves were a powerful race, feeding on the maliciousness brewing across the land. They became power hungry and began abusing the abilities given to them by their gods. They quickly became the main antagonists in the war.

Before the war broke out, the dark elves were involved in several feuds with various dwarven kingdoms, as their cities grew ever closer. The underground dark elven cities would sometimes expand into dwarven territory, wresting ownership from the dwarves with not even a single thought as to how much it angered the dwarven kings. At the same time, they were becoming increasingly hostile to humans through the constant struggle of dark elf crime and vice versus human law and order. Although their children were none the wiser, tensions were so strained that the humans often setup embargoes against the dark elves.

After the war started, the dark elves were unable to gain any ground against the dwarves or the humans. The dwarves were too fortified and the humans were too well organized. However, the dark elves didn't relent and repeatedly struck back. When the gods became angry, they sent a message to the dark elven warriors to regroup and await orders that would crush the dwarves and the humans.

These orders never came, and the dark elf legions were caught off-guard as the gods set off explosions of fire within the walls of the cities, killing nearly the entire population. Only the innocent youth spending time in one of the many passages leading to the city were spared. Everyone else was killed.

DWARVEN PAST

Prior to the apocalypse, the dwarves were followers of deities associated with strength, justice, crafting, earth, wisdom, and victory. Their religion utilized a standard dwarven language and all dwarves were required to worship regularly. Temples exist within the lost dwarven cities, dedicated to their deities and containing myriad religious symbols; all of which would seem quite foreign to someone from the present civilizations

The dwarven kingdoms of today are much more open than the dwarven kingdoms of the past. Before the apocalypse, they created conflict between themselves and the other races by disallowing regular trade. The dwarves possessed superior artisans that crafted armor and weapons above and beyond the quality of every other race, and they did not wish to divulge their greatest crafting secrets to the world. However, the humans were locked in battles with the dark elves and needed

a boost to their military. They looked to the dwarves for improved armor and weapons and received nothing. This was quite a shock as the humans had supplied the dwarves with food for centuries. To have the dwarven kingdoms turn their back was a dire insult.

The dwarves were also warring with the dark elves, and often with the halflings as well. Both had claims over land the dwarves wanted to expand into or takeover as part of their kingdoms. Dwarven royalty was convinced that kings and queens should always be shown the respect they deserve, even from other races. They took extreme offense to the lack of negotiations and closed their doors to the outside world. They became extremely reclusive and plotted the downfall of the dark elves and halflings near their kingdoms. By turning their backs on the humans in their call for aid, they earned another enemy in a war that would end them all.

HALFLING PAST

In the beginning, halflings worshipped deities associated with nature, natural creatures, prosperity, famine, life, death, fertility, and hunting. Their religion had a deep respect for the circle of life, understanding that life and death must coexist for the circle to be complete. While they did not wish famine upon themselves, they believed it was sometimes necessary. During times of famine, the halflings would seek out alliances with other races, find new fertile grounds, or switch from farming to other means of sustaining life.

The halflings now know nothing of the deities their ancestors worshiped. They still respect nature and have a deep connection with natural creatures, but their spiritual appreciation of the world has become their new belief. They have learned to listen to the world around them by connecting with the spirit realm, and believe a deep-rooted appreciation of nature is responsible. The truth is their race has always been in-tune with all aspects of the world, much more than other humanoids, providing them a boon when communicating with the spirit realm. In ancient times, the spirit realm was understood as a part of life and death.

Before the apocalypse, halflings had a good relationship with dwarves and little to no dealings with the dark elves. Their interaction with humans, however, was extremely strained and riddled with conflict. Humans have always had a tendency to build large, grand-scale cities, buildings, and ports that required the clearing of a lot of land. Halflings viewed this as hostile toward the natural flora and fauna of Dhuran, leading to those many conflicts, eventually driving them to join the war.

Nowadays, halfling villages are fairly remote and quite a lengthy travel from human society, leading to few dealings with humans. What dealings the two do have typically involves the halflings looking for aid or the humans looking for servants. They don't see halflings as inferior and, in fact, rather appreciate their dedication to hard work. This has built a neutral, but working relationship.

Interaction with dwarves and dark elves is similar to that of humans, except neither really cares for halfling servants. Instead, halflings given to dwarves or dark elves in exchange for supplies become farmhands or outcasts.

HUMAN PAST

Humans have a tendency to believe what they wish, when they want to believe it. Before the apocalypse, a number of religions existed including ones many considered heretical. While many had their own system of beliefs, the main deities worshiped were associated with lightning, thunder, storms, justice, avarice, lust, sunlight, life, death, mischief, sea, wisdom, war, victory, strength, and protection. These religions all used traditional human language or dialect, resulting in a lot of cross-worshipping as one was able to understand the teachings of another.

Humans in the present Known Lands are completely unaware of the damage their greed once caused. However, they struggle to hold back that greed even now, 500 years after the gods decimated the people of Dhuran. Although ties between all civilized races of the Known Lands are much stronger than they were before the apocalypse, relationships can become strained quickly if not properly nurtured.

Due to their constant need to outdo each other, many political, social, and even military conflicts arose within human society. They may be extremely adaptive, but they are also extremely stubborn. Many nobles have their own views, seeing other people's views and opinions as flawed. This type of behavior led to skirmishes between human cultures and between humans and other races. While none of them are directly tied to the outbreak of the war, as a collective whole, they did not sit well with the other civilizations. Many leaders felt all ties with the humans should be severed while others felt the humans should be taught the difference between right and wrong; some felt the humans should just be ignored. This constant change of opinion only increased the occurrence of conflicts.

Humans became the main aggressor in the years leading up to and including the war. Their constant need to keep open relations was met with closed doors and a lack of diplomatic relations. The less the other civilizations wanted to have dealings with the humans, the angrier the humans became, lashing out at their supposed allies for not coming to their aid, or not providing the goods they so desperately needed (or rather thought they desperately needed). Human greed overcame much of the population, driving them to attack any kingdom, city, or village they came upon. They even initiated wars amongst themselves between rival nobles and mayors.

As tempers flared between humans and everyone else, especially the dwarves, anger began to rise across the land among the other civilized races. The domino-like effect spiraled out of control as humans attacked dwarven kingdoms, the dark elves refused to help, and the halflings attempted to ignore it all. The more people refused to fight, the more anger brewed among the dwarves, pulling the other races into a far-reaching war. In the end, all the civilized races were fed up with issues they had between each other and the complete lack of companionship shown by the humans. These issues were once seemingly minor but became important enough to declare war. The more power-hungry the humans became, the more it affected the non-humans around them.

After seeing their people raging out of control, the gods declared their own war on the people of Dhuran – sparked by human greed.

A Perilous Beginning

For 400 years the new citizens of Dhuran learned to live with the natural resources available on the planet. They were forced to redesign previous conveniences, recreate their educational system, and build new homes to protect them from the elements. While their long-forgotten ancestors had the aid of divine intervention and arcane lore, the survivors had only their wits and skills.

Cities arose, built amongst the lands in the few remaining areas not utterly devastated. Previous civilizations were lost to the landscape, buried under years of ashes, dirt, and wind-blown debris. Beneath the ground laid centuries-old cities hidden from view until one sunny day when everything changed.

A group of five explorers were surveying the land when they came upon a large sunken patch of earth. Cautiously they inspected the ground knowing not what waited beneath. After moving into the center of the convex land, the ground gave way, dropping the group into a large cave.

The explorers landed hard. The cave held little more than a single passageway that led the opposite direction from which they originally came. They chose to follow the passage, seeing an ominous light glowing in the distance. After walking for an hour, the light revealed an underground opening of obvious intelligent design.



It was astonishing, almost too much to behold, for the explorers had come upon a lost and completely forgotten dark elfen city. The cavity in the ground cut for this city was awe-inspiring. Bridges allowed travel from the passageway to the heart of the underground city. Lanterns hung from the ceiling strapped to a lattice-work of walkways leading to what looked like smaller passageways. The lanterns were unlit, yet light remained.

The explorers continued their journey into the underground city, crossing an underground river and aqueduct. The closer they got to the center, the more they realized where the light was coming from. This was not a natural light, nor was it a created light; it was the light from a thousand damned souls tracing chaotic patterns around the underground city.

The explorers stopped in their tracks, hesitating to get closer. But the spirits were tricky, eventually luring the explorers into the city. The five crossed the threshold of the underground river and were quickly set upon by thousands of malevolent spirits. Wishing to free themselves of their eternal captivity, the spirits attacked the explorers, hoping to find and end their ancient bloodline. But none were to be found. Even the one dark elf in the group did not have the same bloodline of these spirits, driving them to a cacophony of screams and laughter.

The five explorers were able to escape the attack, physically unscathed, but mentally changed forever. They followed their path back to their home and spoke of the underground city they found. The villagers stated all dark elf cities were underground, but none of this size. No, this city was much bigger than any dark elf city known to gray elf scholars.

While the five explorers were fleeing the underground city, the spirits gave chase. Thinking the divine warding would prevent their pursuit, the spirits stopped short, just before crossing the river threshold. Later, reflecting that they had nothing to lose, they ventured forward. The warding was gone; the spirits were no longer tethered to their accursed resting spot. But they were not leaving the world; they were not entering the spirit realm. Their eternal damnation persisted.

The town of Borado was abandoned due to the dangers of maintaining a town while surrounded by the dangerous wilderness. This started with the first assault from the bloodline spirits and was only made worse when the first army of demons burst through the torn fabric.

That day, the spirits learned a valuable lesson about the divine trap: if anyone from outside the city crosses the threshold of the divine warding, the warding breaks, freeing those inside. Knowing the curse kept them there due to the survival of their bloodline, there was only one way to gain freedom: they must destroy their living ancestors.

The damned spirits fled the underground city, following the passageway to the surface. There they were met by beast and humanoid alike, and their rage drove them on. Seeking to free themselves of their bonds to Dhuran (dark elf spirits seek a way back to the Plane of Shadows), the spirits attacked anything that got in their way. Their efforts were fruitless. The spirits could not physically harm the living; they could only affect them mentally. The spirits lashed out and discovered they could invade and possess the bodies of the living. They took over whatever creatures and humanoids they could find.

The newly possessed army turned its focus on a nearby town, Borado, unleashing its rage against those inside. The spirits found that in their new corporeal bodies, they could attack the humanoids while seeking out their descendant bloodlines.

The city of Borado was assaulted for days by the raging possessed victims, but the townsfolk were not easily defeated. They sent out a group of scouts and rangers to summon reinforcements from their allies; for the races of this generation held strong ties and were always there to aid their brethren. An army of dwarves and a tribe of halflings answered the call, beating down the raging beings everywhere they turned. In the end, the possessed lay dead at the feet of those who came to Borado's aid, but only after killing over half of the living.

No one knew what happened or where these creatures came from. No one knew why these wild animals were being herded by humans and drow with red, ferocious eyes. No one knew what was inside of these beings. The spirits were gone, released from their captivity; not because they killed their bloodline, but because they were killed at the hands of mortal beings (although no one understood this). After the last raging beast was killed, the land was quiet again.

The five explorers told the elders and gray elf scholars about their encounter with the spirits in the underground city. They described specters with blood-red eyes and rage-filled voices. The elders speculated the spirits must have infected the beings that attacked Borado, calling it a plague. They did not know that the creatures and humanoids that attacked were possessed, not simply infected, but the elders claimed this infection caused these creatures to go mad.

The gray elf scholars wanted to learn more about this underground city and organized an expedition. Upon arrival, they found the passageway to be completely dark with no spiritual light to guide the way. With lit lanterns, the scholars and explorers returned to the underground city, only to find that it now lay silent. The spirits were gone, but the city remained.

Ancient Drak'tau

A band of gray elf scholars returned to the underground city two days after the attacks ceased. Here they found a vast urban center complete with all the basic dark elf amenities.

Of particular interest to the gray elf scholars was the city's library. It was small, but filled with many scrolls. The language was unfamiliar to the scholars, although bits and pieces could be discerned from what was similar to Tradespeak. They brought the scrolls back to Borado for inspection by the city's finest linguists.

The scrolls referred to the city as Drak'tau, and spoke of an empress during the year 1250. The scholars were perplexed, for the year was only 415. The scholars examined the many scrolls and found numerous references to dates earlier and later than their own. The scrolls also made mention of a greater being, known as Ch'kth'walah. But the dark elves knew of no greater beings than their empresses. The scrolls continued to discuss matters of powers coming from the stars, sent by the great beings of the heavens. The scholars did not understand for these things did not exist.

Ancient Drak'tau held many secrets the gray elves did not understand. They spent many years going back, collecting as much information from the entire city as they could. The more they collected, the more the citizens of Dhuran questioned their history. They knew nothing of "beings of the heavens." They knew nothing of spirits. They knew nothing of powers. They knew nothing of that ancient world spoken of in those lost scrolls. The people of Dhuran felt more lost than ever before.

During the following 85 years, the dark elves, dwarves, gray elves, halflings, and humans would learn much from the ancient city and the knowledge it held.

Divine Warding

The divine warding tethering the bloodline spirits to the place of eternal damnation prevents them from interacting with the rest of the world. These spirits cannot enter the spirit realm nor can they cause any harm to the world around them. This is until the warding is broken.

The divine warding was designed to hold the bloodline spirits inside, it was not meant to prevent those outside from entering the warded area. Because the gods were cruel in their punishment of the bloodline spirits, they sentenced them to an eternity of spiritual life in the mortal realm that can only be broken by the death of their descendant bloodline. The warding prevents the spirits from seeking their bloodline, thus extending the length of their damnation. To fulfill this punishment, the descendant bloodline would have to have an outlet to reach their ancestors' spirits.

The warding allows those outside to enter the protected area, thus allowing the bloodline spirits to somehow vanquish their descendants. While the spirits cannot physically harm those who enter, they can cause mental strain, which has the potential to cause the mind to rot. When the spirit has overcome the last of their bloodline, they are freed (as is every other spirit tied to that bloodline). If not, they continue to seek out the rest of their bloodline.

If a mortal from outside the divine warding enters the warded area, the divine warding breaks, allowing the spirits to flee. If the spirits exploit this break in the warding, they tear it open, completely bringing it down and tearing the fabric between the planes; this causes a tunnel to open straight to the Abyss (called the chaos realm by mortals in the Known Lands). If the spirits fail to exploit this break in the divine warding, it eventually heals itself and the spirits are once again trapped.

Unfortunately for the people of Dhuran, when a spirit attacks a person's mind it may enter that person's body. This possession, referred to as "plagued" by the people of Dhuran, provides the spirit with a corporeal body (animal or humanoid) they can use to hunt down their bloodline. However, the spirit then binds with the corporeal body, preventing it from ever escaping and severing its ties to its own bloodline. Should the corporeal body die, the spirit is instead released into the Plane of Chaos. After witnessing this event, the bloodline spirits are determined to destroy their own bloodline to avoid their damnation and an eternity in the Abyss.

Normally spirits native to other planes would be released from the Mortal Plane when death comes while residing in the mortal realm. They would travel through the barriers between the planes or through the pantheon should passage through the barriers not be possible. With the barriers and pantheon being destroyed, these spirits became forever trapped in the Mortal Plane until the time when passage is once again possible.

Dhuran holds another secret besides its planar alignment, which includes a realm of chaotic beings. The pantheon was quite good at keeping the most dangerous creatures of Dhuran away from the civilizations, providing a layer of protection. Without the pantheon, these creatures are allowed to wander about once again, often bringing them into the lands of the civilized races.

The divine warding is kept in place by Raziel's runic energy. When the gods and goddesses abandoned, and destroyed, the pantheon, they gave Raziel the power he needed to enforce the eternal damnation. This divine warding is only created through the use of chaos runes, which also tap into the power of the Plane of Chaos.

When the divine warding is completely brought down and the connection to the chaos realm is partially torn open, the fabric between the mortal and chaos realms allows the denizens of the Abyss to enter Dhuran. Without divine intervention, these malevolent creatures are able to roam freely, destroying whatever they wish in their path.

Violating a divine ward creates a chaotic spiraling effect. First, the bloodline spirits are given release, allowing them to pass from their place of eternal damnation into the surrounding territory. Second, by fleeing their place of eternal damnation, the energy of the chaos rune is disrupted, tearing the fabric between the planes and creating a tunnel into the Abyss. Third, the tear in the fabric can be seen by malicious beings within the Plane of Chaos, drawing them to the source of the tear. Those who can see or detect the tear find passage into the Mortal Plane; some go as far as building an army to march into the Mortal Plane and enslave the population. Finally, after battling back and hopefully winning the fight against the plagued beings, the people of Dhuran have to deal with the demons and demonic beings that arrive days or weeks later.

Should the gods return, the people of Dhuran might yet be saved.



Present Day

The face of Dhuran has changed drastically. Before the apocalypse, many more civilizations existed with alliances being strained well past their breaking point. Before the discovery of Drak'tau, the people lived in relative peace with only the dangerous creatures of the land to deal with. Now, a blight has been unleashed and the people of the Known Lands are being tested, forced to exceed their natural limits of strength, bravery, and willpower, with the ever-vigilant eyes of Raziel watching their every move.

CHAOS REALM

The chaos realm, also known as the Plane of Chaos or the Abyss, is the polar opposite of the divine pantheon. While the pantheon encompasses gods, goddesses, demigods, angels, and other divine creatures, the chaos realm encompasses devils, demons, enslavers, the diseased, and other chaotic creatures. Many beings within the chaos realm have dark powers they use to control the dead. When the gods rained fire and brimstone down upon the people of Dhuran, their bodies turned to ash and many entered the chaos realm. Their spirits were damned to an eternal life on Dhuran, but the enslavers and demons of the chaos realm gained command of these new armies of the dead (or rather undead) as their ashen bodies were reconstructed by chaos into a putrid form.

While encountering a true denizen of the chaos realm is rare, encountering their undead minions is fairly common for Dhuran's warriors. Often riding alongside or commanding these undead minions are some of the diseased and chaotic beings normally found within the chaos realm. These creatures care about nothing and kill everyone that gets in their way.

SPIRIT REALM

The spirit realm resides parallel to the mortal realm, but is invisible to all but those trained to use it. The ancestors of Dhuran's current citizens knew about the spirit realm and how to exploit it. They could walk into the spirit realm, locate a friendly spirit, bind it to a fetish, and use it to do their bidding.

The scrolls in Drak'tau speak of this ability to walk the spirit realm, although the realm is no longer filled with friendly spirits. It is now filled with malevolent spirits, although not as rage-filled as those tethered due to their bloodline still living; these hate-brewing spirits who would rather be left alone than trapped in a fetish for periodic use. This has made shamanism much more difficult than it was before the apocalypse, but it's still a viable means of producing extraordinary effects.

FORGOTTEN RELIGION

The scrolls of Drak'tau and the temple in the city show signs of a religion, dedicated to the pantheonic worship of the deities that abandoned the planet. Although this religion no longer exists, many are convinced a greater being is possible and if they dedicate themselves, this greater being will protect them from the horrors that plague the land. This belief is most prevalent in crusaders.

Crusaders are warriors dedicated to finding these greater beings. They believe that if they fight the horrors that threaten Dhuran in the name of these greater beings, they will appear and save all of the Known Lands, and possibly all lands beyond it. The scrolls do not describe the deities in detail, nor do they describe how the beings reveal themselves. Instead, they provide evidence that support the existence of greater beings; it's up to the people to figure out what this means.

Crusaders do not understand the bloodline spirits or their eternal damnation. They know nothing about the afterlife or what happens when one dies. This knowledge has been lost in time and the scrolls do not speak about it. They also don't understand that only humans are from Dhuran and the other civilized humanoid races are native to another plane, with a spirit that yearns to return there after death.

Most living on Dhuran do not believe in any type of religion. They know nothing of gods or goddesses or that their long lost ancestors worshipped the pantheon. They frown on the ramblings of the crusaders and propose that technology and the ill-understood spirit realm are the keys to survival. Greater beings don't exist and those who believe in them should be persecuted.

RAZIEL'S RUNES

The pantheon provided divine energy that could be weaved with the inherent energy of each plane to create greater powers. With the pantheon gone, that divine energy is gone, leaving only traces of planar energy behind (which is used to create alchemy and herbalism). However, there is one source of power tied with divinity.

Raziel is the master of runes. Many of his runic symbols and worlds are fused with energy from the planes or the pantheon, allowing the wielder to create extraordinary feats. Most of the runes located by rune priests are those associated with the Plane of Chaos, allowing them to still function due to the unfortunate tear in the fabric that opens a tunnel to the Abyss. Runes tied to the other planes no longer function, but those controlled by Raziel with what little divinity he has still work. However, Raziel kept those runes secret and they were never recorded by the civilized races of the Known Lands. Instead, Raziel only taught them to the rune priests in the Land of the Barbarians where they worship Raziel like a god.

INQUISITORS

Inquisitors are hunters of the plagued. They pledge themselves to eradicating the infected creatures and humanoids that prey on the civilized people of the Known Lands. Inquisitors rarely care about history or scholarly theories and feel the plagued beings are the most perilous threats affecting Dhuran. They believe if all plagued beings are killed, the world will become a safer place and no one will need intervention from any greater being.

CRUSADERS

Crusaders fear the world may succumb to the powers of chaos. They pledge themselves to defeating the hordes of undead and their handlers that spew from the chaos realm. They believe that proving their worth to these greater beings will result in some type of divine intervention, saving them all. Although crusaders do not know what the greater beings are or where they dwell, they are sure these beings are the key to making Dhuran a safer place.



GAMEMASTERING ANCIENT WORLD

The subjects within **Gamemastering Ancient World** are essentially a collection of tools the GM can use to create the experience she wishes to create. There is no “proper way” of running *Ancient World* as there are many different ways to approach the setting. It’s also possible that, should the players wish to right the wrongs of their ancestors, Dhuran can be “saved” from the horrors that plague it. The Crusade is one example, but GMs are encouraged to create their own.

GAMEMASTERING ANCIENT WORLD

Characters in *Ancient World* have a truly perilous journey ahead of them and survival is a continuous struggle now that the pantheon is gone. Dangerous indigenous creatures lurk about, bloodline spirits seething with rage await exploration, and denizens of the deep eagerly stand by, ready to plunge into the mortal realm once the fabric is torn. It’s a bleak sight that no one quite understands.

Ancient World is, after all, a dark fantasy setting, and within every dark fantasy setting is some type of oppressive force that creates an atmosphere of horror and dread. For Dhuran, the abandonment of the pantheon has left the planes in an almost primal state. When the pantheon existed, dangerous indigenous creatures were kept away from civilizations, bloodline spirits didn’t exist, and the Abyss was so far away that few demons could ever get through. That time no longer exists, but it doesn’t have to stay that way.

When creating adventures and campaigns in *Ancient World*, the GM may have to answer the question: “How do the characters’ lives affect Dhuran?” The answer could be as simple as “they don’t,” where the world never changes and it’s a continuous fight for survival until all bloodline spirits have been released and the chaos realm has been defeated. Many epic battles would ensue and the likelihood of the Known Lands being decimated is quite high.

Another possible solution is to “promote ignorance” by preventing anyone from further exploration. The characters would then have to create ways to stop anyone from discovering what else is out there and keep future bloodline spirits from being released. Or maybe they find a way to “bury” the truth.

The discovery of ancient cities housing bloodline spirits doesn’t have to be frequent. A number of possible scenarios with political motivations (due to nobility and royalty fighting for control) may occur where the fight for survival is continuous, but most conflicts occur with humanoids, not monsters or the supernatural.

Maybe the characters choose to join the crusade, or mimic the efforts of the crusade, proving to the cosmos that Dhuran is worthy of a pantheon to worship and the protection of the gods and goddesses. This may allow all bloodline spirits to be freed of their eternal shackles, the recreation of the barriers between the planes, and the restoration of prosperity throughout all of Dhuran.

Regardless of the chosen direction, there are many tools presented in *Ancient World* the Gamemaster can use to enhance the players’ adventure and campaign experience.

Raziel

Raziel is the divine messenger, the keeper of knowledge (mostly history), and the keeper of secrets. He is the only being left that has ties to the gods and goddesses, although his desires are very different than those of a cosmic deity. While deific beings bask in the glory of life and death and the worship of their followers, Raziel is an observer who enjoys watching the people suffer, survive, and evolve. Unlike the pantheon, he doesn’t interfere with the lives of mortals, preferring to let them make their mistakes and learn from them.

Raziel doesn’t have worshippers per se, but does support a small group of barbarian rune priests in the sense of preserving his runic symbols of power and ancient runic language. The relationship is more like master and student rather than god and follower, with Raziel’s existence being kept secret from all other barbarians.

Although he could provide them with the divine power necessary to alter life on Dhuran and take over the civilized lands, Raziel refuses to teach the rune priests anything more than needed.

Raziel taught the dark elves the use of runic magic before the apocalypse. Although some of this is being rediscovered now, much of the teachings are lost forever, only to be preserved by the rune priests from the Land of the Barbarians. His teachings were much the same as they are now with him being the master and his rune priests being the students. The only difference is that his teachings were known by others throughout the dark elven race and whispered amongst those in the Plane of Shadows. Temples were never created to honor Raziel as he preferred schools over places of worship. He has always been quite clear to the mortals: he is not a god and should never be treated as one.

However, Raziel does have a god-like secret in that he retains the only existing tie to the pantheon. As long as he remains tethered to what little remains of the pantheon, Raziel can use it to communicate with the gods and goddesses. Could he convince them to return? Maybe, but the gods have been bitterly scorned by the actions of their creations. Could he assist in the creation of a new pantheon? Probably, but that would require new gods and goddesses to judge Dhuran and the aligned planes as worthy of their worship. Could he build a small pantheon and elevate mortals to the cosmos, creating new gods and goddesses? If so, they would need to find followers whose worshipping builds that cosmic power.

Raziel is the only existing connection the mortal planes have to the cosmos. Although he cannot become a god and create a new pantheon, he has ways of facilitating the act as a divine messenger, serving as the eyes and ears of the cosmos and a direct link to the mortal worlds.

Raziel may be a cosmic being, but as a divine messenger, he possesses the ability to appear in mortal form, looking much like a human. When doing so, he can be seen by all living people and creatures, but not by the undead or diseased. He also has the ability to enter the spirit realm and can pass freely between the planes without the barriers being there. He can interact with anyone when appearing in mortal form, but he cannot affect the world around him. He leaves no footprints, cannot inflict injury, cannot heal, and may not use his cosmic powers for anything other than teaching his rune priests.

The Pantheon

The pantheon was created when the gods and goddesses established a connection between the cosmos and the planets residing in the universes parallel to the pantheon. The deities invested time creating humanoid races to worship them, teaching their followers how to survive, building magical barriers connecting the planets at the confluence of the planes, and sprinkling divine energy that could be weaved into each planet's arcane energy to create supernatural abilities.

To protect their people and the temples they built, the various deities pacified the most dangerous indigenous creatures, hindered malevolent beings' passage between the planes, and all but locked the Abyss away, preventing the spread of its evil influence. The gods and goddesses of the pantheon were always appeased when their creations showed their worth, but as that worth began to degenerate, the gods and goddesses became angry.

In the beginning, the civilized people knew little outside of the life provided by the pantheon. As the centuries went by, many of them became curious about the worlds around them and sought out adventure, including passing from one plane to another. Although meetings with other humanoids may have been diplomatic at first, beliefs and cultures clashed, causing heated encounters to occur frequently. When the civilized people couldn't find ways to live together peacefully, war broke out.

The pantheon is not against war, seeing as inevitable amongst all civilized races. It's only natural for tensions to wax and wane as the decades go by, but Dhuran escalated these tensions to a higher level. The conflicts never ceased and only grew worse and worse as they became more frequent. When a total war between all

The people of Dhuran may not need the pantheon to survive, but it sure might make life a lot easier. However, gods and goddesses make many demands to provide safety to their followers and one of those demands is absolute adherence to the desires of the pantheon. If the pantheon wishes to be worshiped, it must be worshiped to the letter. If the pantheon calls for the elimination of a rival, that rival must be eliminated at all cost. When the people completely turned their backs on the pantheon's demands, the gods and goddesses lashed out in the worst way possible.

civilizations was declared, the pantheon became enraged and demanded them all to stop; but the people did not listen.

As the body counts increased infinitely and the truly innocent fled back to their native plane, the pantheon formulated a plan to teach all civilized people a lesson. Months passing with no worship or signs of devotion to their creators forced the gods and goddesses to unleash an apocalypse that decimated them all.

No one was spared from the wrath of the cosmos. The only survivors were the youth who had escaped the pains of war and spent much of their time hiding or playing where they were always safe. After the dust settled, the gods and goddesses made one final decision: the surviving youth would pay for the insolence of their ancestors and their ancestors would forever pay for the survival of their youth. With that, they fled and destroyed the pantheon, leaving only its remnant energy and their divine messenger behind.

Planar Alignment

Ancient World utilizes the concept of a multiverse where multiple universes reside parallel to each other. When planets within these universes exist within the same basic location of the cosmos, it forms a planar alignment with each planet, the cosmos, and the Abyss forming its own plane. Each universe is adjacent to two other universes, forming a "stack" of universes with a dimensional distance between the outermost planes – the Cosmic Plane where the pantheon existed and the Abyss.

If the multiverse were placed on its side, the lid sealing the stack is the Cosmic Plane where only divine beings can dwell. The Plane of Light is the outermost plane with the strongest connection to the divine energy. The Plane of Chaos, or the Abyss, is the other outermost plane with no connection to divine energy; it only has a connection to the dark recesses of the cosmos. In the middle of them all are the Plane of Elements, which is a cosmically balanced plane, and the Mortal Plane, which is a cosmically neutral plane.

All of these planes exist without interference from the Cosmic Plane. However, gods and goddesses within the Cosmic Plane can build a pantheon that essentially encompasses the planar alignment, allowing barriers to be built between the planes to allow regular passage. Otherwise, there is a cosmic fabric separating the planes which can only be penetrated by cosmic energy. The divine warding that traps the bloodline spirits was created by cosmic energy; when the divine ward is broken by the bloodline spirits fleeing it, the energy explodes outward and tears the fabric, creating a "tunnel" directly to the Abyss. Chaotic energy begins to seep through this tear and demons can then exploit it, allowing passage into the Mortal Plane.

Without the pantheon, the barriers don't exist and the fabric is at the whims of the cosmos. Generally, the fabric between planes is quite strong, only penetrable by cosmic energy. However, when rare alignments occur (maybe once a decade or century), two planets may become completely parallel to each other (no slight offset at all), which could weaken the fabric and allow passage between the planes without the use of cosmic energy (or the barriers). This is a truly rare occasion, not to be exploited often and would only last as long as the alignment does (maybe an hour or two). After that, the planets shift ever so slightly and the fabric between them strengthens.

The planar alignment exists with or without the pantheon. Travel between them is all but impossible without the pantheon, but there are rare occasions that it's briefly plausible when the planets are aligned just right. However, as far as anyone

in the Known Lands is concerned, there is only Dhuran and the chaos realm; they know nothing of the different planes or of the planar alignment. The barbarians may know, depending on how much the GM desires Raziel to teach the barbarians, but they'd never divulge that information to the civilized people of the Known Lands.

Bloodline Spirits

Bloodline spirits are but one source of evil that plagues the Known Lands. When the apocalypse was unleashed, the pantheon had intended on eliminating all mortals that dwell in what is now the Known Lands and some areas beyond. Unfortunately, many children were nowhere near where the devastation occurred and thus were spared an untimely death. When the gods and goddesses realized this, they found an ounce of mercy and chose not to eliminate the survivors; instead, they vowed to teach them a lesson. All blood ancestors of the survivors were damned to an eternity of imprisonment within a divine ward. This divine ward prevents those souls from leaving the mortal realm and entering the spirit realm or finding passage back to their native plane. At that moment, the bloodline spirits were created.

The curse tethering the bloodline spirits to the mortal realm is a relatively simple one: they are trapped until their bloodline runs out. In order to do this, all descendants of a particular bloodline must die; then all its ancestral spirits will be released. However, a spirit has very little influence in the corporeal world, meaning killing their descendants would be extremely difficult. In order to succeed and finally find eternal peace, they were forced to invade the bodies of humanoids or animals that could act against the living. This possession creates what the people of the Known Lands call plagued beings.

What the spirits learned is that by possessing the body of another, their soul becomes partly infused with that body, severing its ancestral link. Thus, if the plagued being is killed, the soul is actually released from its eternal bonds and enters the spirit realm. Souls native to other planes still cannot find passage to them, but at least they can dwell within the Mortal Plane's spirit realm. This prevents them from being reincarnated in their native plane, but they can enter a fetus developing in the Mortal Plane.

Bloodline spirits have a lot of pent-up anger toward their descendants. Not only are they cursed for eternity until finding release, they're tethered to the area in which they died and cannot travel outside of the encompassing divine ward. This divine ward essentially creates a bubble that traps the souls. The bubble "bursts" when a mor-



tal crosses the threshold of the divine ward, but it eventually reforms after a number of hours. However, if the bloodline spirits exploit the rupturing of the divine ward by escaping it, the ward collapses, causing the rippling effect of cosmic energy and tearing a hole in the fabric. If the bloodline spirits were to remain within the confines of the divine ward, it would eventually rebuild itself and they would remain forever trapped.

Bloodline spirits have no concept of time and don't realize that 500 years have passed since their imprisonment. The original 1,000 descendants have multiplied into over 1 million. This leaves a lot of descendants to seek out and kill, which the bloodline spirits can "detect" when in close proximity. Not fully realizing the scale of their imprisonment (i.e. how many descendants they would have to kill in order to be freed), the spirits first attack those near the location of the divine ward and then whatever civilization is closest. If a bloodline spirit is successful in killing all his descendants within that civilization, the lack of release from the mortal realm (and the body they've possessed) is a sign that they must seek out more descendants. They are then forced to travel across the land, seeking out all members of their bloodline.

Heroic Races

There are many humanoid races throughout Dhuran, but only those classified as the 'heroic races' are available to players; these are the races created by the pantheon (except for the gray elves, an offspring of these races). Besides being the spotlight of *Ancient World*, the heroic races are a major influencing factor throughout the Known Lands. It is their ancestors that angered the gods and caused the apocalypse to rain down. It is the souls of their bloodline that can cause the fabric to tear, allowing the denizens of the Abyss to pour through. And it is their presence that is an invasion to all indigenous beings that existed on Dhuran before the pantheon was formed.

It's almost as if Dhuran is reclaiming its land.

The heroic races of Dhuran are fighting what is essentially a losing battle. Not only are they continually accosted by dangerous indigenous beings, they also have to face down armies of demons, demonic beings, plagued and diseased creatures, the undead, and of course all non-allied humanoids. To make matters worse, tensions amongst the heroic races are growing. Although the people of Dhuran today are descended from the 1,000 youth who fought for survival, their centuries-old friendships are withering away. Many of them are slipping into the habits of old, with few discovering ways to get past their natural discrimination, finding peace with the other heroic races. The only exception to this is the gray elves that are very accepting of all heroic races.

The Known Lands are not teetering on the brink of war; tensions are not that bad. Most are simply becoming disdainful about others, causing rifts to occur. This is quite noticeable with the stark separation of the different settlements. Although human urban centers have districts where other races congregate, there is no blending of heroic races across the Known Lands. If a village, town, or city contains a non-native of that location, it's usually a merchant, diplomat, or trusted ally. All others are met with hesitation, not acceptance.

While it may seem that each heroic race simply cannot get along with the other, it's really not the case. Often times, warriors or even full armies will come together, allying against a common enemy. (This is quite frequent between halflings and dwarves when an army of anubi enters the Known Lands.) There is open trade throughout the Known Lands, mainly due to the diplomatic ways of the traders

who know how to properly handle differences in racial opinions. Nobles are often found rubbing shoulders with nobles, warlords, or politically powerful people from the other races, all in the name of promoting themselves, of course.

The Known Lands are far from being a homogenous territory where all members of the heroic races are treated fairly and equally at all times. There are groups preaching equality and groups preaching segregation. There are nobles who wish to ally with others of the same stature to increase their wealth through foreign trade and mercantile activities. There are nobles who wish to fleece the major players in the hopes of someday eliminating them.

There is a continuous onslaught of mixed views among the heroic races. Their inability to set differences aside only serves to intensify the threats that already exist throughout the Known Lands. If they're not careful, their entire society will implode with Dhuran finally reclaiming the Known Lands seeded by the pantheon millennia ago.

Villains

Many aspects of the players' section of *Ancient World* are written purposefully vague to offer many holes for the GM to fill. One of those major holes is the possibility of one of the heroic races as a villain. These villains seek to exploit horrific indigenous creatures or the denizens of the deep for their personal gain and may do this by establishing their own outpost or conquering an ancient city. There are numerous as of yet undiscovered cities, towns, villages, outposts, and remote temples dotting the landscape from before the apocalypse. During the past 500 years, the people have clustered around a smaller area, but the heroic races used to stretch much farther than they do now. Every one of these locations can serve as an optimal place for villainous deeds.

Often times what makes the perfect villain is their knowledge, planning, and resources. If a particularly vile dwarven warlord wishes to create his own domain, he may seek out a rumored citadel in the mountains and find a way to make it his own. He would first have to bring an army of great, loyal warriors to the citadel to purge the spiritual infestation. He wouldn't understand why the bloodline spirits exist or how they possess others to create plagued beings, but he would know that often times when an ancient fortification is located, the creatures around that fortification suddenly revolt and attack violently. He would make absolutely sure he was prepared for such a response.

Once the spirits are fully purged, he would then have to fight back all denizens of the deep that come through or are created from the tear in the fabric. He wouldn't know why the abyssal creatures pour forth, but he knows it's a common occurrence with ancient fortifications. Once the threat is neutralized, the citadel is his. He can then set about creating his own miniature empire and find ways to exploit the violent nature of creatures that appear in the Known Lands.

What the rest of the Known Lands don't realize is that one of their own has chosen to declare war on the civilized people in a quite dastardly way. With his rudimentary understanding of ancient fortifications and the struggles required to conquer them, he may seek out ancient villages, towns, or cities near existing civilizations. Upon discovery, he could send an expendable soldier to enter the ghost town, essentially releasing all bloodline spirits (if they exist of course) and allowing the chaos realm to emerge days or weeks later. He sacrifices one of his own to allow a torrent of malevolent beings to flood the nearby civilizations, wreaking havoc everywhere. That threat may be neutralized at a great cost, allow-

ing him to easily break the city with a follow-up attack only days later. If the city surrenders, it's now his to command until a rebellion occurs.

This is only one example of how a villain could play a major role in Dhuran. This warlord would have to amass a great army in order to survive the initial onslaught and then spend many years building up that army again after tallying his losses. Other examples include noble subterfuge to gain political or social control of a city. Maybe a particular merchant likes to deal in cursed artifacts dropped by denizens of the deep which cause a maddening outbreak to occur (or maybe it summons a demon into the city). Maybe there are villains who worship the chaos realm like a religion and have found a way to call upon a demonic being for supernatural powers (or something else occult-like). Regardless of the villain's goal, the key to his or her survival is a better understanding of Dhuran and how to exploit it.

Denizens of the Deep

The denizens of the deep (as listed started on page 16) pose an obvious threat to the people of the Known Lands, but they are horribly misunderstood. First, they are not indigenous creatures of Dhuran; they are the inhabitants of the Plane of Chaos or a product of the energy sourced from the Plane of Chaos. Second, they don't come from the "bowels of the earth", they come from a different plane altogether. However, the people of the Known Lands don't know either of these facts and instead theorize these creatures as dwelling from a place filled with chaos within the depths of the planet, which they mistakenly call the chaos realm. They know nothing of the planar alignment and the fabric that separates the planes.

All denizens of the deep are a serious threat to the civilized (and even the uncivilized) races. They seek death and destruction in many forms and stop at nothing to enslave humanoids in the hopes of bolstering their demonic armies. Why they do this is truly up to the GM, but they are always for selfish purposes. It could be the amassing of an army to unleash upon all of Dhuran to take over or maybe it's a war being waged within the Abyss where demon soldiers are necessary. The reason is mostly moot as the dragging of a mortal being into the Plane of Chaos transforms them into a demonic or diseased being.

In the scope of a campaign, the Plane of Chaos and its denizens of the deep are meant to be a periodic disruption in the lives of those within the Known Land (and beyond). This disruption could be used by particularly manipulative villains or serve as a simple roadblock thrown in the faces of the heroic warriors. Although they could be used as the ultimate goal of a campaign, they are probably best served as a tool used to slow down the progress of the PCs or provide them with interesting challenges to overcome.

Although the denizens of the deep are violent and dangerous, most don't live in Dhuran nor do they have free passage between the Abyss and the Mortal Plane. The large army of demons and demonic beings are held in the Plane of Chaos, possibly waiting to burst free. Once they do, they have a limited amount of time before the fabric repairs itself and they lose their passageway back to the Abyss. Those living within Dhuran, posing a continuous threat regardless of the state of the fabric, are limited in numbers and are mostly scattered about. A small group of them may begin harassing a gray elf town, requiring action to be taken immediately, but they won't amass a giant army and burn the town down. The only group capable of that is the demons, and they're typically locked in the Abyss.

The oppressive nature of *Ancient World* as a dark fantasy setting encompasses almost every aspect of the setting. The denizens of the deep are one aspect, but so are the dangerous indigenous creatures, the tension rising among the heroic races,

the complete abandonment of the gods, the continuous threat from those outside of the Known Lands, and all other dangerous humanoids that wish to kill the heroic races. However, unlike the others, the denizens of the deep provide a truly unique opportunity in providing an encounter of unexplained origin. All other threats are known by the civilized races, but the denizens of the deep continue to change and mutate or simply “grow” new unknown beings too difficult a threat to face without a strong group of heroes to guide them. These creatures or beings have never been written about and sometimes seemingly appear out of nowhere. This can serve to increase the horror and tension throughout an adventure or campaign.



Politics

Politics throughout the Known Lands entail the machinations of nobles, gentry, warlords, wealthy merchants, guild leaders, and anyone else in a seat of influence. All of these people have an immense amount of influence throughout the Known Lands as money equals power. There is a stark contrast between the average citizen and the wealthy, allowing the wealthy to get involved in any number of political and social conspiracies and conflicts.

On the surface this probably wouldn't result in a very exciting game, but as a backdrop, it could be a driving factor for how the characters are getting involved in their various adventures. The characters are hired by a major political figure (or group, such as a guild) and tasked with many different things throughout their career in the hopes of protecting their employer's reputation, estate, or assets or growing their employer's wealth, influence, or holdings.

Another possibility is that the political figure has been forcibly ousted and is attempting to regain whatever status he once held. Depending on the status he once held, this type of campaign can vary quite widely. For instance, if the figure was a king, then his fight is to regain his kingdom. If the figure was a powerful merchant, then his fight is to rebuild his mercantile empire. If the figure was a noble, his fight is to recover his estate and holdings.

There are many political figures vying for power at any given time. Besides the internal influences throughout the settlements of the Known Lands, there are many external influences that cause people strife or provide them with hope. Pirates are a source of strife while the discovery of an ancient temple might provide hope. How these political figures are vying for power can become a driving factor for many adventures and explorations across the Known Lands. Is the employer generally good or evil? Lawful or chaotic? Human or dwarf? What does she stand to gain and what could she possibly lose?

The PCs' efforts should have some type of connection to the political machinations of their employer, as a boon or a bane. These links could be direct in terms of growing their employer's wealth or indirect in terms of gaining a new ally that later on serves to bolster their employer's efforts.

Another aspect of politics exists whereas one of the player characters is the political figure vying for power. The other characters could be her "inner circle" performing all manner of deeds that promote the intentions of their fellow character. If that inner circle becomes dominant enough, all PCs could rise to a position of power or wealth within the Known Lands, allowing them to greatly influence the people around them as they please. This could lead to the development of great things such as a religion (or a cult), a new town, a powerful kingdom, a frontier fortress, an influential guild, or the assemblage of an army that rises up against the chaos realm.

Political motivators don't have much merit in short adventures as they tend to require a slow build-up over time. During a campaign, they can provide a shell encompassing almost everything the characters do, providing them with direction and motivation. How the campaign climaxes is always up to the GM and the players, but if given enough leeway, the characters could end up writing the story themselves as they (or their employer) claw their way to the top of the political mountain.

The Crusade

In the canon of Dhuran going from *Ancient World* up to the events in *Edge of Arcanum*, the Crusades prove to Raziel that the civilized races of the Known Lands have set aside their differences (as a collective whole) to fight back against the evils that plague the land. This heroism and comradery prove they are worthy of the cosmos and a new pantheon shall be created. Raziel “recruits” new gods and goddesses to a pantheon he created. He then speaks to the people, becoming the master of all new priests. New religions are born and the people are eventually taught their true history. The barriers are reformed and the people are once again allowed to travel between planes. The Abyss becomes locked away and all spirits are properly released. The process takes about 100 years, but eventually Dhuran once again becomes a safer place.

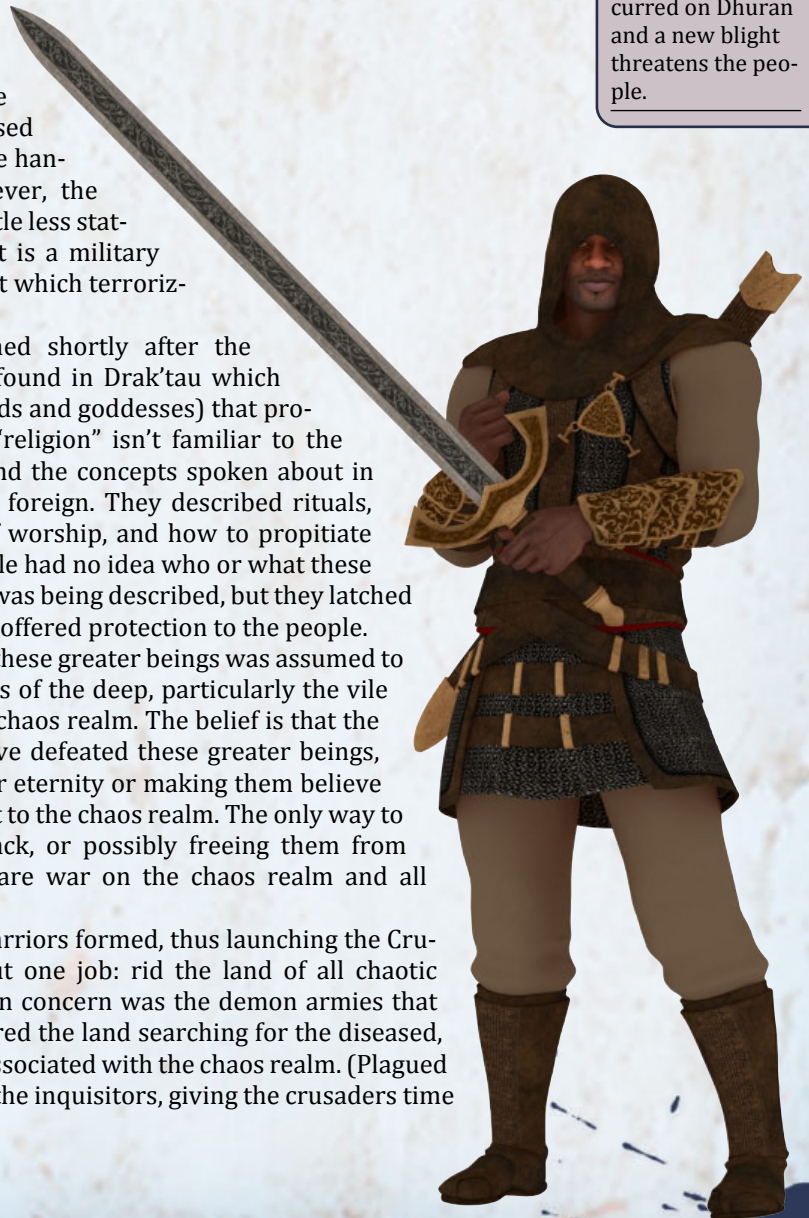
This storyline is created to feed into the events that occur within *Edge of Arcanum*; they are not meant to define how a GM’s campaign is supposed to end or how the Crusades are handled in that campaign. However, the purpose of the Crusades is a little less static, but simple nonetheless – it is a military campaign to rid the land of that which terrorizes it.

The Crusades were launched shortly after the translation of ancient scrolls found in Drak’tau which spoke of greater beings (i.e. gods and goddesses) that protected the people. The term “religion” isn’t familiar to the people of the Known Lands and the concepts spoken about in these scrolls were completely foreign. They described rituals, religious holidays, methods of worship, and how to propitiate these greater beings. The people had no idea who or what these greater beings were and what was being described, but they latched onto how these greater beings offered protection to the people.

The theory about the loss of these greater beings was assumed to be at the hands of the denizens of the deep, particularly the vile beings that emerged from the chaos realm. The belief is that the denizens of the deep must have defeated these greater beings, possibly locking them away for eternity or making them believe the Known Lands had been lost to the chaos realm. The only way to bring these greater beings back, or possibly freeing them from eternal captivity, was to declare war on the chaos realm and all beings associated with it.

A great band of hardened warriors formed, thus launching the Crusade. These crusaders had but one job: rid the land of all chaotic influences. Although their main concern was the demon armies that periodically appear, they scoured the land searching for the diseased, undead, and weird creatures associated with the chaos realm. (Plagued beings were being handled by the inquisitors, giving the crusaders time to deal with other conflicts.)

Edge of Arcanum is the second setting placed within Dhuran. It’s featured in the *Entropic Gaming System: Quick Start Guide* and will be fully compatible with *Bestiary Vocabulum*. It moves the timeline forward 500 years where many changes have occurred on Dhuran and a new blight threatens the people.



The crusaders spend all their time crisscrossing the Known Lands and exploring territories beyond it. They avoid the Land of the Barbarians and the Land of the Pharaohs as they only seek those connected to the chaos realm, not the “uncivilized humanoids” that live outside the Known Lands.

The Crusade is a single, ongoing military campaign comprising a single, elite army. They cannot be in two places at once and thus require continuous support from adventurers and explorers to aid in their war against the chaos realm. Those who truly prove their worth can join the Crusade, but most prefer to venture off on their own, as a small band of warriors, dealing with a multitude of engagements.

Bestiarum Vocabulum

Bestiarum Vocabulum is a collection of adversaries, creatures, and denizens of the deep for all settings placed on Dhuran. Although some entries may need to be adjusted or discarded given the era of the setting and all extenuating circumstances, every book supports every Dhuran setting. They can also be used generically for all other dark fantasy and fantasy horror settings as desired, although the locations will have to be adjusted.

The first *Bestiarum Vocabulum* is 100% compatible with *Ancient World* and mostly compatible with the upcoming *Edge of Arcanum*. The main difference is that plagued and diseased creatures are unique to *Ancient World*. This first bestiary focuses on the continent of Aelmere (although the heroic races of the Known Lands lost the name of the continent during the apocalypse). The heroic races used to control a much larger portion of Aelmere, but the current settlements are confined to the area now called the Known Lands.

Aelmere comprises all the land that engulfs the Inner Sea and borders the Outer Sea. To the southeast, it ceases where the Land of the Pharaohs end. To the southwest, it extends to the farthest extent of the volcanic lands. To the northwest, it ends where the arctic continent begins, well beyond the Land of the Barbarians. To the northeast, it extends to the farthest extent of the lands never occupied by the heroic races.

There are eight continents on Dhuran with Aelmere being the largest and the most populated.



ADVENTURE BUILDER

ADVENTURE BUILDER

Gamemasters looking to add random scenarios to a campaign, or need to quickly build the framework of an adventure can use this **Adventure Builder**. This tool creates adventure guidelines using keywords. The overall meat of the adventure will have to be filled in by the GM, but the basics are provided with the tool that can then be fleshed out to create the action adventure.

Type

Before building the adventure, the general ‘type’ needs to be defined. This defines which set of keyword tables are used to create the final framework. Roll a d8 and consult the following table to determine the adventure type.

d8	Adventure Type
1	Political: The adventure is motivated by political factors and is associated with a political figure. This could be someone the characters are working for, or a figure that wishes to call upon their skills. Continue to page 109 .
2	Exploration: The adventure involves traveling to an unexplored territory with dangers unknown. Continue to page 110 .
3	Adventuring: The adventure involves traveling to a known territory with a definite goal in mind. Once the goal is achieved, the characters may be able to reap the spoils of their achievement. Continue to page 113 .
4	Sabotage: The adventure involves subterfuge and backstabbing to ensure some event doesn’t happen or someone else is stopped from whatever function they’re attempting to perform. Continue to page 115 .
5	Social: The adventure is motivated by social means and is associated with the general public. This moves the target area outside of the wealthier sections and into the middle and lower classes. Continue to page 117 .
6	Investigation: The adventure requires some type of non-combat resolution or is at least motivated by a non-combat resolution in order to gain some type of knowledge, insight, or object. Continue to page 119 .
7	Recovery: The adventure involves recovering a lost, stolen, or recently discovered item with some type of political, social, or monetary value. Continue to page 121 .
8	Military: That adventure is combat oriented and associated with some type of ongoing or recent conflict. Combat doesn’t have to be the only resolution, but encounters are frequent that often result in combat ensuing. Continue to page 123 .

Political Adventures

After defining an adventure as political, roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further develop the overall framework. The first roll defines the general location and political figure in question. This location is generic, allowing the GM to place it within whichever particular settlement is desired, possibly depending on where the PCs are currently located. The second roll defines what motivates the political figure into taking action. Finally, the third roll defines the opposing force of the political figure's action.

d8	Location – Sponsor
1	Human City – Noble: The adventure takes place within one of the human urban centers and is being driven by one of the local nobles, or possibly a visiting noble.
2	Human City – Wealthy Merchant: There are many wealthy and powerful merchants within the human urban centers. One of them has chosen to hire or sponsor the characters on a task that he or she needs completed.
3	Human City – Guild Leader: Guild leaders are often respected, much like the nobility, and are always influential within their community. One of them has called upon the characters to perform some type of deed.
4	Dwarven Kingdom – Gentry: Dwarven gentry are the equivalent of human nobles, often playing similar political games and vying for social power.
5	Dwarven Kingdom – Royalty: Dwarven royalty are akin to whatever human noble house is flexing the most power locally, controlling the greatest amount of influence among the nobles. However, royalty are all related to the current king or queen (note the actual king or queen are not likely to get involved) and have requested the characters' presence.
6	Dark Elf City – Warlord: Dark elven warlords have significant political power and control the military forces of the dark elf underground cities, including all manner of support for those military forces. They often call upon outside warriors to aid their military efforts when they can't put their differences aside and ally with the other dark elven warlords.
7	Gray Elf Town – Mayor: Mayors may be the political head of a gray elven town, but they are often inexperienced and need outside, or internal, assistance.
8	Halfling Village – Chieftain: The party has been called to one of the halfling villages to aid the chieftain and his tribe. These tribes are not very large and most halflings are busy performing other tasks.

d8	Motivation
1	Protection: The political figure requires some type of protection. The role could be as bodyguards, enforcers of the law or other rules, or just the personal retinue of the political figure during her excursions.
2	Wealth: The political figure is attempting to increase her wealth in some way. She requires the characters to assist in those efforts.
3	Alliance: The political figure is either attempting to form an alliance, or is trying to keep one from falling apart. The characters may have to serve as diplomats or advisors during this time.
4	Influence: The political figure is attempting to increase her political or social influence in some way. She requires the characters to assist in those efforts.
5	Artifact: The political figure is seeking the recovery of a rumored artifact, or the protection of one she already possesses.
6	Appointment: The adventure occurs during a time of election, promotion, or some type of event that allows the political figure to assume a greater position of power.
7	Maneuvering: The adventure is subtle, involving subterfuge and stealth activities as the political figure either attempts to outmaneuver another party, or perform deeds that otherwise cannot be made public.
8	Rally: The adventure is unsubtle, and widely known by the greater populace. The purpose is to gain the support of non-political people, possibly increasing the political figure's social standing.
d8	Opposition
1-2	Rival: One of the political figure's rivals is directly opposing her views or actions, possibly taking action against her at the same time.
3-4	Uncivilized Humanoid: Some humanoid race considered uncivilized is disrupting the efforts the political figure is attempting.
5-6	Ally: One of the political figure's allies is secretly plotting against her.
7	Newcomer: A total stranger to the current political scene is interrupting the political figure's efforts.
8	Public: A public outcry against the political figure is work directly against all her efforts.

Exploration Adventures

Exploration adventures are simply those placed within territories that have yet to be properly explored or documented. Someone may have passed through it briefly, spotting something in the distance that needed to be further investigated, stumbled upon something by accident and has reported his findings for full exploration, or maybe the area just needs to be explored to see what threats there are.



Roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework. The first roll defines the general location to be explored. Remember, these may be territories adjacent to locations already fully documented. This location is presented generically, allowing the GM to further detail it, possibly being depending on where the PCs are currently located. The second roll defines why the exploration is required. Finally, the third roll is an optional roll to randomly assign adversaries.

d8	Location
1	Belmead Mountains: The group must travel into the Belmead Mountains to discover something far from the road. This could be within the mountain peaks, or throughout the vast forest that covers much of the mountain range.
2	Bygrass Marsh: Ancient trails can be found throughout the Bygrass Marsh, possibly leading to ancient cities. The trek is quite far and leads the group along a perilous journey through the vast wilderness.
3	Green Lake: There is some type of disturbance in or around Green Lake, past the Bygrass Marsh. Few ever dare travel this far as many threats exist which could harm the brave explorers.
4	Winterbrush Forest: Although Winterbrush Forest covers a large portion of the Known Lands, there are still areas within it that have either not been explored or exploration groups failed to return.



- 5 **Merriton Mountains:** Although the dwarves and dark elves have explored much of the land around their homes, there are still areas within the Merriton Mountains that few have ever traveled. This is especially true west of the dark elven cities.
- 6 **Low Plains:** Most feel the low plains have been thoroughly explored, but random sightings of unknown structures have been reported and varying migration patterns of different creatures often brings them precariously close to civilization.
- 7 **Fairburn Forest:** Must of the Fairburn Forest has yet to be explored and many unknown threats are possible. Additionally, many ancient areas lie in or near the Fairburn Forest, increasing the possibility of discovering an ancient city.
- 8 **High Plains:** The halflings keep the high plains fairly safe, but there are pockets of territories that have never been explored. This may be due to threats from the Land of the Pharaohs or dangerous creatures that keep all humanoids away.

d8	Purpose
1	Survey: Someone has reported seeing remnants of an ancient village, town, or city. It is most likely little more than ruins. The characters are called upon to survey the location and report their findings.
2	Marching Army: A distant army (a small force or a full army) has been seen marching either toward one of the settlements or dangerously close to one of the settlements without it being the actual target. A team of scouts is pulled together to investigate.
3	Missing Person: Someone has been kidnapped or otherwise disappeared and the townsfolk are scrambling to find a group that will recover their missing loved one.
4	Ancient Outpost: Some type of ancient outpost: a keep, tower, or small fort, was spotted during a scouting or surveying trip. The characters are called upon to investigate this outpost and see if it can be repurposed for the protection of the Known Lands.
5	Ominous Sounds: Eerie sounds have been heard off in the wilderness; someone needs to ensure an attack is not imminent.
6	Recent Attacks: Someone or something has been harassing the settlement as of late and always retreats into the wilderness. The characters are called upon to hunt down and eradicate the threat.
7	Distant Threats: Scouts have spotted someone or something, with obvious bloodlust in their eyes, traveling quickly to the settlement. The characters are quickly scrambled to protect from the forthcoming attack.
8	Awakened Danger: An ancient beast of some sort has recently been awakened and is now wreaking havoc everywhere, drawing nearer and nearer to the settlement.

d8	Adversary
1	Humanoid: The adversary is some type of humanoid that doesn't fall into one of the other categories.
2	Demon: The adversary is native to the Abyss; carries the Demonic classification.
3	Weird: The creature is one of the strange creatures lurking across the Known Lands; carries the Weird classification.
4	Animal: The creature is a dangerous animal that dwells within the Known Lands; carries the Animal classification.
5	Monster: The creature is a monstrous thing native to the mortal realm or possibly one of the other planes; its name ends in 'ba-hal'.
6	Undead: The adversary is undead; carries the Undead classification.
7	Diseased: The creature is an unfortunate product of the chaos realm; carries the Diseased classification.
8	Plagued: The adversary is possessed by a bloodline spirit; carries the Plagued classification.

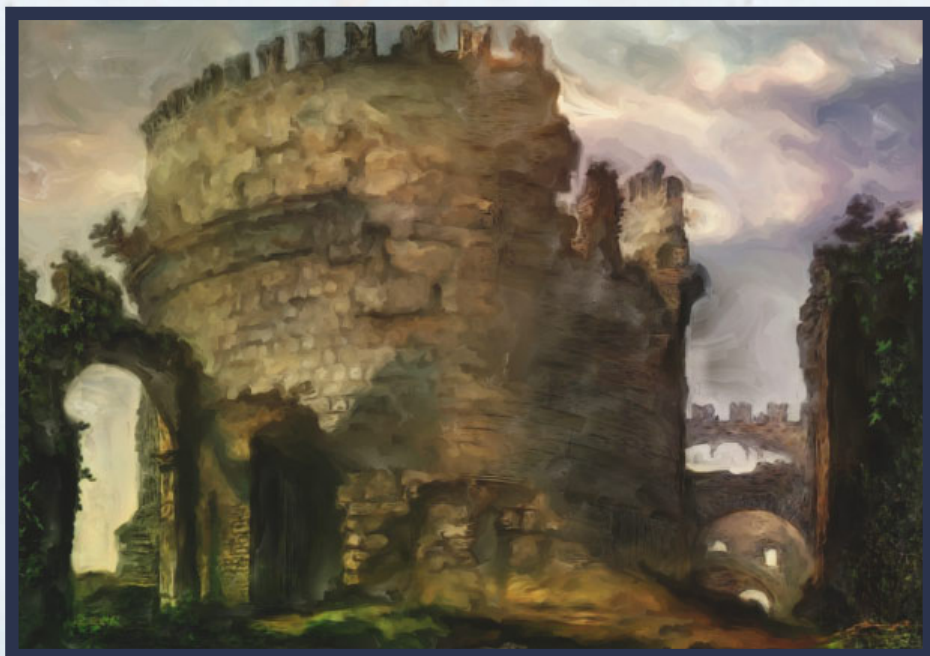
Adventuring Adventures

The term "adventuring" is being used here to signify a location that has already been explored and the party has at least some knowledge of what to expect while there. This includes areas of within one of the cities or wilderness areas another party (or even the PCs) has previously explored and reported what they found.

Roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework. The first roll defines the general location of the adventure. This location is presented generically, allowing the GM to further detail it, possibly being dependent on where the PCs are currently located. The second roll defines why the adventure is required. Finally, the third roll is an optional roll to randomly assign adversaries.

d8	Location
1	Inner Sea Coastline: Many coastal caves dot the Inner Sea. The adventure takes place in, near, or around one of these caves or a similar coastal structure.
2	Dwarven Kingdom: The adventure takes place within the vast network of tunnels within one of the dwarven kingdoms.
3	Urban Center Sewers: The adventure takes place within the vast network of sewers beneath one of the human urban centers.
4	Urban Center District: Human urban centers have smaller districts comprising a particular race, class, or other unifying commonality. The adventure takes place within that district.
5	Reclaimed Outpost: A recently explored and reclaimed outpost from ancient times is the location of the adventure.
6	Reclaimed Ancient City: A recently explored or well-known ancient city that has been mostly reclaimed is the location of the adventure. Although the whereabouts of the city is known and what it comprises are mostly documented, much of the surrounding land may house unknown threats.

- 7 **Dark Elven Cave System:** The adventure takes place within the spider-web-like network of caves that branch off one of the dark elven cities.
- 8 **Low Plains Road:** The low plains are crisscrossed with roads that connect the various settlements. Outposts appear periodically to keep travelers safe, but there are many dangerous lands surrounding the various roads. The adventure takes place near or around the roads within the low plains or utilizes one of the outposts as a base of operations.
- d8 Purpose**
- 1 **Villainous Threats:** A particularly vile being has established roots nearby and is threatening or harassing the people who live in the territory. The villain must be stopped before further damage is done.
- 2 **Treasure Hunting:** Treasure is rumored to dwell within the deepest parts of the location.
- 3 **Relic Hunting:** A powerful relic is rumored to have been lost within the deepest parts of the location.
- 4 **Cleansing:** The location has recently succumbed to an infestation of some sort, and needs to be cleared out. The majority of the infestation comes from rather mundane creatures or animals, but someone or something may be leading them.
- 5 **Occupation:** A group of intelligent beings has turned the location into their new base of operations. This is a threat unto the surrounding territory as the beings are known enemies to civilization.
- 6 **Local Harassment:** One of the local areas has been attacked or continually harassed and the culprits have retreated to the location. Follow them and eradicate the threat.



- 7 **Following Lead:** The party has followed an investigation, map, or some other type of lead that eventually brought them to this location. What's inside depends on what lead they were following, or maybe it's completely unknown.
- 8 **Save the Day:** An adventuring party was already launched into the location, but they failed to return. The PCs are called upon to find the adventuring party and hopefully return them safely.
- d8 Adversary**
- 1 **Humanoid:** The adversary is some type of humanoid that doesn't fall into one of the other categories.
- 2 **Demon:** The adversary is native to the Abyss; carries the Demonic classification.
- 3 **Weird:** The creature is one of the strange creatures lurking across the Known Lands; carries the Weird classification.
- 4 **Animal:** The creature is a dangerous animal that dwells within the Known Lands; carries the Animal classification.
- 5 **Monster:** The creature is a monstrous thing native to the mortal realm or possibly one of the other plains; its name ends in 'ba-hal'.
- 6 **Undead:** The adversary is actually undead; carries the Undead classification.
- 7 **Diseased:** The creature is an unfortunate product of the chaos realm; carries the Diseased classification.
- 8 **Plagued:** The adversary is possessed by a bloodline spirit; carries the Plagued classification.

Sabotage Adventures

Sabotage adventures focus on stealth or subterfuge as the team quietly inhibits some type of activity that someone doesn't want to proceed. Although it's possible to have an adventure of this type in the wilderness, this particular table focuses on sabotages within a civilized environment.

Roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework. The first roll defines the general location where the sabotage is to occur. This location is presented generically, allowing the GM to further detail it, possibly being dependent on where the PCs are currently located. The second roll defines why the sabotage is required. Finally, the third roll defines the target of the sabotage.

- d8 Location**
- 1 **Uncivilized Village:** Someone within one of the uncivilized villages is causing a stir amongst the civilized areas. This potential threat to the Known Lands needs to be quelled, but must be done quietly. Although it needs to be stopped, no one wants to deflect the ire of the village onto the heroic races.
- 2 **Warlord Camp:** Warlord camps are often bustling with activity that nobles, gentry, and other warlords despise. Most warlords have their own agendas in mind and care very little about collateral damage. If their goals threaten the wellbeing of others, it needs to be addressed.

3	Noble Estate: Noble houses are often involved in political subterfuge and request the characters to perform a task for them with the utmost discretion. This is most likely a maneuver against another noble house with the intent of sabotaging their operation.
4	Guildhouse: The guildhouse is the main headquarters for a public guild where all officers meet. Guilds often struggle to see eye-to-eye and possibly the most efficient way to sabotage a guild is by taking the action directly to their headquarters.
5	Remote Outpost: Remote outposts sometimes fall under the control of corrupt individuals. Before that leader is exposed as being a heretic, subtlety is required to avoid public outcry, and the threat of a civil war (the public tends to blow things out of proportion).
6	Ancient City: Once an ancient city is cleared of all threats and the ensuing demonic incursion is quashed, the ancient city falls into the hands of whoever has the money to support it. These sometimes become the new home of corrupt individuals who wish to use it as a base of operations to launch an attack against a nearby settlement. Sometimes they're used as secret headquarters to "collect" denizens of the deep that can be unleashed at a later time in a war-like fashion.
7	Gentry Territory: Each member of the gentry typically has a small territory that falls under their control. Must like nobles, they too often get involved in political subterfuge and wish for all actions to be taken directly to the target gentry's territory.
8	Merchant Holdings: Powerful merchants have many holdings. Some may be used as a front for other activities, some may contain all manner of vice to exploit the desires of the people, and others may have secret passageways that lead to illegal holdings.
d8	Purpose
1-2	Impede a Building Threat: There is a definite threat to the greater populace building within the target of the sabotage. This threat must be stopped or slowed down so that other actions can be taken against it, such as arrest, expulsion, or exposure.
3-4	Quiet the Target: A particular humanoid needs to be quieted. This could go as far as assassination, or a kidnapping, or could be something like intimidation.
5-6	Theft: The sabotage involves stealing an object, research, or experiment in order to stop the target from proceeding.
7	Destruction: The sabotage involves destroying a tangible object.
8	Spoilage: The target object is something that has special storage requirements. It can be destroyed by altering its storage so that it spoils and is no longer usable.
d8	Target
1-2	Rival: The target of the sabotage is a rival of whoever is requesting the sabotage. The requester could be one of the PCs or someone outside of the group.

- 3 **Uncivilized Humanoid:** The target is actually a humanoid from one of the uncivilized races. This humanoid may have infiltrated one of the settlements or the sabotage is taken directly to that humanoid's home.
- 4 **Ally:** The target of the sabotage is an ally of whoever is requesting the sabotage. The request could be one of the PCs or someone outside of the group.
- 5-6 **Newcomer:** Someone new to the settlement has dastardly plans and is quickly executing them.
- 7-8 **Lower Class:** The target of the sabotage is someone not considered part of the upper classes – they are not nobles, gentry, powerful merchants, warlords, guild leaders, or royalty. How this person managed to become the target of the sabotage could lead to another adventure opportunity.

Social Adventures

The term “social” is being used here to signify the adventure is much more public than private. It may affect a greater portion of the general public, is located within the more public areas of a settlement, or is motivated by public necessity.

Roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework. The first roll defines the general location of the adventure. This location is presented generically, allowing the GM to further detail it, possibly being dependent on where the PCs are currently located. The second roll defines why the adventure is required. Finally, the third roll is an optional roll to randomly assign adversaries.

d8	Location
1-2	Human Urban Center District: There are many districts within the large human cities and the majority of each is occupied by the middle and lower classes. Outcries for help amongst these districts are extremely common and gain the most visibility due to the sheer abundance of people affected.
3-4	Gray Elven Town: There are no upper-class townsfolk within the boundaries of the gray elven towns. Thus, any need for help is coming from the standard folk who thrive amongst the middle and lower classes.
5-6	Dark Elven Marketplace: The marketplace within dark elven cities is the only spot where all manner of people come together in the public eye. There may be any number of secret gatherings amongst the less affluent, but these always remain secret and would never fall under the social category. Sometimes, the need for help is brought to the marketplace to ensure the sanctity of other secret gatherings.
7-8	Surrounding Farmland: Many settlements have outlying farmland protected by those from the nearest settlement. They live in possibly the most dangerous areas of the Known Lands due to the lack of protection from fortified walls, but the rich soil necessary for farming is rarely contained within those walls, forcing farmers to fight for survival elsewhere.

When using adversaries in a social adventure, the threat could be direct or indirect. Direct would be the adversary is the source of the disturbance while indirect would be the adversary is actually a tool be utilized by the true source of the disturbance. This allows the GM to better connect the purpose of the adventure with the randomly chosen adversary.

d8	Purpose
1	Protection: The social adventure is one of simplicity – the location is being attacked, or an attack is imminent, and needs the PCs to protect them. This may be a forced conscription while the PCs are in that location or a cry for help from someone who runs up to the PCs and begs for their assistance.
2	Kidnapping: Either someone important or of a youthful age has been kidnapped and the public is demanding justice. They want the victim to be returned safely, or just returned for a proper burial, and the culprit to be dealt with swiftly.
3	Revelation: Somebody or a group of somebodies has uncovered either something damning or divine. This could be accidental, coincidental, or a straight-out lie. Whatever it is, the issue is being boasted about or preached and those in the surrounding area are becoming agitated or guided by those words. This may provide a false hope that leads to ignorance or an uproar that leads to a civil war.
4	Rebellion: The middle or lower class is fed-up and taken to rebelling against some oppressive body. If the activity was preceded by an occupation or change in leadership, then the locals want to reinstate the previous regime. If the activity was preceded by an event within that same class, this is more of a demonstration that has escalated into a riot.
5	Discovery: A valuable object has been discovered that could benefit the middle and lower class.
6	Infighting: Some type of feud has developed amongst the middle or lower class, forcing action to be taken to insure the safety of all others.
7	NPC Threat: The PCs are the actual target of the adventure due to some action taken against them by a major NPC. This requires the PCs to be living amongst the middle or lower classes.
8	Governance: The people are quite unhappy with their current or potential governing body. There has been an outpouring of rage over that governing body and the people are on the verge of revolting.
d8	Adversary
1	Humanoid: The adversary is some type of humanoid that doesn't fall into one of the other categories.
2	Demon: The adversary is native to the Abyss; carries the Demonic classification.
3	Weird: The creature is one of the strange creatures lurking across the Known Lands; carries the Weird classification.
4	Animal: The creature is a dangerous animal that dwells within the Known Lands; carries the Animal classification.
5	Monster: The creature is a monstrous thing native to the mortal realm or possibly one of the other plains; its name ends in 'ba-hal'.
6	Undead: The adversary is actually undead; carries the Undead classification.

- 7 **Diseased:** The creature is an unfortunate product of the chaos realm; carries the Diseased classification.
- 8 **Plagued:** The adversary is possessed by a bloodline spirit; carries the Plagued classification.

Investigation Adventures

Investigation adventures focus more on the non-combat aspects of role-playing. Combat could be used as a hindrance to the investigation, but it's not meant to be how the adventure is intended to be resolved. Before launching into an investigation, ensure the PCs have an appropriate Skill set in order to succeed. Otherwise the adventure might become much more difficult or divulge from its initial intentions.

Roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework of the investigation. The first roll defines the general location where the investigation is resolved. There could be many other locations involved leading up to the resolution, but this location happens to be where the adventure ends or begins, either way serving as a focal point. The locations provided are mostly generic, allowing the GM to place them wherever desired. The second roll defines the purpose of the investigation; this is the even preceding the investigation, prompting the characters to take action. Finally, the third roll defines who or what serves as a hindrance or opposition to the investigation.

d8	Location
1	Estate: The upper class often live in estates: the wealthier the family, the larger the estate. Each estate is unique, built per the desires of the family and the architect hired to design it. There may be any number of hidden passageways, secret rooms, trapdoors, and other places where secrets can be kept. Estates typically include a large manor house, a tract of land, and at least one outlying building.
2	Business: The investigation occurs within a place of business. This could be as common as an inn, tavern, or supplies store or somewhere less common like a spice shop, tannery, or apothecary.
3	Farm: The characters are brought to the outskirts of town or sent to an outlying area where farmland exists. The investigation could take place in or near the farmhouse or tool shed or out in one of the fields.
4	Outpost: The PCs are called to a remote outpost where little more than guard and scouting duties are performed. The outpost should be well protected against the dangerous lurking in the wilderness, but is susceptible to the same conspiracies that occur within city limits. Sometimes enemies from within are more dangerous than those from without.
5	Dwelling: The middle- and lower-class live within a variety of dwellings that would never qualify as an estate. They may have a small amount of yard around their house, but otherwise they are nestled in the neighborhoods that fill the various settlements.



- 6 **Guildhouse:** Guildhouses are where the upper echelons of the guilds meet for various reasons. Guild machinations often run rampant and all is funneled through the guildhouse during periodic meetings or secret rendezvous. An investigation of a guildhouse requires the utmost discretion as there are probably skeletons hiding in everyone’s closet.
- 7 **Military Structure:** The investigation occurs at a place designated as a military or policing structure within the limits of the settlement. This could be a training facility, stables only for the militia, or the city watch.
- 8 **Labyrinth:** The term ‘labyrinth’ is used here generically to refer to any underground structure that contains a series of pathways that link together to form some type of labyrinth-like design. These could be dungeons, sewers, cave networks, lava tubes, or actual underground mazes.

d8 Purpose

- 1 **Homicide:** Someone has been murdered and the circumstances point to it being personal, not a case of military action.
- 2 **Suicide:** A suicide has occurred, but it seems quite suspicious. The scene of the suicide doesn’t look quite right, almost as if it was staged.

3	Disappearance: Either through kidnapping or disposal of a murder victim, the regular tenant has gone missing.
4	Ritual: Evidence of a dangerous ritual of some sort has been located. This could be from eyewitness accounts or evidence left well after the ritual took place.
5	Suspicious Activity: Someone has reported what they believe to be suspicious activity amongst a neighbor, friend, or even enemy. The activity could occur frequently or only periodically.
6	Heinous Acts: The offender has not gone as far as killing, but is possibly torturing or poisoning others for their own sick and twisted pleasure. No one has died, but someone could soon.
7	Scandal: Scandalous acts are common amongst the upper class as they think they can get away with anything. One or more is currently wrapped up in some grand scandal that needs to be unraveled.
8	Accidental: The investigation occurs almost accidentally as the characters are either on their way somewhere else or stumble upon it in the midst of another adventure. This isn't meant to derail their larger adventure, but rather it supplements downtime with something intriguing to look into.
d8	Opposition
1	Heretic: The opposition is a member of one of the heroic races.
2	Humanoid: The opposition is an uncivilized humanoid, not being a member of one of the heroic races.
3	Demon: The opposition is considered a demonic being; carries the demonic classification.
4	Group: The opposition is actually a group of people, possible a guild, cult, or secret organization.
5	Weird: The opposition is a strange creature that normally lurks the Known Lands; carries the Weird classification.
6	Monster: The opposition is a monstrous being native to Dhuran or one of the other planes; its name ends in 'bahal'.
7	Chaotic: The opposition is one of the chaotic beings created by the Abyss; carries the Diseased, Plagued, or Undead classification.
8	Corrupted: The opposition is a member of one of the heroic races who's become corrupted by the power of the chaos realm. He may have 'sold his soul' to a demon to gain supernatural abilities or has become a demon's puppet.

Recovery Adventures

The purpose of a recovery adventure is to reclaim a lost or stolen item, or to return someone that was kidnapped. If recovering an item, there should be some value attached to the item, whether it is physical or sentimental. If recovering a person, that individual should be of extreme importance. This goes beyond the "Missing Person" adventure type as this individual was singled-out for a specific reason, and may be being tortured or enslaved by the abductors.

Roll a d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework. The first roll defines what or who needs to be recovered. The second roll defines the general location of where the item or person originates (i.e. where they were taken from). Finally, the third roll defines the general location of where the item or person has been taken to (i.e. where they are now). Defining the culprits should depend on the results from all three rolls, ensuring the destination of the adventure corresponds to somewhere the culprit can access. **Example:** If taken to an uncivilized humanoid settlement, the only ones with access to that settlement are those living there or those trading with the inhabitants.

d8	What
1-2	Noble: A noble, warlord, aristocrat, or ruler has been kidnapped (or someone equivalent to those social ranks). This possibly occurred during a raid of the individual's estate, during battle, or while traveling between settlements.
3	Noble's Child: The child of someone in the upper class has been kidnapped and the parents are in an absolutely uproar. The culprits may be attempting to ransom the child or possibly flexing their power against the parents as a sign of superiority.
4-5	Relic: An ancient object of importance has been taken. This object may possess great power or could be key to defeating a specific type of enemy.
6-7	Heirloom: An object of familial importance has been taken. This object may be a symbol of the family's power or possibly be a reminder of a deceased ancestor.
8	Research: Important scrolls and experiments covering a specific field of research have been taken. If allowed to fall into the wrong hands, the power of this research could be used against the designer or whoever backs him.
d8	Origination
1	Human Urban Center: The object or person was dwelling within one of the mostly-human cities. Those seeking the recovery are quite important socially and politically within the city.
2	Gray Elven Town: The object or person was dwelling within one of the gray elven towns. Although not as important to humans in their sprawling cities, the gray elves put a much higher value on people and items within their circle of influence.
3	Dark Elven City: The object or person was dwelling within one of the dark elven underground cities. Warlords are typically tasked with ensuring the recovery of anything or anyone of importance.
4	Dwarven Kingdom: The object or person was dwelling within one of the dwarven kingdoms. Members of the gentry are typically tasked with ensuring the recovery of anything or anyone of importance.
5	Halfling Village: The object or person was dwelling within one of the halfling villages. The entire village gets involved when someone or something of importance has been taken from them.
6	Traveling: The theft or kidnapping occurred while traveling between settlements. This could have been preceded by a daytime ambush or a stealth approach at night.

7	Remote Outpost: The object or person was residing at a remote outpost, either temporarily or as a long-term assignment. The owner or captain of the remote outpost is prompting the recovery efforts.
8	Hidden Cache: The object or person was residing within some type of hidden cache of other valuable items. If this was a kidnapping, the person should have a reason for visiting the hidden cache. If the theft of an object, there should be a reason why that object is being held within that hidden cache.
d8	Destination
1	Underground: The person or object is actually being held within an underground area beneath or near to the origination. This is not an underground city, but rather part of an underground network where no one lives.
2	Rival's Estate: The person or object has been taken to a rival's estate either within the same settlement or the next settlement over. However, the culprits have done a thorough job of covering their tracks to avoid suspicion.
3	Wilderness: The person or object has been taken deep into the wilderness where no trails reach.
4	Remote Outpost: The person or object has been taken to a remote outpost where trails do reach, but few ever go. Only those assigned to the remote outpost ever go there or possibly those traveling afar pass by.
5	Ancient City: The person or object has been taken into an ancient city or structure. Recovery can be made more difficult by the lack of knowledge of that ancient location ever existing.
6	Uncivilized Humanoid Settlement: A group of uncivilized humanoids, or an ally, has brought the person or object into one of their settlements.
7	Distant Settlement: The person or object has been smuggled away to a distant settlement, far from its origin. The culprits have the advantage of naivety as few within their settlement, if any, have ever seen or heard of that person or object.
8	Surrounding Country: The person or object has actually been taken just outside the walls of the settlement, into its surrounding country. This could be a small fort, farmhouse, keep, or any other location within the settlement's limits, but outside of its walls.

Military Adventures

Military adventures are termed as such to signify the focus of the adventure is some type of combat resolution or is in response to a combat incursion. Roll three d8 and compare the results to the following tables to further create the overall framework. The first roll defines the general location of the conflict. This location is generic, allowing the GM to move it to wherever it's most optimal within the greater storyline. The second roll defines the general reason for the conflict, either as a defensive measure or an offensive one. Finally, the third roll is an optional roll to randomly assign the opposing force.

d8	Location
1	Settlement: The conflict is placed within one of the settlements of the heroic races, either within its walls or within its general limits.
2	Uncivilized Territory: The conflict is placed within or near to an area controlled by one of the uncivilized humanoid races.
3	Underground: The conflict occurs in some type of underground structure outside of any settlement's limits. This could be a hidden labyrinth or a network of caves in the mounts.
4	Hinterlands: The conflict occurs within the hinterlands throughout the plains or sparsely woods.
5	Wilderness: The conflict occurs within one of the thick forests, the Bygrass Marsh, or any other location where few from one of the heroic races dare to travel.
6	Ancient Location: The conflict occurs within one of the ancient locations, such as a city, temple, or outpost.
7	Mountains: The conflict occurs within the mountains where the wilderness is much thinner, but the elevation and rocky terrain become a major factor.
8	Lands Beyond: The conflict actually occurs outside of the Known Lands, within or approaching the Land of the Barbarians, Land of the Pharaohs, pirate territory, the volcanic peninsula, or areas north of the Belmead Mountains.

d8	Reason
1	Raid: A small band of warriors has been pulled together to do a quick raid on a target settlement or outpost.
2	Invasion: A large force of soldiers is marching toward the target.
3	Refugees: Refugees displaced by a prior event are now wreaking havoc upon their neighbor.
4	Villainous Deeds: A single, important NPC is pulling the strings of many, driving the action.
5	Chance Encounter: The conflict occurs by happenstance while traveling from one place to another.
6	Proliferation: A species is using combat to aid in the proliferation of their species, possibly to expand their homeland or as a parasite that feasts off others.
7	Chase: Combat ensues while chasing a main target. These are most likely smaller conflicts designed to protect the target so he can escape.
8	Obstacle: The conflict is yet another obstacle during the course of a larger campaign as the party trudges along toward its destination.



d8 Opposition

- 1 **Heretic:** The opposition is a member of one of the heroic races.
- 2 **Humanoid:** The opposition is an uncivilized humanoid, not being a member of one of the heroic races.
- 3 **Demon:** The opposition is considered a demonic being; carries the demonic classification.
- 4 **Group:** The opposition is actually a group of people, possible a guild, cult, or secret organization.
- 5 **Weird:** The opposition is a strange creature that normally lurks the Known Lands; carries the Weird classification.
- 6 **Monster:** The opposition is a monstrous being native to Dhuran or one of the other planes; its name ends in 'bahl'.
- 7 **Chaotic:** The opposition is one of the chaotic beings created by the Abyss; carries the Diseased, Plagued, or Undead classification.
- 8 **Corrupted:** The opposition is a member of one of the heroic races who's become corrupted by the power of the chaos realm. He may have 'sold his soul' to a demon to gain supernatural abilities or has become a demon's puppet.

Example

The following is an example of using the above tool to create the framework of an adventure and how that framework is further fleshed out to define the actual adventure will be. Start by rolling d8s.

1. 6 – Investigation
2. 7 – Military Structure
3. 1 – Homicide
4. 7 – Chaotic

The basic structure of the adventure is that it's an investigation into a murder that has been reported at a military or policing facility, ultimately caused by some type of chaotic being. From this basic framework, the additional details of the investigation are further fleshed out. For location, the military structure will be the watchmen's tower that connects to the southwestern gate of Storm Harbor. The murder was caused by a plague human stalking Storm Harbor. The victim is one of the bloodline spirit's descendants. The adventure is presented to the party as such:

"Screams ring out from the southwestern gate into Storm Harbor. A group of city folk and tavern-goers has gathered near the gate, rumbling all manner of rumors from a possible raid to the discovery of dead birds. No one appears to know what's going on until the head watchman steps forward. From the front of the crowd, the watchman declares 'An incident has occurred within the walls of the watchmen's tower, and it is being handled accordingly.' Murmurs throughout the crowd grow louder as they fester over what the incident could have been.

"Minutes pass and the watchman works diligently to clear the crowd of all unnecessary people. He retains a group of able-bodied men and women, forming a group to investigate the incident." (The characters should be within this group.) "The watchman approaches them and asks if they'd be willing to aid in the investigation of the incident. If prompted for a reason, the watchman simply declares 'We do not have the time or the manpower to investigate.' The characters are singled-out for the task as many of the others are busy shaking their heads or staring at the ground, an obvious indication that they do not want to get involved.

"Your reputation is known throughout the watchmen and the head watchman finds you a suitable candidate to investigate." (The characters should then choose to investigate the incident.)

"The head watchman informs you his name is Emmett Romero and asks you all to follow. Along the way, he recaps the incident. Apparently, one of the night watchmen was brutally attacked and killed while on duty. His body was found in a hay stack adjacent to the watchmen's tower, but signs of a struggle are evident within the tower where he was stationed. It appears that after he was murdered, his body was thrown out the window, landing in the hay stack below. The murder has so far been isolated to this poor night watchman, but the culprit has clearly gotten away.

"Emmett opens the door into the third floor of the watchmen's tower and asks you all to be discreet with the investigation. 'We don't need anyone panicking right now' he declares, and leaves you to your mission. Emmett then travels back down the stairs to resume his duties."



THE PRIORY

THE PRIORY

During the centuries before the apocalypse, the people of Dhuran were believers in the pantheon and built priories to teach monks to spread the word and fight persecution. Somewhere in the Belmead Mountains, just north of the halfling villages, sits an ancient priory, once a beacon of faith and now overwhelmed by chaos. (The actual location of the priory is mostly irrelevant; GMs are free to place it anywhere desired within the reaches of the Belmead Mountains.)

The priory has become the home of a demonic warrior. Once a valiant dark elf warrior before the apocalypse, he was called upon to carry out the will of the gods and goddesses. To aid his deed, he would be gifted eternal life and the power to manipulate the chaotic energy. The warrior could not deny the request and became infused with the essence of a demon. While not a full-fledged demon, the demonic warrior gained the ability to wield the powers of chaos and do as he pleased with the world the gods left behind.

The Priory is an introductory adventure for a party of 4-6 characters. The priory in question contains a number of bloodline spirits and creatures of chaos recruited or enslaved by the demonic warrior. The adventure can be completely self-contained or used as a launching point for a campaign. However, if the priory is not completely purged of all threats, the beings now residing there continually harass all settlements within 100 miles.

The demonic warrior presents a unique challenge to the characters and a twist on the overall canon of *Ancient World*. The power he wields is capable of extracting bloodline spirits from their eternal damnation without altering the divine ward and exploiting small holes in the fabric between the realms to summon beings from the chaos realm or sapping more of its energy. Instead of the destruction of a divine ward tearing a hole in the fabric, the warrior is more meticulous in his efforts and only extracts what he needs. Of course, this allows residual energy to seep through before the hole is fully closed, creating other possible complications, but that is of no consequence to the demonic warrior as it only furthers his malevolent desires.

The Priory is also self-contained in terms of adversaries. Although it utilizes adversaries from within *Bestiarum Vocabulum*, all applicable stat blocks are repeated herein, just without the full description of the creature. When combined with the *Bestiarum Vocabulum*, GMs can further flesh out the details of the adversaries along with introduce new ones that conform to the various elements of the adventure and the priory's surrounding territory. For example, the priory is located in the Belmead Mountains, possibly placing it in the domain of a ragbahal tribe. Additionally, the residual chaotic energy that seeps through before the hole is fully closed may cause the creation of carrion birds or even carrion hounds.

History

Nestled high in the Belmead Mountains is a priory. Once dedicated to the pantheon of Dhuran, it now sits lost to the world. All deities were once fully represented here as this priory was renowned for its dedication and teachings of the pantheon that abandoned the people. The monks and nuns who dwelled there warned the people that war would bring disaster, but their preaching went unheard and the foretold apocalypse rained down upon the unbelievers. Even though the monastics

of the priory were dedicated to nothing but the pantheon, they were not spared the wrath of their deities.

On the day of the apocalypse, a lone cloaked humanoid entered the priory's grounds. A stranger to all, the intruder was thoroughly questioned about the purpose of his travels. The man removed his cowl only to reveal a face of chaos, right before slaughtering all those within. Was this a demon or devil called up from the chaos realm? Was this being sent by the gods? The answers did not matter as the creature was yet another extension of the apocalypse, cleansing the land of the unworthy.

Although the priory was filled with those living a monastic life, not all had lived a pious life prior to their induction. Ten of the forty monks and nuns had parented children before beginning their calling and these children were kept away from the priory and away from most of civilization. As such, their home was free from the "eyes" of the apocalypse, surviving to continue life after the pantheon left.

As dawn arose on the next day, the children travelled to the priory after hearing the sounds of devastation throughout the night. They found nothing but death as the bodies of the monastics lay motionless on the ground. The children fled the priory and sought a safe haven. They never returned to the priory and the mountaintop sanctuary became lost to time. After centuries had passed, the priory's assassin returned to claim it as his own and slowly began building a force to command.

THE ASSASSIN'S NEW ARMY

Iymril Mizzrym, a former dark elf assassin, was transformed into a darkspawn by a malevolent god to fulfill the task given to him by the pantheon that abandoned Dhuran. Once a devilish assassin, he has become a demonic warrior whose name has been lost to time. Instead of going by Iymril, he uses a new name: Ethramesh.

Ethramesh has returned to the priory to build an army. Finding no shortage of skeletons and semi-preserved corpses, the darkspawn has been tapping into chaotic energy to create this army. The priory's bloodline spirits have become enslaved by Ethramesh, but this meager force is not enough for him.

Sitting atop a high mountain in a now untraveled location, Ethramesh's priory sanctuary has gone unnoticed to all explorers of the region. However, the darkspawn is very aware of the surrounding lands, the nearby halfling villages, and the not-too-distant dwarven kingdoms, gray elf towns, and human cities, all ripe for enslavement. Ethramesh periodically orders undead slaves to travel to these lands and kidnap lone individuals. They have been ordered to remain out of sight to avoid being followed, but the drag marks and signs of struggle left behind have come to the attention of the Jeffers City watchmen. Knowing their people are missing, yet not knowing why, the watchmen have sought brave warriors to recover the missing folk by traveling outside the confines of the city.

Summary

The characters are called upon to locate three humans taken from Jeffers City. With few signs left behind, the group must work diligently to follow the most obscure signs to find where the victims were taken. However, the trail quickly runs dry and the group comes upon a small band of halflings. The halflings had spotted a group of "shambling humanoids" traveling into the mountains and point the way.

Thanks to the aid of the halflings, the party is able to pick-up a vague trail passing through the Fairburn Forest and into the Belmead Mountains. They continue forth and travel high into the mountains to find an ancient priory nestled atop a cliff. The

trail appears to end at the entrance to the priory, and the PCs can only hope to find their kidnap victims inside. Making it in, however, is difficult at best, and traveling about inside is made even worse.

Throughout the priory, although the characters have no idea what a priory is, are signs of worship. Life within the priory was once dedicated to the worship of the pantheon; now it has become a place of darkness and evil. The interior is occupied by denizens of the deep, all dedicated to and controlled by a demonic being, the former dark elf turned darkspawn.

A Call for Help

The characters have enjoyed an evening relaxing or being entertained within the fortified walls of Jeffers City. Early the next morning, a group of watchmen have gathered just outside the open southeastern gates. They are obviously looking at something on the ground with the head watchmen pointing to various places along the ground and the outer wall.

The characters can either approach the watchmen and ask what's going on or ask a friendly citizen that has already started rumormongering. What they learn is mostly vague, but they do find out that blood splatter has been found on the ground and sprayed across the outer wall. Additionally, there are two-foot drag marks leading in three directions from the blood splatter. There's definitely not enough blood splatter to signify death, but someone was clearly attacked and taken away.

Overnight, a group of undead minions reached Jeffers City beneath the cover of darkness. They attacked a group of three young adult humans (about 18-years old each) while sneaking out of Jeffers City to avoid detection. (The humans are all thieves being sought by the watchmen and were attempting to flee Jeffers City for good.) The humans were not heavily armed or armored, looking to move quickly and quietly. The undead minions knocked the humans out, dragged them a couple feet, and then lifted them up to be carried off to the priory. The only signs left behind are the blood splatter and short drag marks. However, the drag marks indicate three different directions; complicating the matter slightly of which way did they go.

The city watch is gathering a couple of watchmen to investigate the situation. They don't know anything other than what they see and they aren't very good at investigating crimes after they have been committed and the perpetrators are long gone. Their preference is to recruit a group of skilled individuals to do the investigation and receive payment upon completion. Obviously everyone within the city would like to see the kidnapped victims brought back (although as of yet they don't know who was kidnapped) and the culprits hanged for their crime.

Most of the watchmen suspect a group of seadogs was responsible. They tend to be sloppy in their attacks and enjoy ransoming humans for coins, trinkets, or supplies. In fact, the first course of action the two watchmen investigators take is to travel to the seadog coastal villages and watch for signs of humans being held there against their will. This allows the recruited investigators to start within the city.

GETTING THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED

The PCs are the obvious choice to investigate the kidnapping. They are clearly skilled warriors capable of taking down these filthy culprits. The city watch offers a reward of 3gp, as that's all they can afford, along with the assurance that the city watch will offer any services it can during the course of the investigation. If the characters attempt to persuade the head watchman into paying more, his best offer

is 4gp upon completion of the job. He cannot go any higher than that and would rather find the next best group of warriors to investigate.

JEFFERS CITY

With the city watch investigators heading to the coastal region, the party is free to move about Jeffers City and gather information. This can be done through roleplaying or with appropriate rolls, such as Streetwise or Persuasion depending on how the information is being gathered. The characters can learn the following:

1. A small band of thieves has been harassing the people lately.
2. Although thieves are common, this new band has been attacking daily.
3. There is a Thieves' Guild somewhere in the city, but rumors state these new thieves are not a part of it.
4. The small band of thieves has not been spotted today.
5. At least one person heard a scuffle just outside the city gates, but the sound quickly disappeared.
6. Rumors are swirling about that the thieves must have killed someone, or a group of someones, and are now on the run.
7. The night watchmen are not particularly good at watching the city during the night.
8. The night watchmen are known to frequent the local brothel during their work time.
9. Two watchmen were assigned to the southeastern gate last night, but both were spotted coming out of the brothel.
10. No one is quite clear on what time the attacks occurred.
11. The night watchmen swear they were at their post all night long.
12. The southeastern gates were not open last night.
13. Many thieves use a passageway in the sewers to get into and leave Jeffers City without being spotted by the watchmen.

If the PCs follow-up on the sewer passageway that bypasses the southeastern gate, they must succeed on a **Notice (-2)** roll to find the passageway after entering the sewer. The passageway is behind a loose grate that was actually stolen from another part of the sewer and placed there to look as though it belongs.

Once inside the passageway, the characters can traverse the secret entrance, but only by crouching or crawling. The passageway is not very large and looks more like an opening for runoff water than anything else. The passageway snakes its way through the underground for 100ft before coming out at a large hole, covered in reeds and weeds, next to a large oak tree. Once emerging from the passageway, the PCs can clearly see they are 60ft away from the southeastern gate and the tree blocks entrance from the city watch tower. The party is free to address the existence of the secret passage as they please.

When the attack occurred, the three thieves had used the secret entrance to leave Jeffers City and were getting ready to head across the Low Plains. As they emerged, they spotted the undead minions shambling their way and decided the best course of action would be to move into the open where the city watch could spot them. Their hope was that the city watch could help them defeat the undead

Ancient World is a dark fantasy experience. There are no hoards of treasure and only those within the upper classes have the freedom to buy whatever they want, whenever they want. City organizations, such as the city watch, rely on a portion of the taxes collected by the city; they do not have a large source of funding and can rarely offer much to outsiders. Rewards of 2-3gp per group are the standard, among the city watch and almost every group that isn't a band of nobles, wealthy merchant, or one of the powerful guilds.

minions; they would then either trick or kill the watchmen and escape to the Low Plains.

Unfortunately, the nighttime watchmen were in the brothel and no one was manning the city watch tower. The thieves were ill-equipped for battle (they were hoping to travel as light as possible) and ultimately overpowered by the undead minions. They were then knocked out and carted away.

There is one visible indication as to what direction the thieves were taken: the undead minions used hand carts to bring their victims out of the Low Plains and into the Fairburn Forest. From there they would abandon the carts and throw the thieves over their shoulder. If the thieves wake up, they'll be knocked unconscious again until reaching the priory.

The wheels of the three hand carts left visible tracks in the ground. The characters can then ask the local watchmen and learn that no carts have traveled that path for two weeks. These tracks were clearly made within the past few days, providing the characters with a trail to follow.

LOW PLAINS

The party can follow the tracks through the Low Plains until reaching Fairburn Forest about three miles away. GMs are free to throw in random encounters here, but otherwise the heroes make there without incident. There's no one on this trail at this time.

Upon reaching Fairburn Forest, the three hand carts can be seen discarded on the side of the path where it disappears into the thick woods. Blood can be found on the cart, but only enough to signify that it was very slowly dripping. Anyone making a **Healing** roll can determine the victims are still alive as the remnants of blood in the carts and at the scene of the scuffle are clearly not enough to kill anyone.

FAIRBURN FOREST

From the edge of the Fairburn Forest, the undead minions' path cannot be fully discerned. Following them requires a **Tracking (-2)** roll, but there are other options than simple tracking. One thing that should stand out to the PCs, possibly prompted by the GM, is that there are no signs of encampment in the forest. There are no telltale signs of a campfire, no clearings where tents could have been placed, and no remnants of food thrown on the ground, all indicating they are on the trail of something not human. The characters, on the other hand, will need to rest at some point of their journey and can reach the other side of the Fairburn Forest by nightfall. Once there, they can find a place to make camp and continue their search the next day.

The characters may not need to actually find the path taken by the minions if they simply wish to travel through the forest and come out the other side. There are many half-worn paths that lead through the forest, branching off in different quite often during the trip. As long as they keep a general sense of moving in the same direction (mostly east), then they'll eventually come out of the forest. GMs may wish to throw in Random Encounters during this time or allow the characters to get lost.

At some point during their trip through the forest, either shortly after getting lost or when they make camp, they come under the watchful eye of a group of halfling scouts.

Possible random encounters include bats, bears, cougars, coyotes, lynx, rats, snakes, and wolves.



HALFLING SCOUTS

Either while lost or at camp, the characters hear rustling amongst the forest canopy. A small group of halfling scouts has spotted them and are descending to the forest floor.

Four halfling scouts approach the PCs with no weapons drawn. They are clearly displaying no signs of hostility and would like to speak with the characters. However, four other halfling scouts are still perched in the trees, just in case the party is hostile.

The head scout, a man named Dereekep, approaches and asks the characters to state their purpose in the forest. He's not really gauging whether they are lying or not nor does he particularly care about their mission. Dereekep is more concerned about bandits and threats to the halfling village than he is about warriors performing an investigation. However, if the PCs threaten the halfling scouts, they will draw their weapons and respond accordingly. Their purpose is to stop bandits and report any hostilities moving toward the halfling villages.

Fortunately for the heroes, Dereekep and his halfling scouts saw the band of undead minions and followed them to the edge of the Belmead Mountains. They saw the trail the minions took and noticed they had humans slung over their shoulder.

Dereekep can report that there were twelve "shambling humans", as he calls them, with three unconscious humans moving into the mountains. He did not stop them as they did not appear to be threatening anyone. He knows not why the unconscious humans were being carried, but then he cares very little for human behavior. At the time, the humans were not bleeding and the halflings chose to not intervene.

The PCs are free to respond to this information as they please, but note there are a total of eight halfling scouts including Dereekep. If the heroes attack, they will be dealt with accordingly and they won't be shown the trail that leads into the Belmead Mountains.

If they remain cordial, Dereekep and his band of scouts takes the PCs up to the Belmead Mountain pass the next morning. He suggests the party should rest before trekking into the mountains as it's a dangerous path to take. He assures the group that his scouts will keep watch for the night and keep the camp safe (which they do).

At sunrise, Dereekep and his scouts are ready to leave. They take the characters out of the woods and along a path skirting through the area where the forest meets the mountains. After traveling a couple of miles, Dereekep points out a barely discernible path leading into the mountains. The path shows clear signs of a recent disturbance, but there are no signs that it's a road frequented by regular travelers. In fact, Dereekep didn't even know the path existed until he saw the minions enter it.

At this point, the party is on its own once again. The halfling scouts cannot follow the heroes as they must continue their work of watching for bandits and other threats. Dereekep knows nothing about the path, including where it leads and what may be living along it.

TRAIL THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS

The characters have already spent a day traveling across the Low Plains and through the Fairburn Forest to reach the faint trail that leads into the mountains. The priory lies at the end of this trail, although the party doesn't know that yet. At this point, they are merely following the direction pointed out by Dereekep, indicating the path taken by the "shambling humans" as he called them.

The trail through the mountains might be faint, but the footprints of the minions are relatively easy to spot. The mountain trail is littered with small pockets of sand due to pulverized rock from falling debris; the minions left obvious footprints. Following them requires a Tracking roll. If, at any time, a Tracking roll fails, a random encounter should occur. Bats, bears, and wolves are commonly found in the mountains as are other beings noted in *Bestiarum Vocabulum*.

Following the path is relatively easy, but traversing the terrain is not so. The mountain is rocky and the trail is not very wide (6ft wide at best) when it appears. The trail actually disappears frequently only to reappear 20ft later. As long as

Tracking rolls are made, the warriors are assumed to be looking for this trail, regardless of how many times it disappears. However, during combat, the terrain is considered difficult and all movement is halved.

The trail travels at a manageable incline until finally coming upon a set of stone stairs. Reaching these stairs should take the better part of a day as the group must travel around a foothill, through a gorge, and arrive at the bottom of the stairs near the edge of a very high bluff. The party is standing in a ravine clearly cut by a mountain river many millennia ago. The gorge was the likely exit of this mountain river, possibly cut by a pair of rivers that once came together. The only sign of the once mighty river is a trickling stream running alongside the path.

The stairs are quite narrow, being a mere 2-3ft wide. They are cut into the bluff with shaped stones set inside to provide proper footing. The stairwell goes up 100ft where the land appears to open up (as viewed from the bottom of the stairs).

Upon reaching the apex of the stairs, the heroes find a large mountain ridge dotted with trees and a large stone structure near the center (bearing in mind they are still in the foothills). This is the priory and behind it, the Belmead Mountains can be seen reaching into the sky.



PRIORY

The priory is a fairly large structure sitting atop the ridge. The only problem is that it's protected by a 10ft tall stone wall extending anywhere between 20ft and 50ft from the actual priory. For simplicity's sake, the stairwell comes out looking at the western wall of the priory. Behind this wall is a 50ft courtyard. The wall is a rectangle, and the northern, eastern, and southern sections are roughly 20ft from the actual priory (although the eastern wall is 20ft at its closest and 40ft at its farthest). A single entrance is located along the western wall.

GENERAL TERRAIN

The area outside the priory isn't any better with grass past the overgrown stage, allowing anyone to move about unseen as long as they crouch (Stealth rolls are not needed, but movement is halved). If they stand, they can easily use Stealth to move about unseen. Seeing into the priory from outside, unless adjacent to the walls, requires **Notice** rolls due to the overgrown grass, trees, and bushes. This is the same for anyone looking out of the priory. (The minions rarely look out, but the homunculus might.)

ENTRANCE

Upon coming off the stairwell, the PCs are still 75ft from the priory's only entrance. Large overgrown trees block full view of the entrance, allowing the characters to leave the stairwell and time to discuss their course of action without being seen.

Scouting the priory grounds is fully possible, although they risk being caught. While no one is outside of the walls, a pair of rage skeletons stands guard at the entrance. They are facing each other, but can be easily distracted from their guard duties to investigate a disturbance. From the stairwell, the rage skeletons can be seen with a successful Notice roll. Otherwise they can be seen if the characters leave the cover of the overgrown tree. However, they risk being spotted by the rage skeletons (possibly requiring a Stealth vs. Notice roll).

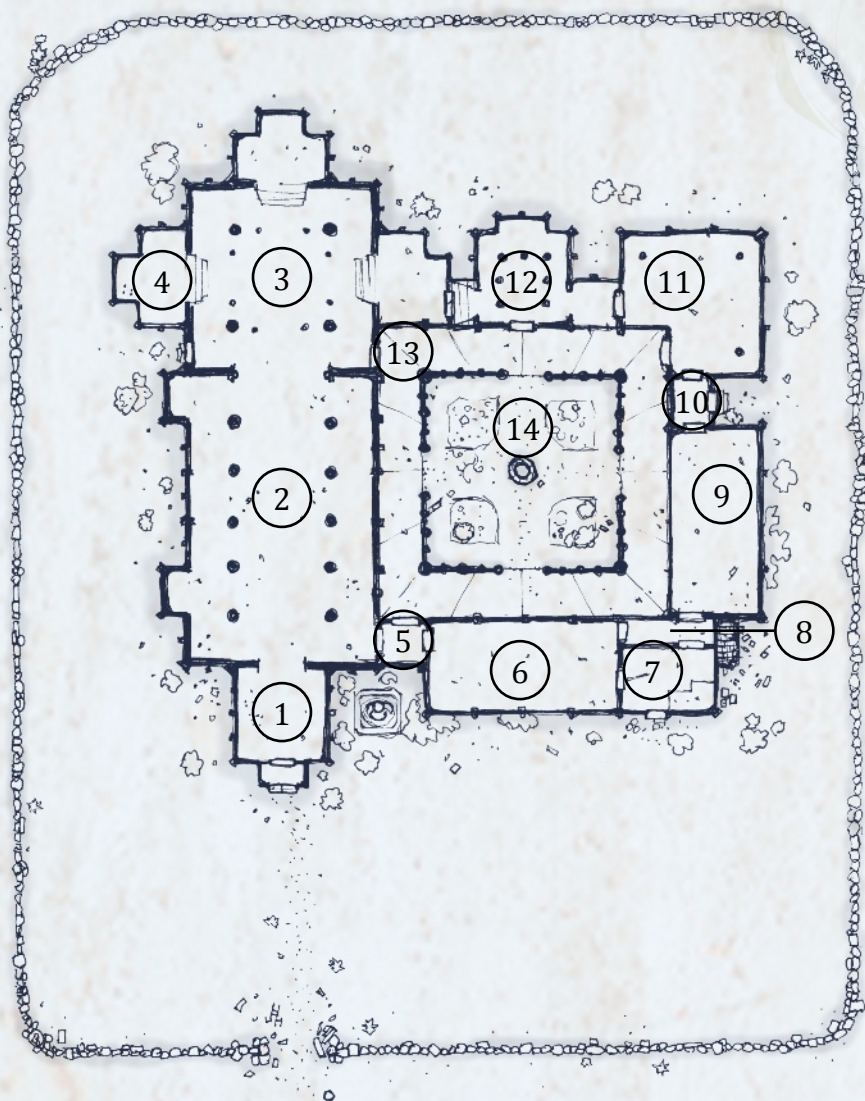
- Rage skeletons (two) – see page [142](#)

Rage skeletons have a tricky side to them. Upon reaching Incapacitated, they collapse into a pile of skeletal remains. At any time, Ethramesh can reach out and reanimate those skeletal remains to once again create rage skeletons; they are thus efficient guards that can be continually recreated. The heroes are most likely not aware of this and simply walk away once the skeletons are defeated. This may prove problematic later on in the adventure. However, if they bludgeon the skeletons with a club, mace, or hammer (during or after combat), the skeletal remains become unusable and cannot reanimate. Another option is to scatter the skeletal remains over the bluff, throwing them about haphazardly, so the chaotic energy cannot put them back together again. If the skeletal remains are only scattered about the ridge, the chaotic energy can pull them back together to recreate the rage skeletons.

If the PCs don't catch onto this, they may be allowed a **Common Knowledge** roll, or an equivalent Knowledge specialty, to understand that something must be done with the skeletal remains. What must be done is up to the characters.

OUTER COURTYARD

After getting past the rage skeleton guards, the outer courtyard is quiet. GMs wishing to challenge a group of PCs can add a combat encounter or two within the courtyard consisting of one rage skeleton per character. Otherwise, the courtyard is empty and the heroes can attempt to understand the priory that stands before them.



The priory can be broken down into two halves: the northern half and the southern half. The northern half contains a single, large cathedral. A high bell tower can be seen near the center of the cathedral. The southern half is a cluster of buildings all facing inward. Very small openings dot the walls, but no one can be seen through them (nor is anyone looking through them). There is a single window on the southwestern corner of the priory, but again no one can be seen through it.

The outer courtyard itself is open. Overgrown trees and shrubs dot the landscape immediately around the priory and the grass throughout has grown quite tall. The party can move about unseen thanks to the grass and overgrown trees partially blocking the windows, but they'll need to be cautious if approaching the main

entrance. The entrance is a straight path from the outer entrance where the rage skeleton guards were posted, following a worn path to an ornate door in desperate need of repair.

Following around the southern wall, the southern façade of the priory is much like the western façade. The biggest difference is that 2/3 of the way down is a door with no one standing nearby.

Continuing along the eastern wall, the eastern façade is varied, but there are no windows or doors, just different rooms that jut out here and there. Continuing along the northern wall, the northern façade (the cathedral) is also varied. About 1/4 of the way down is a window with vague activity being seen through. Otherwise, the wall contains rooms that jut out here and there.

If the party wishes to approach the main entrance (on the western side of the cathedral, straight in from the outer wall entrance), a **Notice** roll indicates activity within or near to the main entrance. There are obvious sounds of feet shuffling about and rowdiness can be faintly heard. If the party approaches the side entrance on the southern side, no activity can be detected. This is the safer of the two approaches as busting in through the main entrance alerts those within.

INSIDE THE PRIORY

There are two entrances into the priory: the main entrance and the side entrance as noted above. The main entrance is guarded, the side entrance is not. Additionally, the side entrance allows the heroes to enter the building cluster unseen while the main entrance immediately exposes them to detection. It's perfectly acceptable to burst into the main entrance and fight through the minions, but if stealth is preferred, the party must use the side entrance.

There aren't very many minions inside the priory. The kidnapped victims are being held in the chapterhouse (area 12), but the door between the library and the chapterhouse is impassible. It has been broken beyond repair and parts of the roof have collapsed there. The only way in is through the cloister or the adjacent cathedral transept.

Traveling through the cloister exposes the party to some risk of being seen. They can use stealth and quietly move along the cloister to reach the chapterhouse. If they bust in through the main entrance with swords swinging, they can fight their way through to the cathedral transept and enter that way.

Regardless of the route taken, Ethramesh doesn't confront them until they exit the buildings and return to the outer courtyard with the kidnapped victims (or without, if the victims are dead). By doing so, he has access to skeletal remains in the outer courtyard, and possibly the two guards from before, which he can animate into rage skeletons.

Ethramesh uses minions to keep him safe and do his bidding. Rage skeletons are used as guards outside, ghouls are used as servants (and are the ones who brought the kidnapped victims to the priory), and a pair of horned devils serve as bodyguards. If encountered outside the cathedral lobby, there should be no more than one ghoul per character. There are only two horned devils, but they don't fight until Ethramesh orders it.

If the heroes come in through the main entrance, Ethramesh is in the western range of rooms meditating. If they come in through the side entrance and avoid the cathedral, he's near the high altar, plotting his next move. His horned devil bodyguards are making a ruckus in the cathedral nave, thus the noises when approaching the main entrance.

GENERAL TERRAIN

The priory is in a general state of disarray. The walls and ceilings have started to crumble and debris is strewn about everywhere. The range of rooms once used as living quarters have been mostly gutted with all furniture being destroyed. The priory as a whole can definitely be saved with some much needed restoration, but until then it's in serious need of repair, which only complicates moving about.

All areas inside the priory are difficult to move about due to the large amount of debris. Running is not possible, but everyone can generally move about unhindered during combat up to their Pace. A lot of the debris can be used for 25% cover or picked up and thrown like a rock.

1. CATHEDRAL LOBBY

The large double-doors of the cathedral lead into a small entrance and then into the cathedral's lobby. Statues of unknown personalities line the lobby on both sides. None of these statues are familiar to the PCs as they depict prominent figures from the ancient religion. Guards are stationed within or near to the lobby, walking back and forth as if patrolling the small area. They immediately spot any intruders entering through the lobby doors.

- Ghouls (one per character) – see page [142](#)

2. CATHEDRAL NAVE

The nave of the cathedral is a high-ceilinged opening once holding rows of cathedral pews. The pews have been smashed and pieces of wood now litter the floor. This area serves as something of a recreational room for the priory's horned devil guards when they get bored. When the party first approaches the cathedral, the horned devils are in the nave, causing a ruckus.

If reaching the nave from the lobby, a door on the immediate right leads to a hall that connects to the cloister the southern range of rooms. On the opposite side of the nave is where the high altar stands.

3. CATHEDRAL HIGH ALTAR

The cathedral's high altar is one of the few preserved structures within the priory. Ethramesh likes to speak to his minions from the pulpit, giving him an air of authority and a feel as though he dominates these creatures. The ceiling peaks highest here and small stairs can along the northern, eastern, and southern walls. These stairs lead to small transepts. If coming from the nave, to the immediate right of the high altar is a door leading into the cloister; to the immediate left is a large window, mostly blocked by trees outside, that anyone can easily look through.

4. CATHEDRAL TRANSEPTS

There are a total of three transepts in the cathedral. The eastern one houses Ethramesh's throne. If the heroes entered through the side entrance, Ethramesh is here. Otherwise, he is meditating in the southern range of rooms or wandering about the priory. The northern and southern transepts serve as resting places for the horned devils and Ethramesh's homunculus advisor (who avoids combat as much as possible).

5. HALLWAY

Between the nave, cloister, and the western range of rooms is a small hallway. This hallway is designed to lock off certain areas of the priory while allowing passage to those with keys. The locks on the doors between the hallway and the nave and the hallways and cloister are broken, allowing the doors to open freely. However, the lock on the door between the hallway and the western range of rooms is destroyed and the door no longer moves. It appears to have been melted to prevent passage.

6. WESTERN RANGE

Along the western wall is a range of rooms where the monks once slept. These have mostly been torn apart by Ethramesh's minions and time has not been kind to the remains. Most of the walls have either been torn down or riddled with holes, making the range of rooms more of a large, open area. This is where Ethramesh goes to meditate and is only accessible through the kitchen. All other doors are blocked and their locks are melted.

7. KITCHEN

The kitchen is no longer used and has been stripped bare of furniture and everything a kitchen needs to prepare a meal. The only thing that remains is a large counter set into the wall. Implements of torture are scattered about and days-old blood stains the floor and counter. The GM may optionally call for a Fear roll due to the carnage present.

There is a usable door between the kitchen and the southern range of rooms. It's typically locked, but the lock can easily be picked with a standard **Lockpicking** roll. There used to be a door between the kitchen and the dining room, not only an open archway remains. Adjacent to the counter is a large open window where minions appear to throw humanoid remains out of. A large overgrown tree blocks the window, but blood and humanoid chunks of flesh can be found just below the window from the outside. No glass remains on this window.

8. DINING ROOM

The dining room is completely empty except for a trail of blood leading from the kitchen. There are three doorways: one to the kitchen where the door no longer exists, one to the western range of rooms where the door is broken and the lock is melted (from intense heat), and one to the southern range of rooms that opens and closes freely with no lock.

9. SOUTHERN RANGE

Along the southern wall is a range of rooms where the nuns stayed. It has also been mostly torn apart and has become the "home" for Ethramesh's horned devils. If the horned devils are not in the nave, they would most likely be here.

10. FOYER

The side entrance into the priory sits between the southern range of rooms and the library. This is the preferred entrance for monks and nuns when walking the prior grounds. They were expected to avoid the front door and allow travelers and guests priority to the main entrance. The door shows definite signs of continued use and is still used by minions coming in and out of the priory. The foyer, however, is empty. The door to the library is closed but usable and the door to the southern range of rooms is usually open, but not open far enough for those inside the rooms to see who is in the foyer.



11. LIBRARY

Inside the library is a chaotic scene. It has become the home of Ethramesh's homunculus advisor who loves to throw books about after reading through them and searches for new ones by grabbing a shelf and discarding it onto the floor. The small demon is a disorganized scholar and enjoys learning about what he calls, "The silly beliefs of humans before they abandoned the priory." If engaged in combat, he immediately flees. If approached diplomatically, he can be questioned, but ultimately doesn't reveal much. The homunculus is rather intelligent and spends his time reading, teaching Ethramesh how to better manipulate chaos energy, and acting as an advisor to all minions.

There are three doors that lead to the library. The door from the foyer is closed and lockable, but is rarely locked. The door to the cloister is never locked and freely opens and closes. The door to the chapterhouse is rusted shut.

12. CHAPTERHOUSE

The chapterhouse was once used by the priory's leaders to discuss matters of religion. It now serves as the prison for all kidnapped victims who are eventually "worked on" by the priory's minions (i.e. killed and turned into undead soldiers). The three victims are in the chapterhouse guarded by two rage skeletons and two ghouls. The ghouls are less likely to abandon their posts than the rage skeletons, who can be lured out into the cloister by a loud disturbance.

There are three doors in the chapterhouse. The door from the library is rusted shut and cannot be opened. The door leading to the cloister can open and close freely. The door to the cathedral transept is locked, but the lock can be picked.

- Ghouls (two) – see page [142](#)
- Rage skeletons (two) – see page [142](#)

13. CLOISTER

The cloister is a covered walkway running the full perimeter of the courtyard. It is used by all within the priory to move from building to building. The half wall provides a medium amount of cover and can be used to move about using Stealth.

14. COURTYARD

The courtyard is the central point to the priory. A now-dry well sits in the middle with overgrown stands of brush near the corners. The overgrown brush provides a medium amount of cover and can be used to move about the courtyard using Stealth.

ETHRAMESH

Ethramesh was once a dark elf assassin who sold his eternity to chaos in exchange for becoming a powerful darkspawn.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Skills: Entropy d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d8

Armor: Chaos armor (all 2)

Weapons: [2] Long sword (Str+d8)

Special Abilities

- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to disease and poison; half damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Four Arms:** Darks spawns have four arms. They can make two attacks each round without incurring any multi-attack penalties.
- **Powers:** Ethramesh has 40 Power Points and, using Entropy, knows the following powers: *animate, blast, zombie*
- **Size +2:** Ethramesh is about 10ft tall.
- **Supernatural Vision:** Ignores all penalties for lighting.
- **Terror:** Ethramesh is a horrific demon warrior.
- **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Normal damage is dealt by cold iron weapons.

Adversaries

GHOULS

Ghouls are animated bodies of the dead that have either been preserved throughout time or have yet to reach the states of putrefaction.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d8

Special Abilities

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4
- **Blood Feast:** Ghouls feast off the blood of their victims, causing exsanguination. If a ghoulishly Wounds a target with a bite attack, the victim must make an immediate Vigor (-1) roll or gain one level of Fatigue
- **Burrowing:** Can move at half its Pace underground.
- **Fear -1:** Forces fear checks to be made.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Scent of the Living:** Ghouls can sense the blood of the living. They gain a +1 bonus to Notice and Tracking rolls made against living targets
- **Supernatural Vision:** Ignores all penalties for lighting.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage.

HORNED DEVIL

Horned devils are skilled demon warriors that are always subservient to their master. They have been recruited by Ethramesh to serve as his bodyguards.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Taunt d8

Weapons: Great axe (Str+d10, 2 hands)

Special Abilities

- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to disease and poison; half damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Leathery Skin:** All 2
- **Supernatural Vision:** Ignores all penalties for lighting.
- **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Normal damage is dealt by cold iron weapons.

SKELETON, RAGE

These rage skeletons have been animated by Ethramesh's manipulation of chaotic energy. The skeletal remains come from previous residents of the priory.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Throwing d8

Special Abilities

- **Supernatural Vision:** Ignores all penalties for lighting.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage.

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Cynric removed his bow and nocked an arrow. Feradul pointed to a tree in the distance, indicated Cynric to shoot near the creatures in the hopes of scaring them away. He let the arrow fly and it thumped into the tree next to them. A loud roar answered the arrow and one of the creatures began bouncing around angrily.

"I think we made it mad!" exclaimed Cynric.

"You think so?!" yelled Roylla.

"They'll be drawn by the glow of the fire! Prepare yourself!" Feradul stepped back and prepared for the creatures' arrival. He could see two shadow-like forms moving quickly toward the camp. Off to the side, two more shadows joined in.

The three warriors made a half circle around the fire, waiting for the creatures to come.

Welcome to Dhuran, a world filled with secrets and hope. *Ancient World* presents a dark fantasy setting where great warriors scour the land to protect the people from the denizens of the deep and the terrifying creatures that call Dhuran home. The people have spent centuries surviving a seemingly never ending blight, but a glimmer of hope shines in the distance. However, as the secrets of Dhuran's ancient past begin to unravel, the veil begins to lift and the true perils of the Known Lands appear. Grab your weapons and armor and lead the fight to reclaim Dhuran!

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