



SAVAGE THUNDERSCAPE™ THE WORLD OF ADEN

WRITTEN BY BEATTIE, SWAFFORD, CARMAN, & WULF



THE WORLD OF ADEN ORIGINALLY CREATED BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY

Written by John Beattie & Mark Swafford,
with Shawn Carman & Rich Wulf



Copyright © Kyoudai Games, LLC 2015

Savage Thunderscape - The World of Aden, Kyoudai Games and their associated logos are trademarks of Kyoudai Games, LLC.
This game references the Savage Worlds game system (*Savage Worlds core rulebook*, *Savage Worlds Fantasy Companion*, *Savage Worlds Horror Companion*), available from Pinnacle Entertainment Group at www.peginc.com.

Savage Worlds and all associated logos and trademarks are copyrights of Pinnacle Entertainment Group. Used with permission.
Pinnacle makes no representation or warranty as to the quality, viability, or suitability for purpose of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION3

CHAPTER 1, THE WORLD OF ADEN5

Pre-History	5
The Era of War	5
The Golden Age	5
The Age of Thunder	7
The Dark Era	7

Timeline.....7

Life in the World of Aden.....11

Languages	11
Cosmology	12
The Calendar & the Seasons	12
The Wildlife of Aden	12
Agriculture	14
Government	14
Religion & Philosophy	15

Major Faiths of Aden15

The Church of All Saints	15
The Radiant Path	16
Way of the Ten Beasts	16

Minor Faiths of Aden17

The War of the Sky	17
The Benevolent Miasma	17
Ancestor Worship	17
Nature Worshipers	18
The Divine Machination	18
Darkfall Cults	18

Industry.....18

Trade & Commerce19

Prominent Organizations.....19

The Crimson Sisterhood.....	20
The Herald's Guild.....	20
The Seers.....	20
The Steamwright Guild.....	20
The Thunder Scouts.....	20

CHAPTER 2, HEROES OF ADEN.....21

Races.....21

Dwarves	21
Elves	21
Faerkin	21
Ferrans	22
Goreaux	23
Half-Elves	23
Humans	23
Jurak	24
Rapacians	24
Echoes	25
Ilithix Exiles	25

Edges.....26

Background Edges	26
- Arcane Background.....	26
- Fallen.....	26
- Golemoid.....	27
- Thaumaturge	28
Professional Edges	30
- Arbiter	30
- Technical Mind	30
Combat Edges	31
Weird Edges	31
Legendary Edges	31

CHAPTER 3, MAGIC.....33

Cosmology of Aden.....33

Unique Magical Disciplines.....33

Arcane Backgrounds.....34

Arcane Background (Entomancer)	34
Arcane Background (Mechamage)	35
Arcane Background (Seer).....	36
Arcane Background (Steamwright)	37
Arcane Background (Thunder Scout)	38

Spells & Powers.....41

CHAPTER 4, TECHNOLOGY.....47

Steamreaver Weapons.....47

Steamreaver Weapon Descriptions...47

Steamwright Weapons.....48

Other Melee Weapons.....48

Ranged Weapons.....49

Firearms	49
Firearm Ammunition	50
Other Ranged Weapons	51

Armor.....51

Special Materials.....52

Vehicle Weapons & Siege Engines...52

Special Ammunition	53
--------------------------	----

Vehicles.....54

Vehicle Rams	54
Basic Vehicles	54
Advanced Vehicles.....	55
Superior Vehicles	56

Equipment.....57

Alchemical Items.....57

Poisons.....58

Magic Items.....59

New Miscellaneous Magic Items	59
Crafting Magic Items	59
- New Edge: Craft Magic Items	59

Manite Implants & Golemization...60

Creating Manite Implants.....	60
- Installing Manite Implants	60

The Manite Threshold	60
----------------------------	----

Golemoids & Greater Healing	60
-----------------------------------	----

The Wasting.....61

The Bleak Wasting (Optional)	61
------------------------------------	----

Manite Implants by Level.....62

Minor Implants.....	62
Basic Manite Implants	63
Advanced Implants.....	64
Superior Manite Implants.....	64

CHAPTER 5, NATIONS OF ADEN.....65

Aramyst, The Ruined Kingdom.....65

Arasteen, The Radiant North.....68

Carraway, Home of the Faithful.....70

The High Steppes, Realm of the Lawless.....73

Ionara, The Kingdom of Ice.....76

The Island Republics of Misland.....79

Kyan, Heart of the Jungle.....82

The Concordance of Le'Ciel.....85

The Rhanate, Domain of the Dust King.....88

Urbana, Realm of the Iron Tyrant...91

Vanora, Empire of the Beasts.....95

Yzeem, The Promise of Hospitality...98

CHAPTER 6, PERILS OF ADEN.....101

Bestiary.....101

Animated Object	101
Golems	101
- Corpse Golem	101
- Doll Golem	102
- Metal Golem	102
- Rock Golem	102
Golemoid Horse	102
Ilithix	103
- Ilithix Drone	103
- Ilithix Guardian.....	103
Naga of Aden	104
Nocturnals	104
- Bulette (Corrupted).....	104
- Cackler	105
- Shankers	105
- Wasted	106
- Whisper Fiend.....	106
Slurghithian	106
Snow Serpent	107
Ursax	107
Vermis	108
The Nature of the Darkfall.....	108
Prominent Corrupted	109

CHAPTER 7, THE SCOURGE OF SYLDAN.....111

Credits

Written by: John Beattie
& Mark Swafford,
with Shawn Carman
& Rich Wulf

Editing: Jeff Scifert, Jodi Black,
& Mike Brodu

Cover art: Diego Gisbert Llorens
& Matt Zeilinger

Interior Artwork:

Biagio d'Alessandro (p.22), Mike Brodu (p.58, 115), Jake Cheatham (p.103, 105-108), Robert Denton (p.66, 68, 71, 74, 78, 80, 83, 86, 89, 92, 96, 99), John Donahue (p.13, 16, 62, 95), Jason Engle (p.26-27, 29-30, 34-38), Paul Meador (p.6, 116), Dan Moenster (p.21, 23-25, 48-49), Jeff Porter (p.55, 61, 102-103), Tanyaporn Sangsrit (p.104, 107), Shen Fei (p.8, 19, 42, 77, 93), Jeremy Walker (p.49-51, 59), Matt Zeilinger (p.32, 52, 110)

For Kyoudai Games

Shawn Carman, Creative Direction

Rich Wulf, Mechanical Design

Ryan Carman, Brand Development

Robert Dake, Logistics & Production

Matthew Schenck, Art Director

Mike Brodu, Graphic Design & Layout

Butch Carman, CFO

INTRODUCTION

"Here." Alastrina jabbed her finger into the crude diagram that she had drawn in the loose, arid soil. "This point here, just before they emerge from the canyon."

Gudrun grunted. It was a familiar sound, and one that Alastrina had come to appreciate over their years of working together. It usually indicated that he had some astute tactical observation she had not considered. "The Iron Guard will be extremely cautious. The canyons are the most dangerous portions of their journey."

Alastrina smiled. For once, she was ahead of her second-in-command. "This is very near the end of the canyon. No significant attack on the Thunder Train has ever taken place anywhere near the canyon's end. This is a safe zone, as far as the Iron Guard are concerned."

The jurak chuckled. "The Iron Guard consider nothing safe." The massive warrior was from the Wall Mountains, and had fought many battles as a mercenary in the employ of the Urbanan military. He had not fought alongside the Iron Guard, as far as Alastrina knew, but he knew more about the soldiers of Urbana than anyone she had ever met. It was only one of the many reasons he was so valuable to her in battle.

"We do not need them to be negligent in their duties," she pressed. "We only need a slight advantage in terms of their reaction. This is the only option we have at this point. The canyon is necessary to ensure the train cannot turn broadside and bring its full armament to bear on us."

There was a hissing laughter from one of the others. Silak, the rapacian who had been a member of her band for almost six months now, apparently found her comments amusing. "Just because they can't fire ten storm cannons at us doesn't make the two they can fire any less dangerous," he said, his tongue darting out over his scaled lips as he talked, his eyes taking in her entire body as they always did. As far as she understood, the lizard-like rapacians found the concept of human beauty detestable. That Silak did not was only another sign of his dangerously deviant behavior. He disgusted her, but his skill as a warrior was such that she could not cast him aside, at least not yet. "This isn't the Pride of Mekanus we're attacking," he continued. "It's not some glorified earth-mover. This is the Scourging Eye. If there's a more dangerous target in Aden, I can't think of what it might be."

Alastrina held her tongue. "I am aware of the danger, as I think we all are," she said patiently. "You know as well as I do what they hold on that train. You know we have to get it back, no matter the cost. Or are you content to let it reach Mekanus, and fall into the hands of the Inquisitors of the Eye?"

Even the lizard-man did not laugh at the thought of that. "I wasn't objecting," he said, licking the blade of his knife in a suggestive manner. "Just observing."

"Observe silently," she rebuked. "The men will be anxious enough without you making things worse."

"As you wish."

For a moment, there was nothing more to say. Alastrina closed her eyes, savoring the silence. Exhaustion had set in so long ago that she could scarcely remember a time when she was rested. She longed for the beauty of Arasteen, her homeland. There was little she would not give to return to the majestic city of Sea Reach, to sit in the sacred lighthouse of her order and sip mulled wine while discussing philosophy with her comrades-in-arms. But that life was gone long ago, lost in the moment of the Darkfall. The lighthouse still stood, but there were precious few

members of the Radiant Order who could afford inactivity. There were no more quiet discussions, no more debates, no more good-natured sparring in the courtyard. Now there was only war, the war against the endless horde of the nocturnals spawned by the Darkfall and, perhaps more tragically, the war against those who would sacrifice everything, even their fellow men, to defeat the threat. Alastrina opened her eyes and looked to Gudrun. "Can this be done?" she asked quietly, so that the others could not hear.

The jurak was inspecting his blade carefully. "Can the objective be reached? Yes. It will be no simple matter, and a great many of our men will die." He looked up at her. "Is that what you meant?"

The weight settled on her chest. "Yes," she said. "Ready the men."

"Of course."

Alastrina watched him gather the other officers and move to the encampment where their men waited. She was about to lead them into a battle where the vast majority of them would die. The only way she could live with it, the only thing that allowed her to continue, was the certainty that if they failed to act, ten times their number and more would perish in their place.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF ADEN

Aden is a vast land, home to ten great nations and a number of proud settlements who owe allegiance to no one. It is a land of astonishing contrasts, steeped in tradition but embracing progressive thought, rich with magic but aggressively pursuing technology, celebrated for peace but constantly on the brink of war. And it is a land that, ten years ago, fell victim to a supernatural cataclysm of unknown origin that utterly devastated everything that had existed for more than one thousand years.

Welcome to the Thunderscape Campaign Setting.

The Lands of Aden

Aden, the name for both the continent and the world in which it is located, is an incredibly vast realm with a diverse landscape. In the far north, all is frozen and empty in the region known as the Ice Wastes, separated from the mainland by a thin channel in which some of the most abundant fishing in the world is found. The northernmost reaches of the mainland are known for their cool climate, which warms steadily as the plains give way to rolling hills and farmland as one proceeds south. In both the east and west, these farmlands dominate the entire span of the continent from north to south, yielding only to the colder reaches in the north and, eventually, dense jungle in the south. The center of the continent is much less forgiving, however, and is dominated by a massive desert in which survival is a constant struggle, and from which the foolish or incautious never emerge successful. Barren and desiccated, the Sundered Desert divides the lands of Aden sharply into two separate realms, each with its own nations, cultures, and traditions.

Mountains abound throughout Aden, from the massive Wall Mountains of the west to the smaller, but no less foreboding, Charred Peaks, Mother Mountains, Knuckles, and the Alabaster Cliffs. The stones and ore found within the mountains are a vital resource that the people of Aden have depended upon for centuries to fuel not only their need for developing technology but magic as well. Likewise, the great lakes and rivers, from Tirrian's Eye in the west to Great Moss Lake in the east, have been the lifeblood of Aden and its people.

The Peoples of Aden

There are a great many races represented in Aden. The most numerous, of course, are humans, who have spread to virtually every corner of the known world, from the frozen wastes of the north to the vast, dark depths of the Skar in the Sundered Desert. Although one of the shorter-lived races, the prolific and ambitious nature of humanity has ensured that they play a major role in the rule of almost every nation in Aden. In addition to humans, the ancient races of the elves and the dwarves have embraced their roles in the greater society of Aden, and are found throughout the world despite their much smaller numbers. With lifespans measured in centuries, both races have aided in guiding the world through the Golden Age and the Age of Thunder, only to see their great works imperiled by the horrors of the Darkfall.

Born of the mountains and the earth, the jurak and goreaux peoples have added much to the history of Aden. Great warriors and innovative thinkers, respectively, these races have been instrumental not only to the events of the Age of Thunder, but also in adapting to the terrible state of the world in the aftermath of the Darkfall. Likewise, the hardy rapacians and the artificially-created ferrans have emerged from relative obscurity to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the other races as they struggle for survival.

Ever on the outskirts of society, the races of the faerkin and the half-elves remain enigmatic and misunderstood by many, but in the face of the hardships in the forefront of daily existence, those who know them know that they are warriors and companions. That they have so often chosen to stand apart has not prevented them from embracing a new path since the cataclysm that rocked Aden, and their numbers, while small, are greatly appreciated by all who have benefited from their assistance.

There are many races in Aden that choose to remain apart, for whatever reason. Some, like the naga, the slurgitihans, and the salamanders, have cultural reasons that drive them to hostilities with the other races, forcing them to embrace a path that forever isolates them. Others, like the ilithix, are simply too alien to ever truly integrate with the nations of Aden. And still others, like the tragic, cursed echoes, remain completely hidden from the others, keeping to the shadows and eking out an existence in secret. Regardless of the reasons, there are many in Aden who believe that the time for separatism has passed, and that the only true hope for salvation lies in the complete integration and cooperation of all races, lest all fall to the darkness forever.

The Horror of the Darkfall

Ten years ago, a disaster of completely unprecedented proportions devastated the world of Aden. For reasons that remain beyond the understanding of men, the sun was blotted out for a brief instant. Those few who study the movement of the heavens have, even after ten years, no explanation for why this occurred. All that is known is that during those few moments when Aden was thrown into total darkness, nightmares sprang to life. Some unknown, malevolent force not only cast the whole of Aden into a moment of absolute night, but also gave form to every evil legend, every twisted bogeyman from the public consciousness. In moments, tens of thousands of people died, and countless settlements across the face of the continent perished in flames.

Ten years later, the Darkfall continues to be the most significant event in Aden's history. The creatures spawned by it, known as the nocturnals, are the most persistent threat to Aden's continued existence that history has ever known. Survival is a struggle on a daily basis, and

countless horrible villains have arisen from the shadows to curse the world with their very presence. But from this tragedy have risen heroes as well, bold and valiant individuals who seek to lead the people of Aden to victory over this sinister, unknown foe. By blade and by bullet, by sorcery and by steam, the world of Aden continues to fight for its life in the wake of inconceivable tragedy.

For those whom some call heroes, and even for those whom others call villains, the Darkfall is the greatest threat that faces their world. Not only must they try and deal with the seemingly endless threat of the nocturnals themselves, but the nigh-impossible task of identifying and stopping the threat that gave rise to their evil must be dealt with as well.

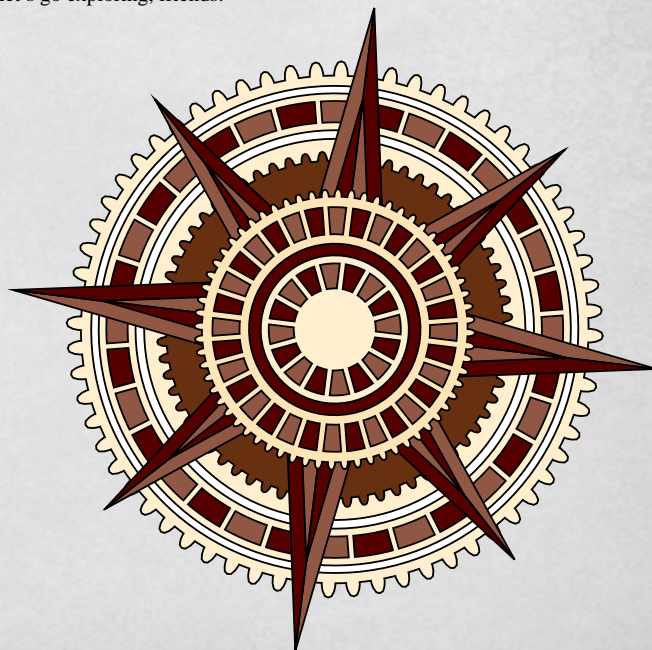
Wait, Have I Heard of Thunderscape before?

That is entirely possible! *Thunderscape* first appeared as a computer game in 1995, produced by SSI and based upon a campaign setting created by Shane Hensley. The game was a success, and later that year SSI followed it up with *Entomorph: Plague of the Darkfall*. *Entomorph* was not a sequel to *Thunderscape* per se, but it was set in the same world, Aden, and introduced the players to entirely different aspects of the setting. Like *Thunderscape* before it, *Entomorph* proved quite successful.

The world of Aden experienced much more development in 1996 with the release of three novels. *The Darkfall* by Shane Hensley was the broadest in scope, establishing the struggle of different nations with one another and against the Darkfall as a whole. *The Sentinel* by Dixie Lee McKeone introduced the horrors visited upon the world by the nation of Urbana from the viewpoint of a defector from the Thunder Trains, and took place largely in the Rhanate. Finally, *Indomitable Thunder* by Marc Acres explored the horrors of the Lost Ghetto in Mekanus and the threats facing the innocent people trapped in that miniature realm.

Finally, the owners of Thunderscape licensed its further development to West End Games, who produced two sourcebooks based in the world of Aden for their Masterbook/D6 system line. The World of Aden and Campaign Chronicles were the last two appearances of the Thunderscape brand before SSI was purchased by another company and the license was cancelled. The world of Aden did not appear again for many years. During that time, the developers of this project made periodic attempts to secure the rights to the property, without success. In late 2012, however, Shane Hensley agreed to sell the property to the owners and operators of Kyoudai Games which made it possible for them to produce the tome you now hold in your hand, a tome that will be the first of many products devoted to the wondrous and haunted world of Aden.

Let's go exploring, friends.



THE WORLD OF ADEN

Aden is a world with a long and storied history, marked by both terrible conflicts and prodigious advances in learning and science. Generally speaking, Aden's scholars agree upon broadly dividing history into specific ages that make up the vast majority of recorded history as well as the enigmatic periods of the Known Lands' prehistory.

Pre-History

The ancient roots of Aden's people remain something of a mystery due to the extensive loss of knowledge that was suffered during the Great War (see below). In modern Aden, there are occasional ruins that hint at what might have existed prior to the beginning of the Golden Age, but attempts to learn more from these remnants have typically yielded more questions than answers. Temples found in Carraway and the High Steppes hint at the existence of ancient lost religions, and strongholds such as the one in which Burcham's Pass was created may suggest advanced peoples that no longer walk on the face of Aden. Unfortunately, there seems to be no method by which these mysteries can be unraveled, especially in the chaos following the Darkfall.

The little that can be gleaned from this era is taken from the records of the elves and dwarves, who have marginally more complete records than the other races. It is known that during this time, the elves maintained a serene civilization centered around the beautiful Sylfanus Forest in what is modern day Arasteen. The elves were once xenophobic in the extreme; however, partial records indicate that a powerful divination ritual on the part of one of the elves' most powerful and influential spellcasters ended this custom. The ritual revealed that the elves would eventually come to absolute ruin and perish from the world if they did not unite with what they, at that time, regarded as the lesser races. Records suggest that a debate that lasted for centuries was held before the elves finally chose life and ended their self-imposed quarantine from the other races, joining fully in the growing civilization of Aden.

At some point during Aden's prehistory, the dwarven people emerged from their subterranean empire and encountered the surface world for the first time. In the beginning, they believed that they had intruded upon heaven, and that the sun was a wrathful god. One especially bold soul realized that this was not the case, and chose to explore. She recognized that it was simply another part of the world, and many joined her in venturing forth to create a great fortress-city, a settlement that persists to this day, more than one thousand years later, as Top of the World in the northern Wall Mountains. Unfortunately, this bravery caused a terrible schism within the dwarven people, and fully three quarters of their race withdrew completely in the earth, swearing vengeance upon the quarter that chose to embrace life on the surface world. To this day, despite the travails of the Darkfall, the conflict between the divided peoples of the dwarven race persists.

The Era of War

Slightly more than four centuries prior to the historic Peace of the Rose, an event that marks the beginning of Aden's successfully recorded and documented history, historians agree that the first skirmishes of a great war that would eventually envelope the entirety of Aden began. Like so much else prior to the dawn of the Golden Age, the particulars concerning the beginning of what would come to be called the Great

War are unknown. The precise factions who initiated the conflict remain a mystery, but the conflict gradually spread all across the continent, with virtually every known tribe or nascent kingdom participating at some point. Matters of territory, religion, philosophy, and virtually every other possible cause of conflict were involved at one point or another, so much so that the war ceased to have any unifying theme or purpose, and was perpetuated for its own sake over and over again, with entire generations being raised in the throes of a war that they did not fully understand, but to which they committed everything.

The Great War is the cause of the dearth of knowledge possessed by modern citizens of Aden concerning their past. Conflicts of religion and ideology, as well as sheer pettiness and vengeance, saw the libraries and oral traditions of entire cultures and races wiped from the face of the world, with no one remaining to remember them. Only the wisest and most organized races, primarily the elves and dwarves, managed to retain any trace of their historical records, and even then only in very limited amounts. The elves managed to preserve a reasonable amount of arcane lore, while the dwarves protected their treatises on mining, metallurgy, and related fields; both also have surprisingly intact records of lineage, but little else.

A relatively recent historical theory holds that the incredible loss of knowledge during the Great War could not possibly have been an accidental occurrence. The sheer volume of information lost, and the uniformity with which such loss occurred within every known cultural and racial group, can only have been conducted through a deliberate effort, or at least so the theory holds. Prior to the Darkfall, this theory was regarded as the domain of the hopelessly paranoid, but in its aftermath there are those who have begun to suspect not only that this may be the case, but that it may have been related to the Darkfall in some way.

The Golden Age

The lion's share of Aden's modern history falls within a period somewhat ambitiously entitled the Golden Age. Notable for the extreme scarcity of major conflicts during this period, the peace afforded by the Golden Age allowed for significant development to be made in all areas of learning, although the most significant advances by far were made with regards to the advancement of technology. Initially, technology was developed as an alternative to magic because of the inability of magic to create lasting enchantment effects; due to Aden's particular metaphysics, metals cannot retain magical enchantments long-term, limiting the creation of magical items to stone and organic materials. Because of this limitation, many in Aden considered alternate avenues of development, and the most significant advance made during this period of history is the harnessing of steam as a power source.

The modern nations of Aden all have their roots in the Golden Age in one form or another. Most were created during the accords at the Peace of the Rose, which established the boundaries and governments of Arasteen, Columbey, Kyan, Yzeem, Vanora, Aramyst, and Carraway. In later years, the nations of Le'Ciel and Ionara would be added to their ranks and given the opportunity to sign the Rose Accords.

The Golden Age is regarded by many as the pinnacle of Aden's achievements and civilization, and its loss is mourned regularly in the dark days of the present era. Ironically, it was neither war nor cata-

THE LANDS OF ADEN



clysm that brought about the end of the Golden Age, but the continuing advancement of magic and technology. More than eight centuries after the Peace of the Rose, scholars and scientists in Aramyst (although this nationality is debated somewhat among certain scholarly circles) discovered the existence of a previously overlooked mineral that could retain magical enchantments indefinitely. This mineral, soon christened manite, quickly became one of the most valued commodities in the Known Lands.

The Age of Thunder

The discovery of manite and its essential, magic-retaining properties transformed Aden in a very short period of time. Throughout the Golden Age, magic and steam technology were avidly pursued by virtually all nations to varying degrees. Metal weaponry was already in production despite the inability to merge it with magic, simply because enchanted weapons of other materials were difficult to produce in any significant quantity. The ability to fuse the pursuits of magic and technology rapidly advanced the cause of both, dramatically escalating mining operations throughout the continent. Most nations were fortunate enough to find at least trace amounts of the metal, which had either gone undiscovered due to its small quantities, or which had been mistaken for another metal. The richest deposits were discovered in Columbey, enough to ensure that they were able to trade additional amounts to the other nations at a tremendous benefit.

Although the shortest of Aden's great ages, the Age of Thunder heralded advances unlike anything in recorded history, and remains perhaps the most significant period in the world's development to its present state.

The Dark Era

The decade since the occurrence of the Darkfall, an incident that effectively cut the Age of Thunder short, has seen dramatic, malevolent change throughout the whole of Aden. The world's population is a fraction of what it once was, and many great cities and scholars perished terribly during that dark day or in the weeks and months that followed. In modern Aden, survival is the most pressing concern for most citizens, and living from one day to the next is something that many cannot afford to take for granted.

TIMELINE

YEAR 420BP

Simmering hostilities between the many tribes and kingdoms that dominate the continent of Aden break out into numerous small conflicts. These quickly escalate into a much larger battle that involves dozens of different groups and more than ten different kingdoms. Although participants come and go as different tribes dissolve, are created, and alliances are made and broken, the war does not completely stop for more than four centuries.

YEAR 259 BP

A spiritual elven woman named Chandrey writes her personal feelings on theology and philosophy, creating what will become the holy scripts of the Church of All Saints. During her long life, she brings the Church into reality and constructs the Cathedral of All Saints over ancient ruins in what will become modern Carraway. Known for her kindness and firm character, Chandrey is given the title of Theocrat of the Church, a title she holds until her death centuries later.

YEAR 222 BP

Denizens of the Misland island chain off the southeastern coast of Aden grow weary of the pirate attacks that have been plaguing them for years. Relations between different settlements in the islands grow increasingly

fractious until it seems as though the denizens there might fall to all-out war. One man, a determined warrior named Kavi Davimposa, takes a crew and captures a pirate vessel. Using it, Davimposa and his men proceed to capture more and more ships, creating a fleet cannibalized from pirate forces. This fleet is then used to wage terrible war upon the plague of piracy destabilizing the region, and in turn gives the people of the Mislands a symbol to unite behind.

YEAR 109 BP

An elven warlord named Dyus unites numerous tribes in the southeastern portion of Aden through the creation of a new philosophy that unites their cultural beliefs. After a successful campaign to bring the warriors of the tribes together as his army, Dyus declares himself the first Emperor of Vanora, and plunges his dagger into the earth at the southernmost tip of the territory he has claimed, declaring that he will build his capital city on that spot.

YEAR 27 BP

A druid of unprecedented power rallies others to her cause and proclaims the vast Crawling Jungle to be her domain, free from the conflicts that continue to break out all across the continent. Within a matter of months, numerous warbands attempt to test her dominion over the jungle, but none survive. The druid rapidly becomes known for her affinity with the giant insects of the jungle, and many of her followers come to share her abilities. By the time the Peace of the Rose accords are established, the druid is recognized as the first Queen Mother of the kingdom of Kyan.

YEAR 1

Utterly exhausted by generations of near-constant warfare, the people of Aden are desperate for relief. The most powerful leaders of the nascent nations of the continent come together in a small town called Rose and, over the course of a week, come to an agreement to ensure that war the size of the so-called Great War is not repeated. Under the accord of the Peace of the Rose, modern national boundaries are established, a universal calendar is adopted, and a treaty ensures that if any single nation instigates hostilities against another, all remaining nations will unite against it to end the conflict quickly. History does not recall the individual responsible for initiating this most sacred event, but one of the most prevalent theories among scholars is that it was the first Emperor of Vanora who did so, hence the continent-wide adoption of the Vanoran calendar. This ushers in the period known as the Golden Age.

YEAR 10

Only a few short years after the creation of Aramyst, the ruler of that nation, a faerkin sorcerer, abdicates his throne and dissolves its power. He instead cedes power to a hand-selected group of peers, the most powerful and influential spellcasters of the nation. This group forms the Celestial College, the new ruling body of the nation. A small group of spellcasters offended at their exclusion from membership within the Celestial College, abandons Aramyst and travels north to a large island off the continent's northern coast, where they found the fledgling nation of Le'Ciel.

YEAR 117

The monarchy of Arasteen, currently occupied by a bold and noble man named Tirrian, is permanently changed by the creation of the Radiant Order, a militant paladin organization created by Tirrian and founded on the twin precepts of judgment and compassion. The order's creation is spurred on by an attack on the city of Sea Reach by a force of mercenaries under the command of a sorcerer from the Grey Islands. The loss of life in the battle to reclaim Sea Reach is staggering, and Tirrian ultimately realizes that if his knights are to truly serve the people, they must extol compassion and healing as well as force of arms and justice. To signify his devotion to the new order, Tirrian declares that the throne of Arasteen will no longer be a traditional monarchy, but rather each king shall be selected only from the ranks of the Radiant Order.

YEAR 126

Near the village of Hammlish in the nation of Arasteen, King Tirrian battles and ultimately defeats a massively powerful supernatural entity known as the Lord of the Pale. This entity, whose origin remains a mystery almost a thousand years later, was said to be the embodiment of plague, pestilence, and virulence. The particulars remain unknown to all but the king and his knights, but the Pale One is defeated and mystically bound so that it can never again trouble the people of Arasteen.

YEAR 189

An elven refugee, having spent centuries developing alchemical practices that ultimately result in the creation of a magical item called a hearthstone, takes his family and travels north of Arasteen to the frozen north. There, he establishes a settlement to carve out a life from the ice and snow. Hearthstones allow his followers to thrive, and the diamonds they harvest from the glaciers there rapidly ensure they are quite wealthy. The city-state of Ionara is soon recognized by the other nations.

YEAR 223

After her death at an extremely advanced age, the first Theocrat of the Church of All Saints in Carraway is honored by her successor when the nation's capital is renamed St. Chandrey in memory of her. The line of mourners at the grand cathedral she built is said to be more than three miles in length.

YEAR 332

After a lifetime of experimentation and failed attempts, a powerful wizard in Aramyst succeeds in his attempt to create a hybrid of men and animals. These creatures, which the wizard names ferrans, are intended to be like men in form, but shorter lived and far less intelligent, making them a perfect race of servants for the sophisticated people of Aramyst. The experiment is vastly more successful than anticipated, however, dramatically increasing both the animals' lifespan and intelligence as they are transformed.

YEAR 416

After nearly a century of oppression and subjugation by their creators in Aramyst, the ferran people rise up and turn against their masters, uniting in a massive revolt that catches the Celestial College and its government completely off guard. The revolt spreads like wildfire, and soon embroils much of the nation in a guerilla war known as the War of Beasts.

YEAR 424

After nearly a decade of war, emissaries from the Celestial College offer peace to the ferran rebels that have spent years disrupting every aspect of life within the nation. The only condition is that the leader

of the revolution, a raven ferran named Sonerus, remands himself into the College's custody for trial as a war criminal. Sonerus agrees, but his people do not. It appears that the war will resume until delegations from other nations, including both Arasteen and Yzeem, make it clear that if the conflict progresses further, their support will be for the oppressed ferrans. The Celestial College grants amnesty to Sonerus and his people, and the War of Beasts comes to an end.

YEAR 559

A necromancer of astonishing power reveals his decades-long plan to conquer the whole of eastern Aden. The Silent One, his cult of spellcasters, and their legions of undead warriors quickly seize control of the region that will one day become the High Steppes, and they soon move into portions of Carraway, the Sundered Desert, and even western Aramyst. The armies of Aden are mobilized en masse for the first time since the Peace of the Rose, and a desperate war is waged that lasts the better part of a year. The final defeat of the Silent One results in a wave of negative energy that cascades across most of the High Steppes and Carraway, resulting in a permanent tendency for the land to spontaneously produce higher levels of undead than found anywhere else in the world.

YEAR 667

Dwarven alchemists in Top of the World discover, largely by accident, the practices necessary to produce gunpowder. Although initially employed as an explosive to assist in mining, the ever practical dwarves quickly develop the notion of explosively propelled projectiles into a reality, resulting in primitive muskets and wheel-locks within a matter of a few years.

YEAR 671

An enclave of goreaux arcanists, spurred on by the discovery of gunpowder a short time previously, discover the basic elements of steam power at their laboratory in the central Wall Mountains. Savvy in the ways of the world, the goreaux make their discoveries available to all the nations of Aden for a price, and soon become some of the wealthiest individuals in the world.

YEAR 817

Weary of the rampant corruption in the Council of Seven that rules the nation of Yzeem, a young, newly appointed member of the Council disguises his identity to ensure that he cannot be bribed or intimidated outside of the chamber. Known simply as the Green Counselor, he spearheads a reformation movement that eventually restores the sanctity of the Council, despite numerous attempts to assassinate him by the corsair captains who previously enjoyed control of the organization.



YEAR 845

A wizard and technologist in the nation of Aramyst discovers a new, rare mineral in the mountains of his homeland. Experimentation quickly reveals that once refined, this new substance, which is christened manite, retains enchantments placed upon it indefinitely, something that has never been accomplished with any other metal or alloy. Attempts to keep the discovery of this mineral are futile, and soon all nations are scouring their mountains and mines for any sign of it. While far rarer than other metals, manite is still discovered in at least one location in every nation, ensuring that trade for it remains relatively brisk and even. Although it is not recognized at the time, the radical improvements the discovery of manite has on the advancement of steam technology and the creation of mechamancy result in scholars later decreeing that the discovery of manite begins the Age of Thunder.

YEAR 919

The king of Ionara, a descendant of the founder Ionarus, suffers an incredible tragedy when one of his twin infant daughters is lost to the terrible currents of the glacial river that serves a vital trade role within Ionara. The river is renamed the Tongue of the Child after the terrible cries that are released in the child's last moments, and which are said to echo occasionally throughout the subterranean caverns ever after.

YEAR 1061

The Emperor and Empress of Vanora, seemingly long plagued with the common elven malady of infertility, give birth to a son whom they name Dyok, after his father. The birth of an heir is cause for the entire nation to celebrate, and festivals are held for weeks on end. The celebrations have a tragic end, however, as someone in attendance at the Emperor's court suggests that the sudden birth might be due to infidelity on the part of the Empress. Emperor Dyok has the man executed on the spot, a rare showing of wrath for a monarch known for his just rule.

YEAR 1090

One of the youngest members of the Radiant Order, a knight named Corben, is kidnapped by a bandit king after his patrol is all slain. Hoping to claim a ransom from the order, the bandit is unprepared for his hostage's courage and ingenuity. Corben escapes his cell, climbs the exterior of the bandit's fortress, steals a sword, captures the bandit king and escapes without being detected. Understandably, Corben becomes the subject of much attention as a result, and five years later, he is elevated to the rank of Paladin upon the death of his predecessor.

YEAR 1101

One of the greatest arcanists in the nation of Arasteen as well as a close personal friend of the Paladin, the wizard Territus founds the elite Academy Lora Aracana in the heart of Sea Reach.

YEAR 1105

A former student cast out from the Academy Lora Arcana for dabbling in forbidden magic, Terramys Scratch returns to threaten Sea Reach with an army of undead raised from the failed colony Grissom in the Grey Isles. Scratch's former teacher, Territus, is forced to face the necromancer himself, ultimately destroying the ship Scratch was on as it attempted to flee the harbor of Sea Reach. Unfortunately, the undead under Scratch's command do not dissipate afterwards, indicating that the necromancer either survived, or perhaps more disconcerting, continues to exist as a lich or other undead entity himself.

YEAR 1110

Month of the Dragon: In the final days of the year, the Red Prophet, Karasynn, comes before the Elders of the Celestial College in Aramyst and warns of a coming disaster. Convinced of his words and gravely concerned with the similarity between Karasynn's foresight and those offered a short time earlier by the Blind Seer of Arasteen, the Elders sent to the various nations of Aden in search of champions, and some of the world's greatest warriors respond. Among them is Kallon, the Paladin of Arasteen, who sets aside his ongoing tour of eastern Aden, dispatching his men home to serve as his nation's champion.

YEAR 1111

Month of the Serpent: Champions from eight nations of Aden, trained by the Celestial College Elders, set out on a quest through the legendary nether portal, a gateway to worlds beyond Aden. They are gone for several weeks, and not all return. Those who do return are in possession of an ancient and terrible skull, the origins of which are known only to the heroes themselves and the Celestial College. They promptly destroy the skull along with a number of other mysterious artifacts.

Month of the Eagle: In the height of winter, the paladin Kallon and his entourage resume their tour of the continent, lending succor to those who need it. In the village of Rose, they encounter the Blind Seer of Arasteen, who gives Kallon warning only moments before the Darkfall envelops Aden. The coastline of Aramyst, including the capital city Regorra and the Celestial College within it, erupt into flame, killing everyone within the city.

Month of the Wolf: After a bloody, two-month journey, the mercenary known as Marlek returns to his homeland in Columbey and quickly finds a place among the king's personal forces. King Warrus of Columbey falls in battle shortly thereafter, however, slain by the nocturnals. His bloodied crown is taken up by Marlek, who rallies the king's remaining troops, returns to the capital city of Tarello, and breaks the nocturnal siege that has held the city captive for days. In the aftermath of the victory, Marlek takes the skull of the nocturnal leader and creates with it a scepter, declaring himself the new king, Lord Urbane. Although many among the nobility vigorously oppose him, the commoners are so grateful for his ending the siege that they offer no resistance. In a matter of weeks, Urbane renames the nation Urbana and its capitol Mekanus, making clear his intent to aggressively pursue mechamagic as a means of combating the Darkfall.

In Vanora, Emperor Dyok succumbs to the attack of a life-draining nocturnal and lapses into a coma. He is avenged within moments by his son, Dyok the Younger, but the younger elf is unable to resuscitate his father, and is shortly thereafter proclaimed the new Emperor until such time as his father recovers from his injuries.

Month of the Shark: After fighting for survival in the weeks following the Darkfall, the massive nomad band under the control of a bandit calling himself the Dust King seeks refuge from the harsh conditions of the Sundered Desert and the predation of the nocturnals by traveling to the massive mesa known as Terrotaxus's Tower. The Dust King flies to the mesa alone atop a drake, and returns with one of the eyes of the great dragon Terrotaxus. His band of nomads quickly uses the drakes to reach the top of the mesa, where they begin constructing a permanent home from the dead dragon's indestructible bones.

Month of the Drake: In the crisp fall weather, the lone warrior Ivar faces a pack of vicious nocturnals. Resigned to death, Ivar swears that the beast he faces shall not slay him. He lapses into a fugue state and awakes shortly afterwards to face an entire pack of slaughtered beasts. In the weeks and months following, Ivar develops this skill into the philosophy of the red haze.

YEAR 1112

Month of the Fox: The only three surviving warlords of the High Steppes, each holding the position of Kazan, come together to determine the future of their nation. The three decide that they shall rule the High Steppes, but disagree as to who shall lead. The sorceress Lilith has no desire to lead, but the warriors Tovar, a human, and Mikal, a jurak, each refuse to relinquish power to the other. Lilith suggests a traditional joust, which Tovar wins, to the surprise of all. Tovar is decreed the ruling Kazan of the High Steppes for a period of ten years.

Month of the Basilisk: After a year of frantic construction, the Dust King's nomads complete the construction of the Black Citadel, a massive tower atop the mesa formerly known as Terrotaxus's Tower. The bandit lord known as the Dust King declares himself the Rhanate, ruler of a vast nation of the same name that stretches from the Wall Mountains east to the Veldt and encompasses the entirety of the Sundered Desert. Although his claim is never formally recognized, in short order he becomes equal to many monarchs in his degree of influence.

Month of the Leviathan: In a confrontation between forces from Urbana and raiders from the Rhanate, a warrior from Urbana's forces loses an arm in the battle. It is several days before the survivors are able to seek the aid of a healer, and by then it is impossible to reattach the lost limb even with the most powerful healing magic. Unwilling to end his career as a soldier, the Urbanan warrior seeks out a mechamage of questionable repute and volunteers to test a new mechamagical device. The soldier becomes the first successful bearer of a golemoid implant, which gives him a new, powerful arm to replace his lost limb. Word of this accomplishment spreads rapidly, and soon other mechamage are experimenting with similar devices throughout western Aden.

YEAR 1113

Month of the Eagle: In the city of Smult, an expedition of adventurers ventures into the depths of the volcano Infernus, at the base of which the city is located. The intention of the expedition is to discover and raid the home of the deadly salamanders that periodically issue forth and raid Smult. Only one survivor returns from this ill-fated group, and before dying, he tells any who will listen that the cavernous depths of Infernus are populated with the tormented souls of those who have given themselves to the Darkfall. Despite being completely unverified, this tale becomes very popular throughout Urbana and beyond.

Month of the Wolf: A philosopher and mage from Columbey founds a community of so-called "free thinkers" high in the mountains of the Wall. Called New Columbey, the enclave becomes home to radical men of science and sorcery from all over the continent, although the vast majority of them hail from the lost kingdom of Columbey. Over time the community comes to be defended by the Wind Riders, a group utilizing magically augmented gliders to sail the skies around the mountains.

Month of the Basilisk: More than two years after the Darkfall, the continent suffers tremendously from an inability to conduct trade. This changes when Urbane reveals the first of his thunder trains. A mechamagical construct of unprecedented scale, the thunder train immediately begins a trade route that takes it through all of western Aden, including numerous cities in Urbana, Arasteen, and Kyan. With the train heralded as an unprecedented success, Urbane immediately diverts significant resources to accelerate the completion of two more trains, already in the process of being built.

Month of the Dragon: Disaster is narrowly averted when Gerrick Malanch, a personal advisor to Lord Urbane, discovers a clutch of dopplegangers in the village of Rose, near the border between Urbana and Arasteen. Although the powerful mage is able to drive the creatures from the village, he expresses to his liege his concern that they may be part of a larger nocturnal infestation in the cities of Urbana. Lord Urbane immediately appoints Malanch as the High Inquisitor of the Eye and tasks him with creating the Watchers of the Eye, a group responsible for policing potential corruption within the borders of Urbana.

YEAR 1114

Month of the Fox: An Urbanan dwarf named Gentor develops the mechamagical tools necessary to harvest the dangerous living seaweed which grows in Aramyst's Great Moss Lake. This unconventional method, which relies upon metal-hulled ships with electro-pods that shock and kill the grasping weeds, does a great deal to alleviate the near-famine state of many settlements in devastated Aramyst.

Month of the Shark: Swollen by the rainy season, the Thunder River in eastern Carraway spawns massive waves of muck-men that march on the city of Stone, commanded and perhaps summoned by a corrupted sorcerer calling himself the Swamp Lord. Master Arbiter Lee organizes the city's legion, but they are overwhelmed. Reluctantly, Lee orders the entire city evacuated, beginning a torturous overland trip to the city of Karstan.

Month of the Drake: Two months after being forced from Stone, the city's survivors are welcomed into Karstan. Half of the city's civilians survive the trek, but only a fraction of the Arbiters and soldiers who defended them live. Master Arbiter Lee collapses after entering the city's gates and dies shortly thereafter, later to be canonized as the Saint of Fortitude. The forces of the Swamp Lord attack Karstan, but

are rebuffed. The sorcerer curses the city, however, and in a matter of months a portion of the city sinks as the ground beneath it becomes a thick marsh. The sorcerer promptly disappears and is not seen again.

YEAR 1115

Annoyed by the ratlings dwelling in the sewers beneath his capitol city of Mekanus, Lord Urbane declares that the creatures are in league with the nocturnals and has his mages concoct a particularly virulent magic poison called arkana, which is dumped into the sewers with the goal of complete genocide of the ratling population. The poison does kill the majority of the population, but a number survive and are hideously mutated by its effects, gaining horrific physical and mystical powers in the process. The ratlings surge to the surface to take vengeance, resulting in a months-long struggle with the people of Mekanus that will later be known as the Rat War.

YEAR 1116

Weary of committing resources to combat the heavily nocturnal-infested northeastern portion of Mekanus, Lord Urbane abruptly decrees that the entire region is to be walled off from the remainder of the city. The denizens of this area are given virtually no notice and have little chance to evacuate before this order is carried out, resulting in an entire region of the city that is completely self-contained, and from which none are permitted to leave. This region becomes known as the Lost Ghetto.

Six months after the creation of the Lost Ghetto, a mechamage employed at one of Mekanus's factories uses manite smuggled out from his workplace to create a massive golem, intent on using it to seek vengeance upon his hated supervisors. Somehow, the ritual to animate the golem results in it gaining awareness, and the creature almost immediately succumbs to the temptations of the Darkfall. Murdering its creator and rampaging through the city, Terrablix the Autonomous travels directly to the Lost Ghetto and enters, where it quickly becomes undisputed ruler of the tiny realm.

YEAR 1117

The warrior Ivar, renowned as one of the deadliest men in the High Steppes, abandons his life as an adventuring warrior and founds a monastery atop a cliff. There, he adopts a monastic lifestyle and begins teaching his philosophy of the red haze to others, creating an order known as the Sanguine Monks.

YEAR 1118

The wizard Nelesh, the brother of Kyan's Queen Mother, establishes a new school of wizardry to better understand and utilize the unique insects of the Crawling Jungle. His new Academia Entomologia quickly develops two different schools: the insectors, who seek to create new species of insects for use by Kyan, and the entomancers, who prefer instead to augment individual creatures to achieve greater results. Early experiments by Nelesh to grant greater intelligence to lesser insects is deemed too dangerous to continue and ordered halted by his sister, the Queen.

YEAR 1119

One of Urbana's thunder trains is caught in a cunning ambush by a massive force of nocturnals and mountain trolls. With their escape blocked by a carefully planned avalanche, the Iron Guard and the train's crew fight a desperate hand-to-hand battle with their enemies, one that lasts for more than four hours. The Urbanan soldiers emerge victorious, but at the cost of eighty percent casualties. In a rare display of consideration, Lord Urbane recognizes the valor of the survivors and the woman who took command after her superiors' deaths, Julith Carron. They are the first members of the Order of Steel, an elite and prestigious military unit created to recognize any soldiers of Urbana who commit particularly glorious deeds in battle.

YEAR 1120

Month of the Basilisk: On a hot summer night, a coup is attempted within the Palace of the Dragon in Vanora. Assassins wearing all-concealing armor make an attempt on the life of the Emperor at the

command of a similarly masked individual called the Shogun. The Emperor defeats a half dozen of his would-be assassins before his guards are finally able to overcome the remaining assassins and rush to his side. The majority of the assassins are killed and revealed to be members of the Sons of the Dragon, but four, including the Shogun, escape. Their armor is found later, and their identities are never deduced. This changes the mood within Vanora significantly, given that the previously incorruptible Sons of the Dragon have been compromised.

YEAR 1121

The present

LIFE IN THE WORLD OF ADEN

Languages

Although there are a large number of languages in Aden, communication has not been a problem for its people for several centuries. During the accords that produced the Peace of the Rose more than one thousand years ago, the leaders who participated were keenly aware that an inability to communicate was one of the most significant and long-standing causes of conflict, and one that had contributed significantly to the length of the Great War. For the purpose of ensuring ready communication, these individuals sought to establish a unified language that would aid in preventing such a conflict from arising again.

Among the races, the elves, dwarves, juraks, and rapacians each had their own unique tongue. The goreaux and faerkin did not, although the former spoke a sort of pidgin language cobbled together from other tongues and the latter spoke the language of the fey realm. Ferrans and half-elves invariably spoke one of the many human languages that had arisen in Aden at that time. The most commonly used language was that which was native to the region later controlled by the nation of Yzeem, probably due to the extensive trading that took place in that region. "The trade tongue," as it was commonly known, was familiar in virtually every region of Aden due to necessity during bartering with the various caravans and merchant ships that roamed the continent before returning to the southern port of Balaquim. The decision was made at Rose that each individual nation could speak whatever language suited its culture, but that each nation would also ensure the trade tongue was spoken extensively as well, ensuring that all nations would have no difficulty speaking with one another.

More than a thousand years later, most old languages have lapsed into obscurity, spoken in ritual, tradition, and in extremely secular communities, and the trade tongue has become known as the common tongue. For the most part, individuals from as far away as Urbana and the High Steppes can communicate effectively as a result of this prevalence of language. However, it is not a perfect system. Although travel is widespread, the presence of the Sundered Desert in the center of Aden ensures that the vast majority of the populace has never left the east or the west, whatever region they call home. As a result, a thousand years of development has caused two distinct variants of the common tongue to develop, known as Western Common and Eastern Common. While a speaker of one can understand and be understood by a speaker of the other, there are a large number of subtleties that are lost in the process, and the finer points of conversation can be difficult even under ideal circumstances.

Racial languages continue to play a prominent role in Aden, although largely for more academic purposes. The few surviving historical records that precede the Peace of the Rose are written in one of the racial languages or a handful of other, now largely discarded tongues. The native jurak language, for example, is often spoken by mercenary companies because of its short, clipped nature and its fierce sounds. The elven language is used extensively in the courts of Ionara where

the so-called ice elves dominate the nobility of the nation. The dwarven tongue is spoken a great deal in the Wall Mountain regions of Arasteen where the largest concentration of dwarves in Aden is located. The rapacian tongue is completely unpronounceable by most other races.

LANGUAGES OF ADEN

The following languages still exist in Aden and are choices for characters when selecting bonus languages equal to their Intelligence modifier.

✧ **ARCADIAN** – The native language of the fey, also spoken by the faerkin race.

✧ **DWARVEN** – The native language of the dwarves, called the Earthtongue by that race. Closely related to the earth-based dialect of Fundamental.

✧ **EASTERN COMMON** – The native language of the Aramyst, Carraway, the High Steppes, Yzeem, and large portions of the Rhanate. Called True Yzeem by elitist scholars of the east.

✧ **ELVEN** – The language of the elves, called Sylfanic by members of that race. Bears vague similarities to both the air-based dialect of Fundamental as well as Arcadian.

✧ **FUNDAMENTAL** – A strange language spoken by the beings of the elemental planes, deciphered and translated by the wizards of Aramyst centuries ago.

✧ **GIANT** – Although giantkind is largely gone from the world of Aden, surviving only in a few remote places, the language they once used is still studied by scholars and those who have contact with the rare creatures.

✧ **JURAKTI** – The language of the jurak. Uses very short, clipped words. Often used by mercenaries for efficient battlefield communication.

✧ **KYALL** – The national language of Kyan. Essentially it is a highly derivative version of Western Common that incorporates a number of clicks and buzzing sounds based on common insect calls.

✧ **LOWLAND** – A language cobbled together by borrowing terms from other languages and based on an older, now forgotten tongue, lowland was spoken by the goreaux prior to their inclusion into Aden's larger society. Other species that remain on the outskirts continue to speak it, including various other species of goblinoids.

✧ **NOCTURINE** – An unnatural language spoken by intelligent nocturnals and by some among the corrupted. It is believed this is a variant of Planar, but few are familiar enough with it to say for certain. Paladins and other defenders occasionally learn this language in order to understand their foes' speech during battle.

✧ **PLANAR** – The ancient tongue of magic, adopted by powerful wizards after the first of their number discovered planar travel. The language is highly formulaic and orders a wizard's thoughts properly so that he can communicate with extra-planar beings.

✧ **RAPACIAN** – The highly sibilant native tongue of the rapacians. It is largely unpronounceable by other species, but it can be understood.

✧ **THRUN** – A secret language unknown to the general populace of Aden, spoken by the echo race and used to communicate between them and their allies.

✧ **VANORAN** – The cultural language of the Vanoran people, spoken almost exclusively by its citizens when interacting with one another, but rarely with outsiders.

✧ **WESTERN COMMON** – The native language of Arasteen, Ionara, and Urbana. Called High Yzeem by elitist scholars of the west.

Other than racial and trade languages, there are very few tongues that are currently in widespread use anywhere in Aden. A handful of planar tongues were employed for academic purposes in the use of high-powered arcane magic prior to the fall of Aramyst, and there appears to be a shared tongue that is known only by intelligent nocturnals and powerful corrupted, but the latter is unknown to those of pure flesh and spirit, and the former have fallen into disuse since the immolation of Regora and the Burning Coast.

Cosmology

Aden is a land of both magic and technology, and both of those fundamental forces are well known to even the most common of citizens. The concept of different planes is something that most citizens have at least heard of, although the degree to which they understand such things varies wildly. The discussion of the planes connected to Aden can be found later in *Chapter 3: Magic*.

A discipline that draws upon both magic and technology, but which is not well known to most citizens of Aden, is astronomy. The extent to which most understand the idea is that there is a sun in the sky during the day, and there are two moons and many stars in the sky at night. Most have never had reason to contemplate the matter much beyond that. Prior to the Darkfall, however, astronomy was a matter of some great study in several nations, specifically Aramyst and Columbey, and from the efforts of those scholars, more has been learned about the tapestry of the universe that surrounds Aden.

There was a theory presented during the Age of Thunder that the sun was not in fact a star like the others seen in the sky, but rather a region wherein the mortal world and the plane of fire merged into one. Some particularly powerful wizards believed that it might be possible to reach the sun by traveling through that plane, but as far as anyone knows, no one ever succeeded in such a bizarre endeavor. On the other hand, many wizards claimed to have been able to reach the larger of Aden's two moons, most commonly referred to as Older Brother, via powerful teleportation magic. Those who did claimed that it was barren and lifeless, but that there were occasional artifacts found there to suggest that there may have once been life.

Aden's second moon, Little Brother, is a great mystery. Its position in the sky is generally indicated by a luminescent outline and an inner field of black, casting no light whatsoever. Although it is clearly closer to Aden than Older Brother, as evidenced by its crossing in front of the other moon on occasion, it appears to be completely inaccessible by magic. Additionally, many powerful spellcasters of various traditions have speculated over the years that the curse of lycanthropy is linked to Little Brother specifically, and remains largely unaffected by Older Brother.

Other than the sun, moons, and stars, there are other objects visible in Aden's night sky that astronomers have tentatively identified as other worlds that are, perhaps, similar to Aden in some ways. Entire tomes have been filled with speculation as to what kinds of life, if any, might exist on such worlds, or what manner of magic might be found there, but so far as anyone is aware, no one has ever visited these worlds. The most well-known worlds are The Smith, a reddish-hued world closer to the sun than is Aden; The Regent, a world vastly larger than Aden and much farther away; and The Lovers, two planets that appear to be in orbit with one another as well as with the sun and which are the farthest worlds that Aden's scholars have been able to identify.

The Calendar & the Seasons

The Rose Accords established the formal calendar recognized by the whole of Aden, and did so by using the calendar of Vanora as a template. It is believed by many historians that this is partially in recognition of the role played by the Emperor Dyok, first Emperor of Vanora, in organizing the Rose Accords, but historical accounts in this regard are somewhat vague and occasionally contradictory.

In accordance with the Vanoran calendar, the calendar of Aden has ten months, each named after one of the animals that make up the

pantheon of Vanora's Way of the Ten Beasts philosophy. Each month is comprised of five seven-day weeks, for a total of thirty-five days in each month. With a ten month calendar, Aden therefore has a year that is three hundred and fifty days long. Four additional days are inserted into the calendar, one at the beginning of each season, always between two months, for a final number of three hundred and fifty-four days in any given year.

Each year begins on the first day of the Month of the Serpent, which is the second month of the winter season. Serpent gives way to Eagle, the third and final month of winter, which then gives way to the Month of the Fox. The first day of spring is celebrated with a day of festival between the last day of Eagle and the first day of Fox. This is a very popular day for weddings, and is considered an especially fortunate day to be born – for those newborns lucky enough to arrive at such an auspicious time.

Spring is a relatively short season in Aden, as the chill of winter gives way quickly to the heat of summer. The Months of Fox and Wolf are mild, and are generally very busy times for most of Aden's farmers and common folk as they prepare for the coming summer by planting crops, managing livestock, beginning their fishing seasons, and other such time-honored traditions. When the Month of the Wolf ends and the first day of summer is celebrated before the Month of the Ursax begins, most celebrate with particular fervor, for they know that summer is a long season filled with hard labor.

Except in Ionara and the northern regions of Arasteen and the High Steppes, the summers in Aden are hot and often humid, although this latter condition varies significantly by location. Summer consists of three months, Ursax, Shark, and Basilisk, and is generally the busiest time of the year for the average citizen of Aden. Crops must be tended constantly to ensure a good harvest later in the fall, and this is the period during which the nocturnals seem most active across the majority of the continent. Because the weather conditions are so favorable, this is also the period that the most brisk trading for non-essential items takes place. Thunder Trains run more frequently during this period, and many lesser merchant caravans are highly active in more rural regions as well. Fishing is extensive all along Aden's sizeable coastline during these months. The celebration of the end of summer is a welcome reprieve at the end of the Month of the Basilisk, a moment's distraction before the hard work of the harvest season begins in the fall.

Fall is comprised of two months, the Month of Drake and the Month of the Leviathan. Every nation in Aden experiences a harvest season of one form or another during the fall, from the harvesting of pumpkins and gourds in the High Steppes to the final harvesting of rice from the paddies in Vanora far to the south. The temperature drops off from the scorching heat of summer, allowing the farmers and peasants of Aden to work the fields without fear for their lives, although exhaustion and dehydration are still threats that must be kept in mind in order to prevent significant loss of life. Fishing continues throughout this season in order to ensure that the end of the season and the advent of winter are met with adequate stockpiles to avoid famine in the cold winter months.

The year ends with the Month of Dragon, the first of the winter months. This month is often filled with large meals and feasts as the citizens of Aden consume all those stockpiled foods that will not endure throughout the whole of the winter, leaving the latter months of the season to be filled with much blander, less varied diets.

The Wildlife of Aden

A comprehensive detailing of the incredibly diverse wildlife found in Aden would be an impossibly vast undertaking. The range of Aden's climates and terrains are such that the variety of plant and animal life found in the many nations is simply astonishing.

Aramyst once boasted the most significant population of supernatural creatures in the known world, partially due to its natural inhabitants and partially due to the number of such creatures imported into the region for arcane study and experimentation. In the aftermath of the immolation of Regorra and the creation of the Burning Coast, a great deal of the natural wildlife has instinctively fled the area, leaving



a marked absence of life that only enhances the nation's reputation as a desolate ruin. The Burning Coast itself is host to a number of creatures that favor the element of fire, including mephits, efreeti, salamanders, and elementals of different sorts. The plains beyond the Knuckle Mountains include animals such as various large species of cat, a handful of surviving large animals such as elephants and rhinoceroses, and various game animals such as deer, antelope, and other hoofed mammals. Aramyst is also notable in that it is the only nation that has a confirmed population of wild pegasi.

Arasteen has the most varied terrain of any modern nation, with frigid hills and forest in the north giving way to temperate plains in the south. Accordingly, it has some of the most diverse wildlife, including small numbers of fantastic creatures that originate from the homelands of the elves. The hills and forests of the north are home to hoofed mammals such as deer and small herds of moose and caribou. Wolves, bears, and small numbers of boar provide rich hunting opportunities, and small game abounds in large numbers. The forests of the Sylfanus are home to a clutch of griffons that are tamed by the elven defenders of the city within its borders. Other exceptional creatures of a bygone age, such as unicorns and blink dogs, can also be found within the forest if one knows where to look.

More so than any other nation, Carraway suffers from the curse of an ancient necromancer, the Silent One, whose death caused the spawning of undead at a much higher rate than elsewhere in the world. While not natural creatures, these undead have limited the game and animal life found in Carraway. Bats, rodents of all sizes, wolves, and some boar are common in the area, but larger game is scarce and the variety that is present in so many other nations is not found within the theocracy's borders.

The High Steppes is regarded as one of the most dangerous regions of Aden, not only due to the presence of nocturnals and bandits, but also because the native wildlife tends to be somewhat bolder and more predatory than in other nations. Many species of wolves are found here, and large packs are willing to attack even armed travelers. Wolverines are also common but are less inclined to attack without provocation. The large mammoths and wooly rhinoceroses that once were found in Arasteen are still present in the High Steppes as well. Intelligent natives such as ogres and trolls have higher numbers here than in any other nation and enjoy a violent rivalry with the jurak forces of Kazan Mikal.

Ionara has the least in the way of wildlife, both in terms of animals and plants. Very little can survive in the Ice Wastes save for a few species of lichens, some scrub, and a handful of the hardiest anials. The dominant predatory species of the region is the snow serpent. The carnivorous serpents prey upon the herds of caribou and reindeer that

dwell in the plains just north of the coastline. The coastline itself is home not only to an enormous variety of fish, but also to large numbers of seals that prey upon them, and which in turn are preyed upon by the species of large, white bears that call Ionara home. Ursax are present in limited quantities as well, but only in the southernmost regions, where the temperature is at its warmest. It is rumored that there are feral giants in the northernmost reaches of the mapped Ice Wastes, but the Ionarans insist that this is merely superstitious nonsense.

Kyan is a realm dominated almost exclusively by dense jungle, terminated only by the southern coastline and the Wall Mountains to the east. The overwhelming majority of wildlife species in this region are insectile in nature, which gives the Crawling Jungle its name, but other species do find their place amid the seething mass of towering trees and crawling undergrowth. Serpents and monkeys are among the most common non-insect animals encountered in the confines of the Crawling Jungle, and they are among the largest normal animals intelligent enough to avoid the region's various insect predators. Dire animals can be found in the area, but only the most cunning and powerful specimens survive long enough to reproduce, ensuring that the ones found within Kyan are indeed dangerous creatures. A handful of rocs are known to nest within the mountains in the regions of Kyan and are among the fiercest foes of the giant hornets that the Queen's Swarmers use as mounts.

The island nation of Le'Ciel has a very temperate environment despite its northern location. The reasons for this are unclear, but most assume that the powerful mages who gave birth to the nation used some unknown form of magic to permanently alter the climate in some way. Given their history of altering the terrain to suit their needs, this seems a reasonable possibility. The sheer volume of high-level magics that have been worked upon the island throughout the Golden Age and beyond have ensured that a wide variety of unusual and magical creatures call the island their home. Many species that once populated Aramyst but that have disappeared since the Darkfall can still be found in Le'Ciel, which is a matter of some pride for the citizens of that nation given their antagonistic relationship with their ancestral homeland.

Other than the Crawling Jungle in Kyan, there is no denser region of jungle anywhere in the Known Lands than the islands of the Misland Republics. The chain's primary island is dominated by a mountain chain that cleaves it into different portions, all but one of which, the coastline, is covered in dense jungle. The native population of the islands, the Misari tribesmen, believes in existing in harmony with nature, and so the island's interior remains largely untouched by the industry and pacification that marks so many other nations in the Known Lands. Of particular note, the Misland Republic is one of the only known places

where a population of giants remains, reclusive though they may be. The massive creatures once dominated Aden in a time before recorded history, but they are largely absent from it today.

The Rhanate's predominant terrain is that of the desert in its various forms, and as might be expected, there is an extreme dearth of vegetation other than the various species of cacti that dominate the ecosystem. Animal life is quite a bit more varied, however, as there are numerous species that have adapted themselves to both the heat and the wide variation in temperature. Various species of reptiles in a wide range of sizes are among the most common, as well as insects of varying sizes. In the regions near mountains, vast swarms of bats can dominate the night skies, and on rare occasions one might find the lair of an intelligent creature such as a sphinx, or a nest of drakes. The far western portion of the Rhanate is the vast swamp known as the Spike Fens, where aggressive plant life is common and the variation of dangerous animal life, much of it venomous, is almost limitless. Leeches, snakes, crocodiles, frogs, and dire counterparts of each of these species abound, and even some intelligent creatures such as manticores can be found in the area as well.

Urbana's wildlife has suffered terribly at the hands of the Iron Tyrant's ruthless expansion toward development of every possible resource against the nocturnals. While animal life and most plant life hold no interest for Lord Urbane, those species that were able to survive the rampant destruction of their habitats were quickly utilized as food sources by the hungry populace, resulting in a region with very little in the way of natural wildlife remaining. Formerly, the plains were homes to herds of bison and horses while the forests held significant populations of deer and wolves as well as some smaller species of predatory cats, including cougars and lynx. The only species that have survived are among the hardiest of them, including a small population of dire animals, and those that could retreat to the mountains and survive there while avoiding the extensive mining operations that Urbana maintains. The only plants that have endured are those that offer neither resources like lumber nor food in the way of fruits or edible roots, predominantly a large variety of scrub brush and other hardy lowland vegetation.

Vanora's wildlife continues to thrive, due in no small part to the reverence for natural creatures that many of its citizens hold. The animals who hold a position in the pantheon of the Way of the Ten Beasts can all be found within the boundaries of Vanora, as well as a multitude of other game animals and lesser predators. Drakes and basilisks are more common here than anywhere else in the world, although they are still uncommon. Although the curse of the undead does not extend as far south as Vanora, there are nevertheless strains of intelligent undead that plague the area as well as mindless beasts such as the will o' the wisp. Tigers were once common enough to present a danger to travelers, but those days have long since passed, and the large cats are no longer encountered with any real frequency.

Much like the Rhanate to the north, Yzeem is a largely inhospitable region that has little in the way of wildlife. The Mud Plains region in the west has virtually identical wildlife to the Rhanate itself, but the Valley of Life that comprises the most fertile region of Yzeem has a much more robust and varied selection of native creatures. Prior to the Darkfall, the most significant threat to farmers in the valley was the prevalence of venomous asps and voracious crocodiles, but sadly those things have become a much lesser danger in the modern era. Despite the situation, cats, dogs, and jackals are all still common sights in the valley and around its outskirts. There is also a large variety of birds, not the least of which are hawks and falcons of various species. There is a small population of monkeys as well, although these are not indigenous to the area and were brought in from Kyan many centuries ago as pets.

Agriculture

Agriculture and farming have always played a tremendous role in Aden's prosperity. In the centuries of the Great War, the constant fighting and marching of armies across the continent laid waste to vast portions of the landscape, rendering them unable to bear crops for several years. Famine was a very real threat in those days, and entire

tribes or even kingdoms sometimes dissolved for no reason other than that there was no food to be had for their people. This very real threat to ongoing stability was a chief concern at the Rose Accords, and in order to alleviate the problem, the leaders of Aden turned to the druids among their people in order to find solutions.

The guidance of druids proved to be an extremely significant development in Aden's agricultural history. Keenly aware of the methods necessary to ensure that the soil remained fertile and replenished, the druids gladly passed on their knowledge to the people of Aden, hoping that in doing so they might preserve the balance between nature and man in a nation that had so desperately been damaged by the latter. Using farming techniques that arose from this wisdom, the farmers of Aden have managed to keep their land arable and fertile for more than a thousand years.

Wheat and rice are by far the most common crops raised throughout the continent. Wheat is more prevalent in the west, while rice is more so in the east, but both are present in both regions to such an extent that they are recognized and commonplace to virtually every living being in Aden. Arasteen is by far the largest producer of wheat in the world, although Columbey once rivaled that claim centuries ago. Caraway in the east also raises a significant amount of wheat but divides its farmlands between wheat and rice. Rice is produced extensively in Vanora and Yzeem, with much of the latter's Valley of Life devoted to rice paddies.

In the northernmost regions of the mainland, as well as in what passes for the warmer regions of Ionara, a plant known as the aniol can prosper despite the climate. The aniol is a relative of the cabbage and is similar in appearance, but with a somewhat more fibrous nature. Aniolis comprise the majority of the Ionaran diet and are a chief supplement to the people of the High Steppes and Arasteen as well. Eastern Aden is also home to a great variety of squash, including the massive pumpkins of the High Steppes and the death-gourds that grow in the same region, so called because of their resemblance to skulls. A number of citrus fruits are found in the jungles of Kyan, and the sweet, water-bearing berries of the rasan tree are a vital part of survival in the Sundered Desert of the Rhanate and Yzeem.

Government

On the whole, the nations of Aden are rather progressive, which is perhaps a natural outcome of a lengthy period of peace without large-scale conflict. The forms of government of the standing nations are somewhat traditional, however, owing a great deal to the fact that they were created more than one thousand years ago and have never seen extensive change in that period of time.

The most common and long-standing form of government currently practiced in Aden is a monarchy, which was the only form of government in existence at the time of the Peace of the Rose. Despite the massive social and cultural upheavals experienced in the wake of the Darkfall, Ionara, Kyan and Vanora remain hereditary monarchies, as they have been ever since their foundations. In all three cases, the families of the nations' founders retain control of their respective nations. In addition to these three nations, Arasteen is a monarchy, but not hereditary; it is the only known instance of a meritocratic monarchy in Aden's history. Each individual monarch of Arasteen selects his own replacement by appointing a Paladin of the Radiant Order, who ascends to the throne upon the previous King's death or retirement. Since the Radiant Order is open to any citizen of Arasteen, it is theoretically possible for any citizen to become the King, although in reality it is much more likely that one of noble or wealthy birth will accomplish such a task.

It is a sign of how significant the changes to Aden are that the next most common form of government is that of the dictatorship. To be fair, two of the three standing dictatorships in Aden have arisen since the Darkfall, and the third did not exist until centuries after the Peace of the Rose. The chaos that ensued after the appearance of the nocturnals gave rise to the so-called Dust King of the Rhanate, who fancies himself a king, but in reality is a dictator. Likewise, the Darkfall sounded the death knell of the great nation of Columbey, which gave rise to Urbana

when the mercenary lord Urbane seized control of the throne. The High Steppes did not exist following the Peace of the Rose, at least not as a unified land, but to face the horrors of the nocturnals, the warlords of that region united under the rule of a Grand Kazan, essentially a dictator selected by strength of arms and with a limited ten-year rule.

Although rarely implemented with success prior to the Peace of the Rose, since that historic meeting, three successful oligarchies have been created in Aden. Yzeem was the first, and despite its multiple flirtations with significant corruption, has endured for more than a thousand years without removal of any significant power or authority. The nation of Aramyst has arguably had the most successful oligarchy in the form of its Celestial College, which replaced a more traditional monarchy within the first generation of the nation's foundation. Likewise, the nation of Le'Ciel, located on the large island off of Aden's northern coast, was formed in response to the creation of the Celestial College, and ironically mirrored that same magocracy-style government with a cabal of mages who came to be known as the Creators. In each case, the key to success appears to have been the compartmentalization of authority assigned to different figures within the oligarchy to ensure minimizing any conflicts over areas of authority. In the instance of Yzeem, this was done by dividing different civic responsibilities among individual members of the ruling Council of Seven. In Aramyst and Le'Ciel, members of the ruling bodies were selected depending upon their areas of arcane expertise, with no two members sharing the same discipline of magic.

Unique in Aden, Carraway is a theocracy. The government of the entire nation is synonymous with the Church of All Saints, and the ruler of one is automatically the ruler of the other. The supreme authority is referred to as the Theocrat, and each individual Theocrat chooses his or her replacement from the upper echelons of the Church's clergy upon retirement. There are historical precedents for a Theocrat to choose a replacement from lower ranking members of the Church as well, but this is exceptionally rare and has only happened three times in the nation's history.

Religion & Philosophy

Religion is a strangely subdued force in the world of Aden. It is generally accepted that there were once gods that were worshipped by the various races of the Known Lands, but that they were abandoned long ago, even before the Great War consumed the world. Like so much of the world's history, very little information concerning these ancient religions survived that conflict. Occasional ruins found in the most uncivilized regions of the continent, as well as vague references in the occasional elven texts, are all that have survived the ages of time, although there are other faiths that have arisen since the Peace of the Rose was signed. Some historians and scholars delved into the mystery of why the old gods had been so thoroughly and completely forgotten, but the Darkfall ended interest in such questions in favor of much more pressing matters.

Vestiges of forgotten religions still exist in Aden, the most prevalent of which is the nigh-universal belief that the different races and cultures of the world have in an idyllic afterlife. This afterlife is rather ill-defined in most cases, but is generally considered a paradise where the virtuous dwell after their lives end. This realm is most often simply called Paradise, although there are many names varying by ancestry and region; for example, the ancient elven term for it is Le'Ciel, a term used by the creators of the island nation for their own land, much to the offense of some elves. By contrast, it is generally accepted that the wicked are denied entry and are condemned to oblivion upon death. Since the Darkfall, a new aspect to this has been added after a survivor emerged from an ill-fated expedition into the volcano at Smult in Urbana. The man survived only a short time, but during those few days he ranted about a terrible realm beneath the earth where those who had fallen to the Darkfall were condemned to suffer eternal torment. This realm has become known as Infernus, and many now believe that not only the wicked, but also those who are claimed by the Darkfall, suffer this fate upon their deaths.

In the past, differences of religion have been a great source of conflict and division. Many scholars believe Aden's last great war had its origins in a (now long forgotten) religious dispute. Fortunately, since the Peace of the Rose such conflicts have been relatively minor. While some optimistically believe this is due to the people learning from past mistakes, it is due in large part to the benevolent machinations of the Seers, a prophetic order obsessed with guiding history. Having learned from the Great War, the Seers paid special attention to Aden's various religious orders throughout the Golden Age and the Age of Thunder, secretly using their foresight to iron out potential problems and misunderstandings before they occurred.

As part of their efforts, the Seers also took great pains to homogenize many of Aden's major religions, seeding similar ideas throughout their belief systems in an attempt to foster brotherhood. As a result, many of Aden's major religions bear similar cosmologies, including a belief in the afterlife and various different interpretations of both Paradise and the oblivion now commonly called Infernus. With the Darkfall and the downfall of the Seers, this quiet manipulation of Aden's religious landscape has ceased. Several new religions have sprung into being in reaction to the Darkfall, some of them quite contentious and controversial. Other long-standing religions have begun to slowly rekindle ancient rivalries with one another, most notably the Radiant Order and the Church of All Saints.

MAJOR FAITHS OF ADEN

The Church of All Saints

"Seek all truth in the whispers of those who have gone before."
- Chandrey

The Church of All Saints is simultaneously Aden's largest religion and one of its most powerful governments. The Church serves not only as a prominent guiding faith, but also as ruling body for the nation of Carraway. Though most widely worshipped in the nation of Carraway, worship of the Church is by no means limited to that land, and devotees can be found throughout Aden.

The Church of All Saints teaches that the spirits of great men and women continue to watch over the faithful. These blessed spirits serve as shining examples; it is believed that there is no truth that cannot be uncovered through proper communion with the Saints. In this way, the Saints serve not only as guardians of the mortal world, but also as advisors. Thaumaturges - those who can commune directly with the Saints - often hold special favored status in the Church.

The Church of All Saints is known for its many strict rules and regulations, all transcribed in their most sacred volume, the Pax Sanctus. This sacred text serves two purposes. First, it is a collection of the names of all officially canonized Saints, as well as brief descriptions of their miraculous accomplishments. Second, it is a collection of rules and regulations necessary for one to lead a virtuous life. These rules run a vast gamut, from prohibitions regarding the consummation of certain meats at certain times of the year to absolute condemnation of the practice of necromancy. Though the Pax Sanctus itself is a religious volume, many of its passages are considered law within the nation of Carraway (particularly those regarding harsh punishments for violent crimes).

While the Pax Sanctus has a reputation for being rigid and unyielding, it is a document constantly in flux. However, only the Theocrat and her Chancellors can approve official revisions or additions to the Sanctus. A new official edition of the book is published each year and is quickly distributed. As the complete text is extremely large and unwieldy, abridged versions are common.

The Church is not openly hostile toward other faiths, but it tends to look upon "lesser" religions as relatively crude and uncivilized. Advocates bear particular animosity toward members of the Radiant Order,



whom they see as too undisciplined and forgiving despite the many similarities in their core philosophies.

The Church of All Saints has a number of official titles for its officials (from Arbiters to Vicars to the Theocrat, as detailed in the Carraway section). Lay members of the church refer to themselves as descendants.

The Radiant Path

"Show compassion for all. Justice is inevitable."
- King Tirrian of Arasteen

King Tirrian of Arasteen was founder of that renowned brotherhood of knights, the Radiant Order. Though his teachings were not originally intended as gospel, they have become embraced not only by devotees of his order, but by the common folk of Arasteen - and beyond - as well. Like the Church of All Saints, the Radiant Path is not merely a major religion, but also deeply influences Arasteen's government. Yet

unlike their Carrite brethren, the Knights of the Radiant Order do not constitute a true theocracy. The knights do not rule the government; they merely serve as its soldiers and enforcers.

While the Radiant Order has strict rules and requirements regarding its members, Tirrian's actual philosophy is simple. It can be summarized by a pair of virtues: Compassion (sometimes also referred to as Love) and Justice (sometimes also referred to as Judgment). Likewise, the core of the Radiant Path boils down to two simple edicts, quoted at the beginning of this section.

The former of these two edicts is simple enough - Radiants believe that all creatures are worthy of compassion and that people should generally be good and fair to one another. The latter edict is often misquoted or misunderstood, with many falsely believing it represents the Radiant Order's confidence in their own righteousness. Radiants believe that justice - the idea that those who commit evil acts will meet with fair punishment - is a literal and inevitable force in the universe. Those who transgress against others *will* face punishment, either in this life or in the afterlife. The knights of the Radiant Order are sometimes the manifestation of justice, but even if they fail, justice will always find its way.

It is the combination of these edicts that makes Radiant Order knights as relentless as they are. Those who believe that the knights merely hate evildoers misunderstand them. Radiant knights are not intended to hate evil - they are intended to *redeem* evil. A true knight believes that a criminal cannot escape punishment and that the afterlife's punishments are exponentially worse than those of the mortal world. For this reason, a paladin must seek out those who commit evil and insure that justice finds them in this life - either via punishment or, preferably, redemption - to *save* them from eternal damnation. Paladins do this because of their sense of compassion, because they do not wish eternal punishment upon anyone - not even their worst enemies. At the same time, it is also a knight's duty to protect the weak and defend the helpless. Though justice may be inevitable, compassion drives them to do good.

This being said, there are adherents of the Radiant Path who twist these simple beliefs, either intentionally or due to prejudice and ignorance. Some view the virtue of Judgment as carte blanche to punish their enemies mercilessly. There are even those who twist the virtue of Love, interpreting it as national pride and unflinching loyalty to fellow brothers and sisters of the faith. Adherents of the Radiant Path are well known for dispatching missionaries throughout Aden to carry their message, usually accompanied by knights of the Radiant Order seeking to do good deeds. These pilgrims are met with varying levels of welcome. Some view them as selfless heroes; others view them as self-righteous meddlers.

Way of the Ten Beasts

*"Dragon was strong, but fell for Fox's tricks.
Fox thought himself clever, but Eagle was wiser.
Eagle hesitated. Ursax did not.
Ursax reminded only to find that Snake had outmaneuvered him.
But Dragon was stronger than Snake.
So did the contest carry on, until none of the Beasts remembered
what they originally sought."*

- From the *Book of the Ten Beasts*

This curious and ancient belief system is believed to have been created by the first Emperor of Vanora. It was very likely intended merely as a system of metaphors and fables, meant to describe Vanora's many warring tribes and instruct them in the proper way to coexist with one another.

The Way of Ten Beasts describes Vanora's ten totem animals - the Serpent, Dragon, Wolf, Eagle, Basilisk, Drake, Ursax, Leviathan, Fox, and Shark. Each of these creatures represents a different life philosophy, each with positive and negative traits. While all of these Beasts are colorful characters in Vanoran legend, the ultimate lesson of the Way of the Ten Beasts is that none of these creatures is truly in harmony with the world. Each requires balance that can only be offered by the others.

Only through unity can there be true peace and prosperity. (Each of the beasts and what they represent is described in detail in the Vanora section of this book.)

Each Beast is associated with a constellation, as well as a month of the year during which that constellation is prominent in Vanora's night sky. It is said that those who are born within the appropriate months assume the positive and negative qualities relative to the appropriate Beast, though most scholars discount this as mere superstition.

In its native Vanora, the Way of Ten Beasts is officially considered a philosophy rather than a true religion. Regardless of this, many have embraced these teachings wholly and cleave faithfully to the belief that the Ten Beasts guide all aspects of their daily lives, and they even look upon the Beasts as literal entities that watch over the faithful. In the remote villages of Vanora, temples to the Ten Beasts are quite common. The Emperor's official stance is that the Way of Ten Beasts is intended only as metaphor, and any sightings of creatures resembling the actual Ten Beasts are apocryphal. All the same, the Emperor takes no action against those who choose to worship the Ten Beasts, so long as they do no harm.

True devotees of the Way of the Ten Beasts generally refer to themselves as children of one of the beasts. A devotee of Drake, for example, would be a Son or Daughter of Drake.

MINOR FAITHS OF ADEN

The War of the Sky

*"Brother Sun, light our path to victory.
Sister Moon, grant us rest when we fall."
- From the Verses of the Most Holy Yerza*

This religion originated in the Rhanate as a splinter faith of the Radiant Path. It began when a rapacian merchant named Yerza hosted a group of Radiant missionaries in his home during an unusually hot Rhanate summer. Yerza learned much of the Radiant Path, and while he found some wisdom in their teachings, he felt that the faith was far too naïve and idealistic, especially after the missionaries failed to heed his warnings and were slaughtered in a bandit ambush the following autumn.

He went on to write a long poem in which he ironically referred to himself as the Most Holy Yerza. Within the poem, he detailed his reflections on Radiant philosophy. The poem is rife with thick symbolism. In particular, he anthropomorphized Love as "Sister Moon" and Justice as "Brother Sun." Rather than limiting these ideals to what he felt were Arasteen's simplistic interpretations, he viewed these two things as forces of energy, in constant contention, yet ultimately perfectly matched. While one could find great prosperity in the balance between them, such balance was ultimately impossible to maintain. A good man would ultimately be betrayed by evil. A brave man would ultimately be destroyed by cowardice. A wise man would delve too deeply into the secrets of life and find his existence hollow and without purpose. An artist could create great beauty, but in comprehending the nature of beauty, find beauty in nothing.

The poem also features a detailed creation myth in which the world itself was created due to the constant conflict between Sun and Moon. In the poem, the Rhanate was originally a bountiful wasteland, but it was scorched irrevocably by the siblings' constant bickering. Yerza did not mean these verses to be taken literally but rather as metaphors decrying the various accomplishments and failures of mankind.

This beautiful (and deeply cynical) poem resonated deeply with the desert's nomadic tribes. The Verses of the Holy Yerza were embraced as a guide to life throughout the Rhanate, with followers referring to themselves as Skybrothers or Yezans. Yerza himself lived long enough

to witness this ascension of his writings, a development he found both humbling and depressing.

Followers of the War of the Sky embrace the tenets of equilibrium. They believe that an excess of vice or virtue ultimately burdens one's soul, and that one must ultimately seek balance and moderation. While some implement these teachings by treating others as they would be treated, others embrace them more literally, believing that any indulgence or misdeed is forgivable so long as it is balanced by an equal measure of virtue or charity.

The War of the Sky has found a great deal of popularity in Yzeem, as well as the Rhanate. The Council of Seven during Yerza's lifetime found their lands overwhelmed by an influx of Radiant Path missionaries. They embraced and distributed Yerza's teachings (the cynical tone of which they found much more to their liking) in hopes that the Radiants would leave them alone.

The Benevolent Miasma

*"Life is short. Life is joy."
- Orcidus*

This new faith was born in the nation of Urbana shortly after the city of Mekanus was reclaimed. The Benevolent Miasma was founded by a ferran prophet named Orcidus who was blessed with a holy vision while staring into the omnipresent clouds of smog that shroud Urbana's capital.

Within the smog, Orcidus saw many possible future fates for the city of Mekanus. He saw the city struggle against the Darkfall as well as against its own crime, political infighting, and overpopulation. In all of these futures, the city was ultimately destroyed either by the nocturnals or by itself – in all of them except for one.

While he could never fully recollect the details of this future, Orcidus returned with an infectious positive attitude and a certainty that the people of Urbana would ultimately triumph against the Darkfall. He began to spread his teachings throughout the city, teaching others to embrace life with joy and live to the fullest, discarding all worries and finding happiness wherever they could.

Miasmism has quickly gained traction with Urbana's poor and disgruntled lower classes, though this may not entirely be due to its message. The cult is notorious for its deeply hedonistic celebrations, as well as copious use of hallucinogenic substances at official gatherings.

The authorities of Urbana have turned a blind eye to the cult's questionable activities. Some have even theorized that the entire religion was secretly coordinated by Lord Urbane's agents, intended to act as both a spiritual and literal opiate to his downtrodden people.

Ancestor Worship

"In the name of my forefathers..."

This worship of one's ancestors is quite widespread in many areas of Aden, especially Le'Ciel and the High Steppes. While some would call such faith primitive, others would be quick to point out that there is very little real difference between the basic concepts behind primitive ancestor worship and the Church of All Saints.

A common thread among ancestor worshipping faiths is the idea that the ancestors constantly watch over their successors – guiding and protecting, but also judging. Those who shame or disappoint the ancestors will find themselves unwelcome among their number upon their deaths. As a result, strict adherence to the family's concepts of honor and morality is an important tenet of such faiths.

Rapacian tribal loyalty is comparable in many ways to ancestor worship. Though not all rapacians literally revere their ancestors, the idea that the tribe is an entity greater than the sum of its parts and worthy of one's devotion and respect is an idea common to both rapacians and ancestor worshipping faiths.

Nature Worshippers

"All that you see derives from the seven."

Aden's oldest known religions trace their lineage to Sylfanus. These ancient elves worshipped the Seven Forces of nature - Sea, Storm, Glade, Hunger, Sun, Mountain, and Night. Though widespread worship of nature has dwindled in the modern era, the concept of these forces is a consistent theme within druidic sects or other nature worshippers.

Each of these forces represents a necessary aspect of the natural world. Though the ancient elves are said to have worshipped anthropomorphized versions of these forces, ascribing them personalities and myths, most nature worshippers in this day and age merely view them as abstract forces.

The rise of mechamagic has caused something of a schism between nature worshippers. Many see manite refinement as a bane upon the land and decry its use. Others embrace a more moderate stance, viewing manite as a necessary evil that must be embraced cautiously to rid the natural balance of a much greater threat - the Darkfall.

The Divine Machination

"Never stop moving. Never stop improving."

This curious faith is named after an anonymously written goreaux treatise of the same name, and its practice is popular among both surface dwarves and Aden's many goreaux communities. This faith has its origins in ancient dwarven lore (still held by the deep dwarves) which holds that the universe was originally created by an abstract entity known as the Maker, and dwarves (and other lesser creatures) were created to carry on and finish his work.

The Divine Machination presents this original thesis, but makes the additional assertion that this maker was not a literal force, but was merely a manifestation of various scientific forces and natural laws. The idea, essentially, is that the universe is a beautiful and ordered system created for some mysterious purpose. The existence of life is the miraculous outgrowth of that creation.

Living creatures are a part of the machinery of the universe. Their purpose is not merely to complete the universe, as dwarves believed, but also to comprehend it.

Followers of the Divine Machination believe there are no accidents. Everything works as intended. Everything has a purpose. Machinists value learning and creation above all else. It does not matter what one learns or what one creates, so long as one

constantly learns and creates. All knowledge is inherently good. All creation, from art to literature to architecture to advanced technology, is inherently good and advances one's purpose in creation. Ignorance and sloth are the only true evils - all other sins, crimes, and hardships are born directly from these great perversions.

A true machinist believes a life is well-lived so long as one never ceases to learn and create. Upon death, one's life energy returns to the universe, serving to advance and empower the divine machinery of existence.

Some members of this faith believe that even the Darkfall, as terrible as it is, is merely a result of some disorder within the divine machination. Some scholars even believe that this is the true purpose of life - that the universe created scholars and craftsmen such as themselves to repair whatever sin or imbalance created the Darkfall and to restore the universe to its natural state.

Darkfall Cults

"Darkness. Now and forever."

Confronted by the ultimate evil that is the Darkfall, there are many who have chosen not to fight its power. Instead, some choose to curry its favor, hoping that the nocturnals will spare them when they consume civilization. Most of these cults are nothing more than madmen, unconnected to the Darkfall and as likely to be destroyed by its agents as any mortal. A rare few, however, are led by powerful corrupted, demons, or intelligent nocturnals.

Brainwashing and indoctrination of low-ranking members is the norm. Most of these cultists believe that the Darkfall is a pure and noble force intended to wash the world clean of various injustices (both real and perceived). Darkfall cultists believe that, for their loyalty and faith, they will be spared when the apocalypse ultimately consumes Aden. Darkfall cults are extremely dangerous and known for their absolute, zealous loyalty. Their rituals are violent and unspeakable, often giving rise to nocturnals, fallen, and other blasphemies.

These cults invariably meet in secluded locations or well-hidden headquarters, as willing communion with the Darkfall is a heinous crime in all of Aden's civilized lands.

INDUSTRY

The concept of industry is a fairly new one in Aden. Up until the advent of mechamagic, items that required skilled construction were created on an individual basis by artisans or craftsmen of a particular discipline. At the most, a family tradition of crafting would be practiced by a small number of artisans sharing a similar technique or method. The creation of mechamagic, however, established the possibility of individuals using enchanted machines or materials in order to dramatically increase his or her output. Although most skilled craftsmen rejected the idea, practitioners of the arcane arts were quick to seize upon the notion and began establishing rudimentary industrial equipment with a higher productivity rate, even though the quality of individual items produced was significantly lower.

Since the Darkfall, the relentless desires of Lord Urbane have transformed the idea of mechanized labor into a reality, creating the first true factories ever to exist in Aden. Each of Urbane's major cities contains a district known as Smoketown, where massive factories churn out manufactured goods. Within, meagerly trained workers supervise and operate machines that increase their efforts many times over, ensuring that these factories can produce things like weapons, firearm components, armor, or even low-end mechamagical components for larger-scale items like storm cannons, sentinels, or the Thunder Trains themselves.

Taken less literally, Aden's industry has always been both robust and varied, depending a great deal on the particular location in question. Certain regions of the continent have always tended to be much more



productive than others. The nations of Arasteen, Yzeem, and Carraway have always had especially fertile farmlands and fishing, and these three nations have often traded excess food to several other countries. This has always been an equitable arrangement, given that other nations tend to have resources that these productive regions lack. Aramyst, for instance, has always produced large amounts of magically active materials and items which are highly valued in virtually every quarter of Aden. Columbey once held a reputation for producing high quality crafted goods as well as articles of academic and philosophical value; since the demise of Columbey, Urbana has replaced it and has become much more prominent in trading due to being the source of the Thunder Trains as well as the leading producer of all mechatmagical components in Aden.

TRADE & COMMERCE

The most significant aspect of all trade taking place within Aden is that of currency. The root of current monetary values was established at the Rose Accords. Unfortunately, this is one of the few areas in which the attempts at the Rose Accords were less effective than anticipated. While the basic value and exchange for national currencies was established at the time of the Accords, more than one thousand years has seen extensive fluctuations in the exchange rates between nations, depending upon the fortunes and misfortunes of different eras. The core value of coinage remains essentially the same, however.

The basic element of currency in Aden is the crest. Every nation except the High Steppes mints its own coin, each stamped with the official crest of the nation, hence the name of the coinage. The gold crest is the standard unit in which the vast majority of prices are measured. For smaller amounts, silver crests comprise one tenth the value of a gold crest, and copper crests, the smallest denomination of coins, are worth approximately one fifth of a silver crest. Denominations larger than gold are available in limited quantities, and typically have only been minted during times of exceptional prosperity. Typically these larger denominations are made of platinum or other extremely valuable minerals, even manite, although the latter are virtually unheard of in post-Darkfall Aden, given how valuable manite is. Although the gold crest is virtually universal, the lesser denominations of crests can be of varying materials depending upon the circumstances and location. In some regions, less valuable materials such as iron or even bone can replace copper and silver coinage, particularly because the lesser values of coins are rarely used in international trade, but instead are generally limited to trades conducted within the lesser castes of a given nation.

In the years immediately before and after the Rose Accords, and again after the Darkfall, barter is very frequently employed in lieu of simple monetary exchanges. Larger cities and settlements still have functioning economies wherein crests are very valuable, but smaller settlements also allow simple trade for necessary items and commodities. In the Rhanate, for example, water is considered a very valuable commodity and can often be used as an exchange for almost anything as long as the volume is considered an equivalent value. Given its unique arcane properties and its importance to the practice of mechatmagic, manite is a commodity considered more valuable than gold in virtually every trade center in Aden.

The most central aspects of trade in post-Darkfall Aden are the Thunder Trains. Massive creations spawned by the twisted brilliance of Lord Urbane, the Trains traverse the continent multiple times per year, bringing trade to a limited number of cities that lie along their routes. Their sheer size and the amount of arms and armor they bear has finally provided a means for trade goods to be transported from one city to another throughout the different nations, something that has at long last brought some semblance of true trade back to the world after it perished under the claws of the nocturnal horde. The creation of Thunder Stations, the docking stations built specifically to accommodate the massive Thunder Trains, has transformed more than one city into a thriving hub of commerce, and many other cities lying along the Thunder Trail have petitioned Urbana to have new stations constructed within them. Thus far the Iron Tyrant has sharply limited the number of Thunder Stations constructed along the trail, but given how profitable the trading that the Trains spawn has proven for Urbana, it seems likely that he will eventually increase the number of stations along the route, if for no other reason than to gather more wealth for himself and for his nation.

PROMINENT ORGANIZATIONS

Although the history of Aden has been shaped primarily by its nations, there have been a handful of organizations without ties to one specific nation or another that have aided in the development of civilization as a whole. Without the resources and the protection of a nation at their command, many of these groups have suffered tremendously since the Darkfall; their influence, however, can still be seen in the modern age.

The Crimson Sisterhood

The existence of this organization is highly speculative, and may be more myth than reality. Stories of this cult of assassins have existed for centuries and are circulated among the populaces of every nation on Aden. According to legend, the members of the Crimson Sisterhood are peerless warriors and assassins, accepting contracts only for exorbitant sums of money, and only then if the targets present a suitable challenge. Membership is allegedly limited to women only, and they predominantly display mastery of various martial arts and weapons. It is possible that male members or exclusively magic-using members exist; if so, they defy all known rumors and thus operate in perfect secrecy, which may well be the entire point.

A human woman named Jyra Trestan, the Rhan of Trubbs, is rumored to be not only a member of the Crimson Sisterhood, but its leader as well. Other whispers in a different part of the world claim that the black sorceress Lilith, Kazan of the High Steppes and unquestioned mistress of Synthica, the Wicked City, is also a member. Although best known for her arcane abilities, Lilith is also known to be a highly skilled duelist, and the Rhan Trestan is one of the deadliest women in the world, wielding a cursed blade of black volcanic glass that she claimed from a corrupted she killed in personal combat.

The Heralds' Guild

A combination of factors in Aden's history led to the development of the Heralds' Guide, chief among them being the length of the Golden Age and the scarcity of conflict during that period, as well as the pervasive nature of arcane magic in the world in the modern era. During the Golden Age, the inconvenience of long-distance communication was one that could afford to be addressed, given the lack of war. The problem came about long before the development of technology began its rapid ascent, and magic was the only means of overcoming the obstacle. A group of like-minded arcanists from different nations determined that they would develop magic that would allow them to communicate with one another over vast distances almost instantaneously. Although that lofty goal was never truly realized, they did achieve success that permitted them to create an unprecedented communication network.

Calling themselves the heralds, these mages and priests gathered others to their banner and began training in their methods a sufficient number to enact their plan. When they had the numbers they required, they offered their services to the various nations. A nation that wished to employ the heralds would provide a number of tower keeps for them throughout the nation, typically built along common roads and trade routes. The spells that these men and women developed allowed them to send and receive messages to one another over tens or even hundreds of miles. When an important message was issued from or to an important individual, the towers could send the message along in a chain until it reached its destination in a matter of hours instead of weeks or months that overland travel would require.

The Heralds' Guild was never a perfect organization. The guild was not able to cross the Sundered Desert, and thus its network was cut into two pieces: the larger portion in Western Aden and a smaller one in Eastern Aden. Since the Darkfall, these networks have fallen into disrepair, with many towers either abandoned or destroyed outright. The decline in the ability to communicate with other nations has only further contributed to the breakdown of relations between several of them since the Darkfall, and many find that the Heralds' Guild, once a mere luxury, is now sorely missed.

The Seers

The origin of the Seers is lost to history, primarily because the organization was exceptionally secretive for much of its existence and then was all but wiped out under mysterious circumstances during the Darkfall. Long before the Golden Age began, individuals with a rare and varied ability to perceive and manipulate fate began to seek one another out in order to better understand their own natures. At first their collaboration was simply an attempt to comprehend the greater tapestry

of fate, but soon it was obvious that in working together they were able to achieve greater clarity and have a greater impact on the world around them. Soon the Seers, while still few in number, were able to offer their counsel to kings and heads of state throughout Aden. It took generations for their offers to be given true consideration, but once their abilities were proven, they were eventually afforded sufficient respect that their place in the highest courts of the land became commonplace over the course of the Golden Age.

The seers did not survive the Darkfall, at least not in a way that most would recognize. The vast majority of the order, never a large one, disappeared with the Darkfall, and their fates remain unknown. Only a handful, those who had been cast out, or those in the most secluded of locations, remained, and for the past ten years those individuals have largely remained in hiding, fearing that whatever force caused the Darkfall would come for them as well. Only now, a decade after the event, have they begun to take a greater role in Aden once more.

The Steamwright Guild

A relatively recent development in Aden's history, the Steamwright Guild is often mistaken by laymen for an organization devoted to mechemagic. This is far from the truth; the guild predates the development of mechemagic by a noticeable margin. Indeed, for much of its pre-Darkfall history, many prominent members of the guild displayed open disdain for the practice of mechemagic. The Steamwright Guild is devoted to the development and utilization of non-magical technology. This purist view has limited their membership since mechemagic became so prevalent, but after the Darkfall most surviving members have abandoned their haughty attitudes to embrace a more practical attitude that favor survival over principles.

The Darkfall did not devastate the Steamwright Guild in the same way that it laid waste to many other prominent organizations, due in large part to the guild's focus on larger urban centers. Most major cities survived the calamity, ensuring that most steamwrights were able to ride out the cataclysm. In modern Aden, the guild is extremely influential due to its limited numbers and the increased importance of both mundane and magical technology.

The Thunder Scouts

Everyone in Aden is familiar with the Thunder Trains, conceptually even if they have never seen one of the massive transports themselves. Comparatively, few are aware that the great vehicles were inspired by much more mundane transports that existed prior to the Darkfall. Present largely in Columbey and the Concordance, these vehicles were simply called trains, and operated on a much smaller scale. They were steam powered, but with a very limited amount of magic involved. These trains could only follow specified routes, as they ran on pre-established rails that were known as railroad tracks. The creation of these tracks was a difficult and time-consuming process, one made much easier by having the route requiring the least work carefully mapped out. It was the duty of a small cadre of elite scouts to accomplish this. These scouts were equipped with single-man vehicles and were expected to be able to handle both the cartographical needs of their position as well as defend themselves properly. In the early days of mechemagic, their transports were extremely loud, causing them to be known as Thunder Scouts due to the clamor of their vehicles.

After the Darkfall, normal railroads became virtually unusable due to the vulnerability of the tracks to nocturnal attacks, and they fell into complete disuse outside of the Concordance, where they still see limited use. In the former Columbey, the Thunder Scouts were put to use by Lord Urbane to secure the routes of his Thunder Trains, a much more ambitious and vastly deadlier undertaking than they had enjoyed previously. Many were lost, but those who survived emerged hardened and more dangerous than ever before. The largest group of Thunder Scouts continues to serve Urbane and the Iron Guard, but many who abandoned their previous duties out of loyalty to the former Columbey have taken up positions as mercenaries and adventurers throughout Aden.

HEROES OF ADEN

The world of Aden is a vast and diverse place, with many different races all sharing their home within the Known Lands. Most races learned to live together in relative harmony centuries ago, sharing common cultures and languages depending upon the region in which they live. While there are other races who remain apart, some due to xenophobia, some due to unique religious practices, and some for unknown reasons, the majority of races can be found in almost every corner of the Known Lands.

RACES

Dwarves

In the world of Aden, dwarves are not the most populous people in society. In a time so long ago that the exact details have been forgotten, the dwarven people discovered the surface world and experienced a schism: most chose to stay below ground, regarding the surface world as heretical, but some left dwarven society behind and took to the surface in search of new experiences. Now, untold years later, the dwarves of the surface are integrated with the other civilized races while maintaining a seething mutual hatred of the deep dwarves who remain below ground and crave the destruction of everything above their heads.

Dwarven Racial Abilities

Use the rules to make dwarven characters from the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*, with the following addition:

✦ **IRON STOMACH:** Dwarves are immune to poison.

Elves

The elves of Aden are its most long-lived people, with lifespans reaching up to hundred years. Long ago they kept themselves separate from the other races, but a great prophet among their ranks foresaw the decline and demise of their people if they chose to remain apart, and in time the elves joined with the other races to create the cosmopolitan society Aden currently enjoys.

Elven Racial Abilities

Use the rules to make elven characters from the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*, with the following addition:

✦ **SLEEPLESS:** Elves do not require sleep, and are immune to effects that cause sleep.

Faerkin

The origin of the faerkin is unknown, but legends in the High Steppes tell of ancient doorways to different worlds, where trickster spirits would emerge and take mates from the local tribes, giving rise to tales of mischievous “forever children.” This is as likely to be the truth of the faerkin’s origins as not, and certainly explains their obvious links to the fey.

Faerkin Racial Abilities

✦ **DEFENSIVE:** Faerkin are extremely defensive fighters and gain +1 Parry when unencumbered.

✦ **FEY BROTHERHOOD:** Faerkin are closely related to the fey, and are generally viewed as favored cousins, and gain a +2 to Charisma when dealing with fey.

✦ **LITHE:** Faerkin start with a d6 in Agility instead of a d4.



Faerkin

Elf

Dwarf

❖ **LOW-LIGHT VISION:** Faerkin eyes are accustomed to the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

❖ **SMALL:** Faerkin are small creatures with a Size of -1 and therefore subtract -1 from their Toughness.

❖ **SLOW:** Because of their short stature, faerkin have a Pace of 4".

Ferrans

The ferrans, magically evolved animals, are an artificially created race that was born from arcane experimentation by the most brilliant minds in the nation of Aramyst. Created as servants, the ferrans threw off the yoke of their would-be masters and fought to gain their independence, which they did. Today they are found across the face of Aden, in virtually all walks of life.

Due to the incredibly varied nature of ferrans, players may choose any one of the following racial profiles when making their character.

Ferran Predator Racial Abilities

Ferran predators emulate predators, such as wolves, lions, and hyenas.

❖ **BESTIAL NATURE:** Ferran predators may select one bonus ability from the Bestial Nature list.

❖ **HEAD-STRONG:** Ferran predators start with a d6 in Spirit instead of a d4.

❖ **LIMITED ATTRIBUTE (SMARTS):** Ferrans in general are dim and their Smarts may not advance beyond a d6.

❖ **NATURAL WEAPONS:** Ferran predators either possess claws, dealing Str+d4 damage, or a bite attack, dealing Str+d6 damage.

❖ **PREDATORY MOBILITY:** Ferran predators may select one of the following movement-enhancing abilities at character creation: Pace 8 (d6 running die), +2 to Climbing rolls on all but completely sheer surfaces, or moves at a Pace while swimming equal to his full Swimming skill in inches per turn in normal water (round up).

Ferran Brute Racial Abilities

Ferran brutes emulate massive beasts such as bears, rhinos, or elephants.

❖ **BESTIAL NATURE:** Ferran brutes may select one bonus ability from the Bestial Nature list.

❖ **HEARTY:** Ferran brutes start with a d6 in either Vigor or Strength instead of a d4.

❖ **LIMITED ATTRIBUTE (SMARTS):** Ferrans in general are dim and their Smarts may not advance beyond a d6.

❖ **MASSIVE:** Ferran brutes are able to wield two-handed melee weapons with one hand and ignore the Minimum Strength requirement when wielding melee weapons. Two-handed weapons wielded this way may be paired with shields but may not be used with Edges that give them multiple attacks such as Frenzy.

❖ **NATURAL WEAPONS:** Ferran brutes either possess claws, dealing Str+d4 damage, or a gore or bite attack, dealing Str+d6 damage.

Ferran Sneak Racial Abilities

Ferran sneaks emulate small, clever animals such as foxes, mice, or hares.

❖ **BESTIAL NATURE:** Ferran sneaks may select one bonus ability from the Bestial Nature list.

❖ **DEFENSIVE:** Ferrans are extremely defensive fighters and gain +1 Parry when unencumbered.

❖ **LIMITED ATTRIBUTE (SMARTS):** Ferrans in general are dim and their Smarts may not advance beyond a d6.



Ferrans

✧ **LITHE AND WISE:** Sneaks start with a d6 in either Agility or Spirit instead of a d4.

✧ **NATURAL WEAPONS:** Ferran sneaks either possess claws, dealing Str+d4 damage, or a bite attack, dealing Str+d6 damage.

✧ **PREDATORY MOBILITY:** Ferran sneaks may select one of the following movement-enhancing abilities at character creation: Burrowing (6", as per the monstrous ability), +2 to Climbing rolls on all but completely sheer surfaces, moves at a Pace while swimming equal to his full Swimming skill in inches per turn in normal water (round up), or a free d6 in the Stealth skill.

✧ **SMALL:** Sneaks are small creatures with a Size of -1 and therefore subtract -1 from their Toughness.

Bestial Nature

Ferrans of all types may choose one of the following racial abilities:

✧ **ARMOR +2:** Ferrans with this ability have thick, leathery hides.

✧ **BERSEK:** Ferrans with this ability gain the Berserk Edge.

✧ **BRAWNY:** Ferrans with this ability gain the Brawny Edge.

✧ **LARGE:** Predators and brutes gain Size +1, giving them +1 Toughness. Sneaks instead lose the Small racial ability.

✧ **QUICK:** Ferrans with this ability gain the Quick Edge.

✧ **THICK FUR:** Ferrans with this ability gain a +4 bonus to resist all negative environmental effects (heat, cold, pressure, etc.).

✧ **WOODSMAN:** Ferrans with this ability gain the Woodsman Edge.

Goreaux

Many believe that the goreaux are an offshoot of the goblin race, and while the goreaux themselves resent this claim enormously, most agree it is likely the case because of their close physical resemblance. Goreaux are remarkably unlike goblins, however, and are among Aden's most brilliant scientists and magic-users.

Goreaux Racial Abilities

✧ **DEFENSIVE:** Goreaux are extremely defensive fighters and gain +1 Parry when unencumbered.

✧ **HYPER-INTELLIGENT:** Goreaux start with a d6 in Smarts instead of a d4.

✧ **INFRAVISION:** Goreaux can see in the infrared spectrum, halving attack penalties (round down) for bad lighting.

✧ **LIMITED ATTRIBUTE (STRENGTH):** A goreaux's Strength may not advance beyond a d6.

✧ **MECHAMAGIC AFFINITY:** Their close association with mechemagic has rendered goreaux naturally resistant to the Wasting. A goreaux's Manite Threshold is increased by 2.

✧ **SMALL:** Goreaux are small creatures with a Size of -1 and therefore subtract -1 from their Toughness.

Half-Elves

Despite the integrated nature of humankind and elves, there are relatively few half-elves in Aden. Those few who do exist do not bear any particular ill will toward or from others despite their status as half-breeds, but there does seem to be some natural tendency for half-elves to avoid putting down roots. Whether this is just their nature or a quirk of their heritage, no one is certain.

Half-Elven Racial Abilities

Use the rules to make half-elfen characters from the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*, with the following addition:

✧ **WANDERER:** Half-elves start with a d6 in either Notice or Survival.

Humans

Humans are the most numerous and wide-spread of all the races of Aden, making up the majority population in all nations of the Known Lands. There are a wide variety of skin colors and cultural groups that differentiate different races of humanity, but most understand that they are more alike than they are different.

Human Racial Abilities

Use the rules to make Human characters from the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*, with the following addition:

✧ **ADAPTABLE:** Humans start with a d6 in a skill of their choice.



Human

Goreaux

Half-Elf

Jurak

The most physically powerful of Aden's races, the jurak are an offshoot of the orc race much as the goreaux were once part of the goblins in ancient times. That was long ago, however, and the jurak are a hardy, adaptable people that have earned their place in Aden's society time and time again. Although their physical gifts are significant, their most prodigious strength is their ability to adapt to any given environment or situation in as little as a generation.

Jurak Racial Abilities

- ✧ **ADAPTABILITY:** Jurak are a diverse people, and start with a d6 in one attribute of their choice instead of a d4.
- ✧ **LOW-LIGHT VISION:** Jurak eyes are accustomed to the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- ✧ **NO HISTORY:** Jurak have a -2 penalty on all Common Knowledge rolls.
- ✧ **ORC BLOOD:** Jurak still count as orcs for the purposes of mechanical effects and abilities that specify orcs (such as orc slayer weapons).
- ✧ **WASTELANDER:** Jurak can go for a number of days equal to twice their Vigor without water before requiring an initial Vigor roll. After the first

day, they only make another roll every twelve hours. They can go up to six days without food before requiring an initial Vigor roll. After the first day, they only make another roll once every 72 hours.

Rapacians

The reptilian rapacians are native to the vast Sundered Desert that dominates the central portion of the Known Lands. Although they have never found the cold to their liking, their people have spread to all other regions of the continent, more highly concentrated in the tropical and temperate regions. Rapacians are somewhat off-putting to other races, and are mildly less integrated than others. Due to their close tribal bonds, this does not bother most rapacians that much.

Rapacian Racial Abilities

- ✧ **LIMBER:** Rapacians are agile creatures and start with a d6 in Agility instead of a d4.
- ✧ **LOW-LIGHT VISION:** Rapacian eyes are accustomed to the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- ✧ **NATURAL WEAPONS:** Rapacians possess a bite attack, dealing Str+d6 damage.
- ✧ **OUTSIDER:** Rapacians are not well liked by others and receive a -2 to their Charisma.
- ✧ **REPTILIAN:** Rapacians are reptilian humanoids and therefore affected by extreme cold temperatures (or spells with cold trappings) just like their bestial cousins. They take a -4 penalty to resist cold environmental effects, and take an additional 1d6 damage from attacks and powers with the cold Trapping.
- ✧ **SCALY HIDE:** Rapacians' tough hides grant them a +1 to their base Toughness.



Jurak

Rapacian

Echoes

The echoes are unique in that they exist amid the other races of the Known Lands, but are unknown by them. The echoes are a race of shape-shifters descended from another plane, and as a result they have always been a very secretive people. That they require a talisman of the dead in order to change into that dead person's likeness is at best morbid and at worst antithetical to several cultural beliefs in the Known Lands.

Echo Racial Abilities

✧ **FRAGILE BODY:** Echoes have soft and delicate bodies; they suffer -1 Toughness.

✧ **INFRAVISION:** Echoes can see in the infrared spectrum, halving attack penalties (round down) for bad lighting.

✧ **MALLEABLE NATURE:** Echoes start with a d6 to any one attribute instead of a d4.

✧ **NATURAL MIMIC:** When using his Transient Form racial ability, the echo becomes a perfect duplicate of the mimicked individual, mirroring not only the individual's appearance but personal habits and mannerisms as well (although they do not have the subject's memories, skills, or any other racial or other special abilities) and gains a +2 to Persuasion skill rolls to impersonate the original individual.

✧ **TRANSIENT FORM:** Using his Smarts as his arcane skill, an echo may alter his appearance using the *disguise* power, with the following changes. This ability has an indefinite Duration and costs no Power Points, instead suffering a penalty to the Smarts roll equal to half the power's usual Power Point cost (rounded down), but is subject to an additional limitation. An echo must carry a fetish (a lock of hair, bone, etc.) of the dead humanoid to maintain the form. An echo begins play with one fetish, allowing him to assume the form of a relatively anonymous humanoid. This ability does not function if the echo is rendered unconscious.

✧ **UNNERVING LOOKS:** If an echo's true nature is known to others, their Charisma drops to -2.



Echo

Ilithix Exiles

The ilithix are a hive-mind race of bipedal insects native to the Wall Mountains where they intersect with the modern nation of Kyan. They exist in vast colonies and do the bidding of powerful queens who are themselves beholden to the Brood Mother, the progenitor of their race. Occasionally, and through unknown circumstances, an ilithix gains free will and is severed from the hive, which usually makes them a target of their former kin. Ilithix exiles are often misunderstood by other races simply due to their scarcity.

Ilithix Exile Racial Abilities

✧ **ALIEN FORM:** Ilithix exiles have a -2 penalty to Charisma when dealing with other races. Armor made for ilithix carapaces costs twice as much due to their unusual body type and the extra effort needed to make such armor.

✧ **INFRAVISION:** Ilithix exiles can see in the infrared spectrum, halving attack penalties (round down) for bad lighting.

✧ **KEEN REFLEXES:** Ilithix exiles start with a d8 in Agility instead of a d4 and may raise it to d12+2 via normal advancement.

✧ **SHAKY FLIGHT:** Ilithix exiles have a Flying Pace of 8" and Climb -1, as well as having -2 to Agility or Agility-based skill rolls when flying. They also cannot fly if they are wearing any armor heavier than leather.

✧ **STINGER:** An ilithix exile possesses a stinger that inflicts Str+d6 damage.

✧ **TRUE EXILE:** Due to their separation from the hive mind, ilithix exiles require two points per step to raise Spirit during character creation.



Ilithix

EDGES

Background Edges

Arcane Background

Requirements: Novice, Special

See *Chapter 3: Magic* for available Arcane Backgrounds.

Fallen

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+

The Darkfall takes many names and many forms, but its most insidious manifestation is in the hearts of normal men and women. By circumstance or by choice, this malevolent intelligence finds root in mortal flesh. These poor creatures are forever changed by the experience, touched by the same twisted power that created the nocturnals. Some of these creatures are victims of unimaginable dark magic or powerful curses. Some intentionally brokered dark pacts with the nocturnals and bear their twisted gifts as a mark of their debt. Others

had no choice at all, but are the offspring of terrible unions between unnatural creatures and ordinary men. These creatures are known as the corrupted. They serve the Darkfall obediently, their wills subverted by its malevolent power.

But some do not serve. They call themselves the fallen.

Much like the paths to corruption, the paths to freedom are equally diverse. Some are freed by excruciating holy rituals. Some overcome the Darkfall's grasp upon their soul through will alone. And some are simply set free with no explanation – their liberty as random and terrifying as was their servitude. The fallen look out for their own, and have formed a loose confederation among themselves. They help one another overcome the darkness within. And, more importantly, they hunt down those who falter – or those who merely pretend to be free of the Darkfall's control – and destroy them without mercy. This hardly spares a fallen from the fear and hatred of his fellow men. To the rest of the world, the fallen are indistinguishable from other corrupted, save by their actions.

But by their actions, they shall be redeemed.

A fallen's powers can vary wildly depending upon its origins and stigma. One thing tends to remain constant – the fallen are masters of destruction. Their power is complemented in various ways by their unearthly heritage, which grants powerful abilities to these dark heroes.

Stigma: All fallen carry a stigma, a fragment of the Darkfall's power that is as much blessing as curse. As the Darkfall most commonly manifests itself in the form of mortal nightmares, each stigma resembles some legendary monster or primal fear shared by the people of Aden.

The horrific nature of the fallen leads others to shy away from their presence, and they have many enemies. All fallen suffer a -2 penalty to Charisma, and most characters are uncooperative or hostile towards them. Less powerful fallen must rely on mundane means to hide their true nature. In this case, making an opposed Persuasion roll versus the target's Notice to hide one's stigma gains a +2 bonus to the Persuasion roll with a proper disguise. It requires a Notice roll at -2 for someone to see through a disguise if a specific person is being mimicked with whom they are familiar; the penalty increases to -4 with a raise on the Persuasion roll. If unfamiliar, the penalties are -4 and -6 with a raise, respectively. At the GM's option, certain particularly dramatic stigma (such as drakes or incinerators) may be more difficult if not impossible to disguise.

Fallen Stigma Types

A fallen's stigma defines the nature of its dark powers. While each stigma has an associated description, do not be afraid to build upon these with your own ideas. So long as the stigma clearly marks the character as fallen, players should feel free to work with their GM's to design a unique and memorable hero. The horror stigma is the most common, and is the default stigma for most fallen characters.

• Befouled

The fallen draws his powers from poison and disease. His complexion is gaunt and sickly. His flesh is riddled with discolored sores and constantly oozes unclean fluids. He gains a +2 bonus on all Vigor rolls against poison and disease. His saliva becomes a potent contact poison, which he may apply to a single weapon or piece of ammunition as a free action or spit up to Range: 3/6/12 using the Shooting skill as an attack. Targets hit with the poison must make a Vigor roll or suffer one level of Fatigue. This may lead to Incapacitation. Fatigue levels from this poison automatically improve one step 24 hours after the original poison effects were suffered. A befouled fallen can generate enough doses of poison in a single encounter equal to half their Vigor die.

• Behemoth

A behemoth fallen is a creature of raw physical power. Behemoths' bodies hunch from the weight of obscenely overdeveloped muscles corded with dark, pulsing veins. This violent creature may appear slow and dim-witted, but can often wield his power with terrifying speed and intellect. He is never considered unarmed in combat and so is never subject to the Unarmed Defender rule. His Strength also increases one die step, to a maximum of d12+2.



Fallen echo

• Horror

Of all the fallen, horrors are the most primal expressions of the Darkfall's power. Their bodies have been wracked and twisted by corruption. No two horrors are alike; the Darkfall has transformed each one into a uniquely disfigured and horrifying creation. Pain, madness, and fear are integral parts of their beings, and they gladly use these dark gifts against their enemies. A horror gains the Fear monstrous ability which may be activated as a free action once per encounter and targets her enemies, ignoring any allies. The mental anguish she has experienced through the Darkfall makes lesser terrors pale in comparison. She is immune to Fear (including magical fear).

• Incinerator

These terrifying fallen are living manifestations of man's innate fear of fire. This stigma leaves the fallen covered head to toe in horrid burns, and her flesh is painfully warm to the touch. When angered, the fallen's eyes glow like embers and release a putrid smoke. Though this fallen has adjusted to the terrible agony caused by her stigma, she is driven to share their pain with her enemies through the power of cleansing fire. Her seared flesh grants +1 Toughness. In addition, she can use the *bolt* power with a fire Trapping, using Smarts as her arcane skill. This ability costs no Power Points, instead suffering a penalty to the Spirit roll equal to half the power's usual Power Point cost (rounded down). If she rolls a 1 on her Spirit die (regardless of her Wild Die), she is automatically Shaken. This can cause a wound.

• Madcap

Not all pranks are harmless. The madcap fallen is possessed by a spirit of malicious mischief. This creature constantly fills the fallen's mind with images plucked from its own bizarre and inhuman sense of humor, steering the mortal mind toward madness unless it agrees to play vicious, sometimes fatal tricks upon others. While the madcap stigma does not twist the flesh like most, its influence is still readily apparent. The madcap's face is twisted into a rictus grin. His eyes sparkle with comic delight one moment and desperate exhaustion the next. His unstable mental state often leads him to neglect personal hygiene, letting his hair grow ragged and his clothes become unkempt and disheveled. Worst of all, except when consciously trying to be quiet, the Madcap finds it difficult not to fill the silence with a macabre, piercing laughter. He suffers no situational penalties to Stealth rolls for running and also gains a +2 to Stealth and Taunt rolls.

Golemoid

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d6+

Steam Reserve: A golemoid is more adept at utilizing manite implants than most, allowing him to generate an intense personal reserve of magical power. While many implants offer passive effects, some are activated through the use of Steam Points. The number of Steam Points in a golemoid's steam reserve is equal to half of his Vigor die plus 2. A golemoid's steam reserve regenerates at a rate of one Steam Point every two hours.

Steam Mastery: In addition to using Steam Points to power his various implants, a golemoid can also spend a Steam Point to do any of the following:

Cast the *detect arcana* power as an action without the need for a skill roll to activate. The Duration may not be extended.

Release a burst of steam from his body as an action, granting the golemoid the *deflection* power at -4 effect without the need for a skill roll to activate until the beginning of his next turn.

Gain a +4 to damage for 1 round when attempting to break inanimate objects.

Release a burst of steam from his feet as a free action, giving him the capability to jump 2d6" horizontally or 1d6" vertically for jumping distance for 1 round.

True Golemoid: The defining characteristic of a golemoid is his unusually high resistance to the Wasting (described in detail elsewhere in this book). At Novice Rank, a golemoid's body is already heavily augmented, with at least half of the original body replaced

with manite-enhanced steel and stone. Most of these implants are prosthetics, functionally identical to the body parts they replace, though a few have enhanced abilities. For the purposes of all rules regarding the Wasting and being targeted by *greater healing* (see *Chapter 4: Technology* for more), the golemoid counts as a "true golemoid." The true golemoid's Impact (the amount of implants allowed before a creature begins to show advanced symptoms of the Wasting) is determined by the following table, rather than by their Vigor.

A golemoid's artificial body grants him a +1 on all Vigor rolls against poison and disease. However, even a lower Rank golemoid is immediately recognizable as a heavily augmented being and may face distrust or derision at the hands of those who fear his kind. Unless the golemoid is able to disguise his nature, he has a -2 to Charisma when dealing with those who distrust golemoids. Making an opposed Persuasion roll versus the target's Notice to hide one's golemoid nature gains a +2 bonus to the Persuasion roll with a proper disguise. It requires a Notice roll at -2 for someone to see through a golemoid's disguise if a specific person is being mimicked with whom they are familiar; the penalty increases to -4 with a raise on the Persuasion roll. If unfamiliar, the penalties are -4 and -6 with a raise, respectively. At the GM's option, certain particularly dramatic golemoid modifications may be more difficult if not impossible to disguise. Obvious use of golemoid abilities will also, naturally, ruin any attempt at passing for normal.



Ferran golemoid

Manite Implants: A golemoid begins with three minor implants (see *Chapter 4: Technology* for a listing of possible implants and how new ones may be installed). A golemoid never needs to worry about Manite Threshold, instead using the Manite Implants table below to determine how many implants they can receive. Golemoids who exceed the number of implants allowed suffer the effects of the Wasting as normal.

Manite Implants

Rank	Minor	Basic	Advanced	Superior
Novice	6	0	0	0
Seasoned	6	3	0	0
Veteran	6	4	2	0
Heroic	6	5	3	2
Legendary	6	6	4	3

Manite Blood

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+, May not have the Golemoid Edge

This character is unusually resistant to the Wasting, allowing him to receive more manite implants without negative effects. His Manite Threshold is increased by 2, increasing the number of implants he may acquire without accruing advanced symptoms of the Wasting.

Thaumaturge

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

Each mortal that is born and dies leaves an indelible imprint upon the world. Though some might cynically state that evil deeds outlive the good, all of a mortal's actions continue to have a rippling impact on future generations. In many cases this effect is indirect. A scholar's discoveries illuminate his students. An artist's work inspires others to reach greater heights of expression. A carpenter's structures shelter his grandchildren long after he is gone.

In other cases, the resonance of one's deeds is far more literal. Some small part of every great (or sinister) person remains behind among the living, a sentient memory that seeks to guide its descendants. Generally, such legendary spirits can only act indirectly, offering an occasional flash of inspiration or perhaps appearing in a dream to present cryptic advice. Most cultures have long since recognized this sense of legendary guidance. While many react with a simple reverence for the dead, some have explored the nature of legend even further. In such places, those who are particularly sensitive to the vestigial echoes of heroes long dead are recognized. This sense of spirituality is widespread throughout Aden, but most prominent among the highly traditional Kurzak tribesmen of the High Steppes and the pious scholars of the Church of All Saints.

These spirit-channelers learn to train their talent, becoming mouthpieces for their legendary ancestors. The most powerful of these can do much more – they can invite these ancient shades to share their mortal form and become something far greater than the sum of their flesh and spirit components. With the help of legends, they become legend.

These mighty beings are known as thaumaturges.

The thaumaturge is an extremely flexible party member. Depending on his current complement of attendant spirits, he might serve as a frontline fighter, a competent spellcaster, or a nimble jack-of-all-trades. So long as he maintains good relations with his spirit guides, the possibilities are limitless.

Legends: A thaumaturge possesses the unique ability to commune with legendary spirits, those strange entities that reflect the characteristic attributes of great heroes and villains. A legend is not a ghost or an undead of any sort. They have no true statistics (other than those which they grant the thaumaturge) and they cannot be killed in any conventional manner. They are beings of pure folklore and memory, idealized

echoes of a significant mortal legend. In many cases, a legend might only bear a minor resemblance to the actual individual it represents.

For a legend, the manner in which a person is remembered is far more important than reality. A man who was a vicious killer in life, but who was later celebrated as a hero would be embodied by a heroic legend. An honorable general who lost a war and was branded a villain by history would likewise be embodied by a villainous legend. A legend might not even represent a specific person, but rather a mythological entity or even a simple heroic ideal. To corrupt, alter, or diminish the manner in which a legend is remembered is the only true way to change or kill one. A thaumaturge must bond with a legend before he can draw upon its power.

Legends are known by many different names. Depending upon culture and historical background, legends may be better known as ancestors, kami, loa, totems, or any number of other terms. Regardless of what they are called, all legends can be channeled by any thaumaturge willing to bond with them.

Legendary Spirits

These entities, also simply called legends, are the strange spirits that give thaumaturges their power. While many of a legend's powers resemble magic (and are even canceled in anti-magical environments), these beings otherwise defy definition. They are composed purely of lore and memory – they exist as long as the tale they represent is remembered. Legends exist both in areas directly related to their history (such as where the relevant events took place) and in areas where they are recorded and celebrated (such as a library or monument to their memory).

While they sometimes appear to be intelligent beings with their own values and personalities, legends defy definition in a number of ways. A legend can serve multiple thaumaturges in different places for years, and each manifestation of the same legend would have no memories of any of the other thaumaturge's actions.

Legends are definitely not the spirits of the dead, but the two types of spirits are closely related. In some cases, a legend might be found only in the grave of its representative hero – sharing territory with the hero's own ghost. The legend might even refuse to allow itself to be bonded unless the ghost gives its approval. After all, who better to deem a thaumaturge's worthiness to embody the ideals of a particular legend than the hero who created that legend? In some extremely rare cases, legends have even formed from the tales of heroes who are still alive. This is an extremely rare exception, however. These spirits seem to choose, on some level, the heroes whom they represent. It has been posited that the legends seem to recognize that living heroes often go on to prove unworthy of their own legends.

Some scholars suggest that once a legend is bonded, it is simply duplicated and recorded onto the thaumaturge's own soul and ceases to be a part of the whole. Others maintain that a legend does not remember any of its actions while bonded to other thaumaturges because these events are simply not relevant.

Whichever of these theories is the case, it is true that each bonded legend develops a special relationship with a thaumaturge. They will remember him even if he releases their bond and then renews it at a later date. All legends are eager to help – but each legend has its own objectives in mind and will quickly withdraw its power if the thaumaturge appears unwilling to meet its lofty standards. Experienced thaumaturges often find it amusing when a paladin complains about the difficulty of his vows. A paladin, after all, must only remember his honor and live up to a particular ideal. A thaumaturge, meanwhile, might have to juggle the often unpredictable requirements of a half dozen legendary spirits in the course of fulfilling his oaths.

Thaumaturges choose two Legendary Spirits when they take this Edge and can gain new Legendary Spirits by acquiring the New Legendary Spirit Edge. They may draw on one legends at any given time. Switching to another legend takes five minutes of meditation. The thaumaturge gains all of the effects and suffers all requirements of a legend as long as it is active.

All legends have the following statistics:

Name: The legend's name. These names are intentionally generic, but each legend should have its own specific name and history. Players are encouraged to invent specific names and histories for their patron legends, and GMs are encouraged to create similar histories for later bonded legends.

Requirements: Each legend demands that the thaumaturge live up to its standards. These requirements can range from general behavior requirements to specific instructions that must be followed. A legend whose requirements are violated will withdraw and prevent the thaumaturge from drawing upon its power until she is no longer in violation of the legend's standards and spends one hour in meditation appeasing the spirit.

Effects: The abilities the legend grants will be listed here.

The Archer

Requirements: The archer will withdraw if you use a non-bow weapon while drawing upon its legend.

Effects: The thaumaturge gains a +1 bonus to Shooting rolls whenever she does not take the Aim maneuver. Her damage with a bow is increased by +1d8 on a raise rather than +1d6.

The Assassin

Requirements: The thaumaturge must conceal her face to call upon the assassin. It will withdraw if her mask is removed.

Effects: The thaumaturge gains a +1 to Stealth rolls during The Last Step (see the Stealth skill description). Her damage when getting the Drop on her target is increased by an additional +1.

The Berserker

Requirements: The berserker will withdraw if the thaumaturge sheathes her weapon before it has tasted blood (or, at the very least, destroyed an enemy if her enemies are without blood).

Effects: The thaumaturge's melee damage rolls deal +1 damage. Any time she succeeds on a Fighting roll, she ignores 1 point of wound penalties until the end of her next turn.

The Destroyer

Requirements: The destroyer will withdraw if the thaumaturge takes a truly selfless action (helping allies is allowed since maintaining their favor ultimately benefits her own interests). Consciously good actions will cause the destroyer to withdraw until she redeems herself in its eyes.

Effects: The thaumaturge gains a +1 to all attack rolls and +2 to all damage rolls against Wild Card enemies who have suffered at least one wound.

The Diplomat

Requirements: The diplomat will withdraw if the thaumaturge attacks a creature that has performed no aggressive action towards her.

Effects: The thaumaturge gains +1 Charisma and +1 to Intimidation and Taunt rolls during a Test of Will.

The Gunman

Requirements: The gunman will withdraw if you use a non-firearm weapon while drawing upon its legend.

Effects: The thaumaturge ignores penalties when opponents have light or medium cover.

The Immortal

Requirements: None

Effects: The thaumaturge's Toughness and Parry both increase by an additional +1 when using the Defend maneuver.

The Magekiller

Requirements: The magekiller will withdraw if you willingly attack an enemy other than a spellcaster when an active enemy spellcaster is in sight.

Effects: The thaumaturge gains +1 to all attacks and damage against spell-casting opponents. In addition, her Pace increases by 1 while attacking a spellcaster.

The Bard

Requirements: The bard will withdraw if the thaumaturge does not speak with her allies at least once per hour.

Effects: The thaumaturge's current command radius is doubled.



Jurak thaumaturge

The Protector

Requirements: The protector will withdraw if the thaumaturge allows harm to befall an innocent without taking action to aid him, or fail to aid a friend in danger. The protector is reasonable and does not expect her to be everywhere at once; if she must choose between protecting two friends, for example, it will not withdraw. However, if she witnesses an ally under attack and does nothing, the protector will withdraw. Consciously evil actions will cause the protector to withdraw until the thaumaturge redeems herself in its eyes.

Effects: As long as an ally is within 1" of the thaumaturge, any attack aimed at that ally may target the thaumaturge instead, at the thaumaturge's discretion. The thaumaturge receives a benny each time she suffers a wound from such an attack. If the thaumaturge Soaks the wound, she doesn't get the extra benny.

The Seeker

Requirements: The seeker will withdraw if the thaumaturge is successfully attacked by a hidden (but not an invisible) enemy more than three times in one day.

Effects: The thaumaturge gains +1 to all Notice rolls made during combat. Once per session, she may reroll a Notice roll without spending a benny but she must use the new roll regardless of the original roll's result.

The Warrior

Requirements: The warrior relishes combat. He will withdraw if the thaumaturge flees or backs down from a fair challenge.

Effects: When making a wild attack, the thaumaturge adds an additional +1 (+3 total) to her Fighting and resulting damage rolls, but her Parry is reduced by an additional 1 (3 total) until the start of her next action.

Professional Edges

Arbiter

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Fighting d6+, Investigation d6+, Notice d6+, Streetwise d6+

The arbiter is a relentless investigator. He gets +2 to all Investigation and Streetwise rolls. Due to the precise style of combat they're trained in, they may treat Smarts as the linked attribute for Fighting. This is not retroactive, and only applies to skill increases for Advances made after this Edge is taken.

Arbiters swear to advance the cause of law and justice. They have the Vow (Major) Hindrance, and must act to uphold the law. If an arbiter breaks this oath, she gains the Wanted (Major) Hindrance as all other arbiters attempt to bring her to justice.

Technical Mind

Requirements: Veteran, Smarts d8+, Arcane Background (Thunder Scout)

All of this Thunder Scout's signature vehicles gain an additional bonus feature. If she gains a new signature vehicle, it likewise gains any added bonus features. This Edge can be taken multiple times.



Ilithix Arbiter

Combat Edges

Cannoneer

You are a master of cannon warfare.

Requirements: Seasoned, Shooting d6+

This character reduces the Range Modifiers by 1 for Medium and Long range when firing a cannon.

Improved Cannoneer

Requirements: Heroic, Cannoneer, Shooting d8+

As above, but the character reduces the Range Modifiers by 2 for Medium and Long range when firing a cannon.

Poison Spit

Requirements: Novice, Rapacian, Vigor d6+

A rapacian with this Edge has developed the rare ability to gather forth a mouthful of blinding bile and project it upon her enemies. Using the Shooting skill, she may project a wad of vile spittle up to Range: 3/6/12 at a single target a number of times per day equal to half of her Vigor die. Affected targets must make an Agility roll at -2 to avert their gaze and avoid the effect (at -4 if the rapacian got a raise on the Shooting roll). On a failure, victims are Shaken and -2 to Parry until their next action. If the target rolls a 1 on his Agility die (regardless of the Wild Die), he's Shaken and fully blind until he recovers from being Shaken. Blinded victims suffer a -6 penalty to all Trait rolls that require vision and have their Parry reduced to 2. If the target has access to at least a gallon of liquid, as an action after recovering from being Shaken as usual, they may clean out their eyes to remove the blinding effects.

Ram

Requirements: Seasoned, Piloting, Driving, or Boating d6+

A character with this Edge gets a +1 to his Driving rolls when performing the Ram vehicle maneuver.

Improved Ram

Requirements: Veteran, Piloting, Driving, or Boating d8+

As above, but the bonus increases to +2.

Shieldwarden's Stance

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

This stance allows the character to make a single melee attack while taking the Defend maneuver, but not Full Defense. This attack is made at -2, and the Fighting roll must be a normal attack (no Disarm, Wild Attack, or other maneuvers), and may not be combined with Frenzy or Sweep. She must be wielding a kite shield and a one-handed weapon to take advantage of this ability.

Improved Shieldwarden's Stance

Requirements: Veteran, Shieldwarden's Stance

The character can make one free attack per round with her one-handed melee weapon when any enemy adjacent to her attacks one of her allies. This attack is made at -2, and the Fighting roll must be a normal attack (no Disarm, Wild Attack, or other maneuvers), and may not be combined with Frenzy or Sweep.

Weird Edges

Basic Combat Specialization

Requirements: Novice, Golemoid, Vigor d6+

When the golemoid character takes this Edge, he selects one of the following combat specializations:

• **Steamreaver:** A steamreaver golemoid is implanted with a steamreaver energy cell, allowing him to power a steamreaver weapon simply by holding it. He receives a free steamreaver weapon of his choice. See

Chapter 4: Technology for more details on the special abilities associated with these weapons.

• **Gunner:** The golemoid has a powerful integrated firearm mounted in his body. This implant is mechanically identical to a pistol, scattergun, or rifle. This special implanted firearm cannot be disarmed, and can be readied, fired, and reloaded while leaving the hands free. The golemoid can reload his weapons so long as he uses his internal stockpile of ammunition. The golemoid can store up to three times his Vigor die in spare ammunition in this stockpile, and can refill this reservoir as an action. The golemoid may store any combination of ammunition types, but it takes an action to change types when reloading his weapon. Magical weapon enhancements and abilities may be added to the golem's integrated firearm as per the normal rules for weapons. Gunner firearms are mounted in an arm, hip, or shoulder (chosen when the implant is created) and can be drawn or stowed with an action. While stowed, the artillery system is difficult to detect (-2 to Notice rolls).

• **Juggernaut:** This golemoid's arms, legs, and body are reinforced with powerful metal plates. If the juggernaut moves at his full Pace and has moved at least 6" or more in a relatively straight line towards his foe when attacking with a charge, he adds +4 to his damage roll with a successful Fighting attack.

New Legendary Spirit

Requirements: Seasoned, Thaumaturge

The thaumaturge chooses another Legendary Spirit she can call on. This Edge can be taken multiple times.

Extra Steam

Requirements: Novice, Golemoid

This golemoid has a larger steam reserve than normal. The number of Steam Points in the golemoid's steam reserve is increased by 2. This Edge can be taken multiple times.

True Form

Requirements: Novice, Echo, Spirit d10+

This echo has used a particular form so much that he no longer requires a fetish.

When using his Transient Form racial ability, he may mimic a specific individual even without a fetish in his possession or when he is unconscious. This must be an individual whose form he has previously mimicked for over twenty-four hours in total; this time does not have to be consecutive. He must have possessed an appropriate fetish at one point for the specific individual and consumed it.

Legendary Edges

Entomancer Insect Discipline

Requirements: Legendary, Arcane Background (Entomancer), Spirit d12+

The entomancer gains abilities focused on a certain path she chooses to follow. She must pick one of the disciplines below and gains all special abilities associated with it.

Once she picks a discipline, she may not change or pick another one.

• **Way of the Spider:** Masteries from this discipline focus on the use of poison. All poisons created by the entomancer become supernaturally powerful. Vigor rolls resisting the entomancer's poisoned weapons or powers with a poison Trapping (including vermin with poisons summoned via the *summon ally* power) suffer a -1 penalty. The entomancer can also suffuse vermin she summons using the *summon ally* power with debilitating poisons. On the same round when summoning a vermin that possesses the Poison monstrous ability or an attack which delivers a poisonous effect, the entomancer can choose to replace the servant's poison with one that lowers one of its opponents Traits, just like the *lower Trait* power. The Command roll to summon the vermin is used to determine the level of poison virulence and its target Trait. Success generates a poison which lowers any Trait of the entomancer's

choice one step, a raise lowers it two steps. This ability replaces other statistics of the poison.

✧ **Way of the Beetle:** Masteries from this discipline focus on indomitable toughness and defense. Vermin summoned by the entomancer using the *summon ally* power gain +2 Toughness, and their Strength and Vigor attributes are increased one die step.

✧ **Way of the Locust:** Masteries from this discipline focus on the use of verminous swarms to devastating effect. When the entomancer creates swarms of insects, those swarms inflict an additional 1d4 points of damage. The entomancer can enter a verminous swarm under her control and be carried along with it when it moves (as if the swarm were a mount). An entomancer moving in such a manner can fly or burrow along with the swarm at the same Pace of the swarm, effectively gaining the Flight or Burrowing monstrous abilities while moving with the swarm.

✧ **Way of the Bee:** Masteries from this discipline focus upon the power of community and interdependence. The character gains abilities that mimic the hive mind ability of insects. The entomancer can select a number of allies equal to half her Smarts and bond them through a five-minute-long ritual. Until she performs the ritual again and selects a new group of allies, she increases the Range of Touch powers to a Range of Smarts. The entomancer knows the exact location of all allies associated with the hive mind (and can thus target them with her powers regardless of Stealth or concealment). She can also communicate with any of them telepathically in two-way communication.

Living Legend

Requirements: Legendary, Thaumaturge, Spirit d12+

The thaumaturge can draw upon two legends simultaneously.

Magnum Opus

Requirements: Legendary, Steamwright, Smarts d10+

The steamwright reaches the pinnacle of technological achievement. She may select a single invention when she gains this Edge. She gains a +1 to Steamcraft rolls with that device and only suffers malfunctions on a critical failure.

Perfection of Design

Requirements: Legendary, Golemoid

The golemoid is virtually indistinguishable from a true golem. He gains the Construct monstrous ability.

Ultimate Combat Specialization

Requirements: Legendary, Basic Combat Specialization, Golemoid, Smarts d10+, Vigor d10+

The golemoid gains an even more enhanced version of the weapon system chosen with their Basic Combat Specialization Edge.

✧ **Steamreaver:** When the golemoid makes an attack with a steamreaver weapon, the weapon gains AP 2.

✧ **Gunner:** The gunner may now choose to lay down suppressive fire within Range of the weapon.

✧ **Juggernaut:** The golemoid now ignores difficult ground or rough terrain when charging.

Alternately, a golemoid may choose another option under the Basic Combat Specialization Edge rather than any of the above options.

Ultimate Defender

Requirements: Legendary, Improved Shieldwarden's Stance, Smarts d10+, Fighting d12+

The character is considered to be in his shieldwarden's stance at all times. She suffers only a -1 on her Fighting rolls while taking the Defend action (the Fighting roll must still be a normal attack (no Disarm, Wild Attack, or other maneuvers), and may not be combined with Frenzy or Sweep) and can now make free Fighting attacks per round against any adjacent enemies who attack her allies, but only one such attack per enemy per round.

Uncanny Dodge

Requirements: Legendary, Seer, Smarts d10+, Spirit d10+

The seer's visions make her impossible to surprise. Opponents can no longer get the Drop on her and she is always considered as actively on guard for Stealth rolls.



CHAPTER THREE

MAGIC

Magic is an incredibly pervasive force in Aden and is present in the everyday lives of virtually all citizens. Instinctive command of arcane forces is a gift that has existed within most races since long before recorded history began and over the eons has been developed by careful study and dedication into the incredibly powerful and diverse arts that are seen in Aden today. Despite the overwhelmingly superior power that study brings, however, the instinctive mastery that started it all remains, and even the most uneducated of the common folk are able to make a few simple incantations and rituals to ease their lives via simple feats of magic.

While nearly everyone in Aden knows at least one spell, there is a definite difference between an average citizen and a true spellcaster. Consider it as almost akin to art. While an average person might enjoy doodling and even be fairly adept at it, his talent pales beside a true genius of the medium, someone with natural talent who has spent years honing his abilities. To most, the differences between one spellcaster and another are far too arcane (no pun intended) and technical to comprehend. As a result, many denizens of Aden simply lump such individuals together and commonly refer to any talented spellcaster as a “wizard,” even though the individual in question may not particularly care for that label.

COSMOLOGY OF ADEN

The concept of planes beyond the mortal realm is one that is familiar to most citizens of Aden. The peaceful centuries of the Golden Age allowed many prestigious magical institutions in the world, the Celestial College of Aramyst chief among them, to experiment with many different theories concerning the existence of other worlds. Reliable means of planar travel have been known to the arcane traditions of Aden for more than five centuries, and while relatively few have the sheer mystical power to affect such things, it is a level of proficiency that even the simplest apprentice can aspire to later in his career.

The concept of planes in the mind of the common citizen is, as might be expected, a matter of great oversimplification. Nations that placed emphasis on education, such as Aramyst and the former Columbey, once taught youngsters that the world of Aden was but a single room in a large house, and that each room had different people living in it, just as Aden had humans, elves, dwarves, and many others. The doors between the rooms were closed and locked, but powerful wizards were able to unlock them and walk through or bring through the beings living in other rooms. Not everyone accepts this concept; some without knowledge or experience with magic believe it to be academic nonsense, but those who have witnessed the abilities of powerful spellcasters generally accept that there are many things beyond the ken of the average man, and that wizards know more about such things than they do.

The exact nature of the known planes was something of a topic of debate prior to the Darkfall and since then has become largely academic and unimportant in the grand scheme of things. Generally, there was agreement that the most accessible of the planes were those that were aligned with particular aspects of the mortal world. Order, chaos, good, and evil in varying combinations are the concepts most readily associ-

ated with these planes. Fey creatures and animal spirits, the latter of which are the most frequently summoned of all extraplanar creatures, tend to be found in the more chaotic realms, while the more orderly realms tend to have denizens largely unfamiliar to the people of Aden. The realms of good, where they overlap with the realms of order and chaos, are the home of glorious beings that the people of Aden know as archons or angels, while the planes of evil are home to various devils and demons. For reasons unknown, connections to the planes of good have been more difficult to open since the Darkfall, and doorways to the realms of evil have been far, far easier.

Elemental planes are also known to exist and are thought to reflect the mortal world in a more direct manner than the aligned planes do. Dwarves of a sort, for example, are believed to be present in different elemental planes. The most telling evidence of how closely the elemental planes touch upon the mortal world can be seen in the presence of the Burning Coast of Aramyst, where it is believed that the coming of the Darkfall somehow created a region where the elemental plane of fire overlaps with the physical world. No one who has both the ability and knowledge to confirm this theory is believed to have survived the Darkfall, however, and so it remains merely a theory, one perhaps wildly inaccurate in its assumptions.

As discussed in a previous chapter, most of Aden’s cultures believe in an idyllic afterlife, generally known as Paradise, and a punishing oblivion now commonly referred to as Infernus. These two concepts have become enmeshed with the theories of planar structure over the centuries. Paradise is believed to be the most distant realm, accessible only via death of the flesh and the ascension of the soul. Scholars and theologians believe that the planes of order and good, the realms where angels and their like dwell, border upon Paradise. Likewise, Infernus cannot be reached by magic despite the incident that gave rise to the belief in this realm, but it is bordered upon by realms of chaos and evil and can only be truly entered by a wicked soul upon the death of its body.

UNIQUE MAGICAL DISCIPLINES

The prevalence of magic in Aden, combined with the great length of the Golden Age allowing individuals and organizations to pursue the development of their own preferences, has given rise to numerous magical disciplines that are unique to the nations of Aden. While there are many, the most significant of these are entomancy, mechamagic, and thaumaturgy.

Entomancy is perhaps the least practiced of Aden’s unique magical disciplines and exists in small numbers only in the nation of Kyan. Given that the nation’s culture and lifestyle is so intrinsically interwoven with the existence of insects both mundane and gigantic in size, it is no surprise that its magic has historically involved insects in many ways. It was not until relatively recently, however, that the Academia Entomologia was created, specializing in the enhancement of insect-based sorcery. Two individual disciplines within the academy have developed. The first and by far the most common is known simply as entomancy, from which the entire practice takes its name. By defini-

tion, entomancy concerns the enhancement of existing insects, either individually or in swarms. One of the most common forms of enhancement entomancers grant to the objects of their study is increasing their combat effectiveness, and these individuals are known for their prowess in arcane circles. The second and vastly less common discipline within entomancy is practiced only by a handful of individuals as of yet. These arcanists call themselves insectors, primarily as a means of differentiating themselves and their methods from their entomancer colleagues.

Mechamagic is unquestionably the most pervasive of Aden's unique magical traditions, as well as the youngest. It has existed for a relatively short time, having been created, or discovered as some claim, a few short centuries before the occurrence of the Darkfall. The fusion of arcane magic and the power of steam technology has resulted in an explosion of development of new technologies which have, in some cases quite literally, changed the face of the world. Certainly, if one were to take a citizen of Columbey from so short a time ago as a few months prior to the Darkfall, he would doubtless fail to recognize the current polluted wasteland that is now Urbana. Few would look upon the horrible visage of the Sentinels, mechemagical automatons that serve as the last, deadliest line of defense for the Thunder Trains, and feel that mechemagic is an inherently benign and beneficial force in the world. However, by that same token, life as it is currently known in

Aden could not continue to exist without the vital trade routes reestablished by the Thunder Trains themselves, the largest and most significant mechemagical creations in the world. While the discipline has both ardent proponents and vehement detractors, the simple fact is that mechemagic is a power in its own right and will continue to shape the world as the era of the Darkfall continues.

Thaumaturgy is more common than entomancy, but it is far less practiced than mechemagic. It is one of the oldest magical disciplines in Aden and is known in virtually every culture in one form or another, although it is much more prevalent in some than others. The practice of thaumaturgy is tied closely to the common belief among Aden's people in a paradise-like afterlife where the spirits of the virtuous reside after death. Those particularly devout in their remembrance of such spirits long ago discovered that they were able to channel the power of said spirits, gaining blessings related to the prowess such spirits possessed in life. A thaumaturge might, therefore, gain great battle prowess by channeling the spirit of a long-dead warlord, or he might perhaps gain arcane insight by aligning himself with the spirit of a dead magister, and so on. While thaumaturgy is practiced in literally every nation in Aden, it is most prevalent in two very different lands: Carraway and the High Steppes. In Carraway, the reverence of ancestor spirits is an essential part of everyday life within the Church of All Saints, the religion of which virtually every citizen is a member. In the High Steppes, the more primitive tribes of raiders maintain a strong oral tradition of their past, including the deeds of their ancestors. The sacred heroes of the Church and the vilified bandits of the Steppes are both equally effective in lending their guidance to their adherents, much to the chagrin of their enemies on the other side.

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

Arcane Background (Magic) and Arcane Background (Miracles) are the only Arcane Backgrounds allowed in *Savage Thunderscape* from the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*. Characters with Arcane Background (Magic) are known as wizards. Characters with the Arcane Background (Miracles) are known as clerics. In addition, the following new Arcane Backgrounds are also available:

Arcane Background (Entomancer)

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

Arcane Skill: Command (Spirit)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 1 + *vermin friend* (also known as *summon ally*)

Spells: All spells they cast must have some sort of insect-like Trapping to go along with the actual effects of the spell. This reflects the fact that their abilities and powers stem from a natural and magical affinity and focus with insect and vermin life.

Vermin Empathy: An entomancer has the ability to naturally calm and influence insects using her Spirit attribute, in a manner similar to that of the way the Persuasion skill is used when encountering sentient Extras. The entomancer may use her Spirit (modified by her Charisma) when determining the initial reaction of any insect or insect-like Extra or swarm of Extras. Predatory or aggressive insects are usually Hostile, but a successful Spirit roll changes their attitude to Neutral and for every raise on the Spirit roll, the insect's reaction improves the attitude one step, up to a maximum of Helpful. On a successful Spirit roll, they will not attack unless provoked or directed to do so in some manner (this requires a Helpful attitude). This ability has a Range of Smarts. Taking command of vermin under control of another entomancer requires an opposed Spirit roll.

Unhived: When an entomancer rolls a 1 on her Command die, she loses control of any insects she was commanding through Vermin Empathy. Any insects that were under her control again become Hostile.



Faerkin
entomancer

Arcane Background (Mechamage)

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Repair d8+

Arcane Skill: Golemancy (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 5

Starting Powers: 2

Golem Minion: The mechamage is a prodigy in the art of golemancy. He receives a golem minion when becoming a mechamage (either a corpse golem, doll golem, metal golem or rock golem). This minion is treated as an Extra (not a Wild Card) and the mechamage may use the Beast Bond Edge and any Leadership Edges with his golem minion. This minion could represent a gift from the mechamage's teacher, a family protector, or a remarkably successful early creation by the mechamage himself. The mechamage can give basic commands ("Attack that ilitihx," "Carry that box") as a free action, but the golem can only understand and carry out one command per round.

If the mechamage wishes to replace his golem minion (either because the old one was destroyed or merely because he desires a different one), he must perform a ritual requiring 24 hours of uninterrupted labor, in which he prepares the new golem's body and enchants it with powerful magic. He requires access to appropriate tools and materials worth 200 gold, as well as complete seclusion during this time. At the end of the ritual, the mechamage creates a new golem minion of the appropriate Rank and any former golem minions become inert.

If the former minion's body is still intact, the mechamage may perform this ritual again to reactivate it as his minion. This requires the same amount of time, but no gold cost. If a golem minion is destroyed, but most of its body remains intact, the GM may waive up to half of the cost of creating a new golem minion of the same type so long as the old golem minion's remains are recovered.

Tinkering: Mechamages are skilled at repairing broken constructs and magical items. Mechamages can use the Repair skill to fix golems, constructs, and other magical devices.

Backlash: When a mechamage rolls a 1 on his Golemancy roll (regardless of his Wild Die), he is automatically Shaken. This can cause a wound.



Goreaux
mechamage



Human seer

Arcane Background (Seer)

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

Arcane Skill: Prophecy (Spirit)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 1 + *detect/conceal arcana*

There was a time when the holy order known as the seers stood among the most revered and beloved figures in Aden. Those born with the gift of prophecy were quickly adopted by the order (who, as prophets, were extremely good at finding such individuals) and given both a formal education and a moderate level of military training. This continent-wide order dedicated themselves to protecting the future of Aden against all evils, and helped usher in a golden age of peace.

Their unique ability to predict the future naturally led others to look to the seers for guidance. While it would have been easy for the seers to profit from their talents, they instead used their gifts for the benefit of all. They became counselors, spiritual advisors, philosophers, and religious leaders. This level of humility only led the people of Aden to love them all the more. And so it came as a shock to everyone when the seer order was destroyed. The Darkfall rose from the collective nightmares of mankind and, within a single night, assassinated every known seer. This tragedy struck the people of Aden to their core. If even the seers were vulnerable to the Darkfall, what chance would they have? Had they been wrong to rely upon the seers all this time?

To put things simply – why didn't the seers see this coming?

In fact, they did – but not soon enough. Those seers who recognized the warnings also recognized that the Darkfall had moved subtly, carefully, making certain that those whose vision could not be clouded were moved into secluded positions, removed from positions of influence within the order. If the remaining seers wished to survive there was only one thing they could do – run. They were forced to flee and bide their time until they knew how to truly fight their mysterious enemy. The seers allowed the world to think they were extinct, and the Darkfall encouraged its minions to perpetuate the ruse. Isolated from those they were meant to guide, the seers were no longer a threat. In the meantime, the nocturnals continue to hunt the surviving seers, killing them without mercy whenever they can.

Though they are few in number, the seers continue their hidden war against the Darkfall. They live in hidden cells, rarely contacting one another, constantly aware that their mysterious power to glimpse the future has earned them the most powerful enemy in all of Aden. This realization has forced them to be careful, to prepare for anything, and to always watch their backs. They have transformed from an intellectual order of philosophers into a hardened secret society of grim survivors. These days, a seer doesn't survive long in Aden unless she keeps her eyes open.

The seer is a tough, self-reliant character, but her true strength lies in numbers. It is somewhat ironic that an individual who grants such powerful guidance to others has such tremendous difficulty trusting strangers. When the rare seer dares to step forth from seclusion and join an adventuring party, her ability to buff her allies and weaken her enemies becomes swiftly apparent.

Aura Reading: The seer is an innately perceptive individual and a keen judge of character. She gains a +1 bonus to Notice rolls to discern lies or misdirection.

Blinding Sight: When a seer rolls a 1 on her Prophecy die (regardless of her Wild Die), she must make a successful Vigor roll or be blinded (blinded seers suffer a –6 penalty to all Trait rolls that require vision and have their Parry reduced to 2). She may roll a new Vigor roll as an action each round to attempt to regain her vision.

Arcane Background (Steamwright)

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Repair d6+

Arcane Skill: Steamcraft (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 1

Aden may be a land of powerful magic, but magic is not the only power that exists. In recent generations, the power of technology has increased exponentially. While part of this can be attributed to mechemagic serving as a catalyst for certain breakthroughs, the genius of Aden's many scientists and engineers should not be underestimated. The world marches ever into the future, and the steamwrights lead the charge. These brave men and women shine the light of knowledge into all corners of the world. Their discoveries are often dangerous. Their experiments sometimes lead them into the heart of peril. And their accomplishments earn them no end of enemies eager to steal their discoveries and exploit them to their own ends. The steamwrights do not let such challenges daunt them in their search for truth. A true engineer, however, prepares for everything. And if you do happen to invent a steam-driven pneumatic turret system, is there any real sense in charging into danger without it?

The steamwright is a natural explorer, and as such is a natural fit for any adventuring party. While the other party members may venture into the deep to fight evil or gather treasure, the steamwright may consider it merely to be a specimen hunt or a field test. Her great skill at crafting items both mundane and extraordinary can be a great benefit to her allies. Her unmatched ability at using her inventions to wreak havoc will wreak fear among her enemies.

Invention: A steamwright uses powers through inventions, similar to Arcane Background (Weird Science) in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*. All rules for Weird Science apply to Steamcraft as well and Steamcraft may be substituted for any requirements based on Weird Science, including those of Edges such as Gadgeteer and Mr. Fix It. Steamwright inventions suffer malfunctions similar to Weird Science inventions as well.

Engineering: A steamwright's mastery of technology extends not only to her personal inventions, but to all manner of lesser creations as well. She adds +1 to all Knowledge (Engineering) and Repair rolls.



Rapacian
steamwright

Arcane Background (Thunder Scout)

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Boating, Driving or Piloting d6+

Arcane Skill: Casting (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 5

Starting Powers: 1

If one were to name Aden's greatest technological achievements in the last century, the Thunder Trains would almost certainly be at the top of the list. These colossal moving fortresses boldly steam across the lands of Aden, undaunted by monsters, bandits, and wilderness. Yet it was not always so. The Thunder Trains may be powerful vehicles, but they require solid and stable terrain. Thus, each follows a carefully charted trail, carefully avoiding lands that are too marshy or mountainous for travel. These Thunder Trails were no accident – each was carefully and painstakingly scouted and, when there were no trails, forged through the wilderness by teams of steadfast engineers.

During this great endeavor, the Thunder Scouts first rose to fame. They started as mere mercenaries, granted simple steam-powered vehicles by the Urbanan mechamages to help protect them in their duties. These brave men and women were the first into the wilderness, blazing

hidden trails for the coming Thunder Trains. They were the first to brave lands now plagued by nocturnals and other dangers, seeking the hidden paths. They protected the laborers; they served as messengers, hunters, mechanics, and soldiers in a battle to unite the terrified lands of Aden once more. The Thunder Scout name has become synonymous with tough, hardy individualism and a refusal to surrender no matter the odds.

Though the Thunder Trails are now largely complete, Thunder Scouts can still be found throughout Aden and are no longer associated solely with the nation of Urbana. Many a simple farmer's son or daughter has spent his savings on a cheap steampowered cycle and ventured forth into the wild, following the siren song of these romanticized heroes. They are wanderers. They are explorers. They are adventurers and heroes.

They are the Thunder Scouts.

The Thunder Scout is an extremely versatile member of any adventuring party. Her customized vehicle allows her to serve as a forward lookout, party transportation, or a mobile battle artillery platform. Her mix of skills and combat savvy make her a valuable asset, both in the wilderness and in urban settings and, while not quite in the league of a mechamage or steamwright, her mechanical skills can be quite useful in emergency situations.

Signature Vehicle: At Novice Rank, the Thunder Scout forms a bond with a signature mechamagical vehicle (player's choice of a sea star, steamwagon, or thunder cycle). Though this vehicle is not a living being like a knight's mount or a wizard's familiar, there is nonetheless an undeniable rapport between pilot and machine. When acting as one, both the vehicle and the pilot are capable of extraordinary feats neither could accomplish with another pilot or vehicle.

If the Thunder Scout's signature vehicle is lost, destroyed, or she merely decides she wants a different one, she must acquire a new vehicle and perform rigorous maintenance upon it. The total maintenance time must be twenty-four hours, though this time need not be consecutive. She requires access to an engineer's toolkit and a safe, quiet place where she can perform this maintenance in solitude. This process also requires custom parts worth 200 gold, though the Thunder Scout can save some of this cost (up to 10%) by creating the parts in advance by making a successful Knowledge (Engineering) skill. At the end of this preparation process, all additional bonus features that were granted to the Thunder Scout's previous signature vehicle (consisting of all additional benefits granted above the standard ones possessed by typical vehicles as described on the Vehicle Table in *Chapter 4: Technology*) permanently cease to function and the vehicle no longer counts as her signature vehicle. The new vehicle gains new bonus abilities equivalent in number to the previous signature



vehicle (although they do not need to be ones from the previous vehicle and may be defined by the Thunder Scout) and is now the Thunder Scout's signature vehicle.

A Thunder Scout must spend at least one hour per day performing maintenance upon her signature vehicle. If she fails to do so, any benefits conferred by the bonus features do not function until she performs this maintenance. Daily maintenance can be performed simultaneously with any other maintenance or repairs the vehicle requires. If anyone other than the Thunder Scout pilots or drives the Thunder Scout's signature vehicle for more than one minute or performs repairs taking at least that amount of time without the Thunder Scout's aid, the vehicle loses all bonus features just as if the Thunder Scout had failed to perform its daily maintenance. A Thunder Scout knows the intricacies of her signature vehicle like none other. Though these machines are not always built by the Thunder Scouts, they are, without exception, heavily modified. Even master steamwrights sometimes marvel at the strange customizations thunder scouts enact upon their vehicles. They are rife with mechanical innovations that boggle the mind, and in many cases simply should not work at all. Except that they do – but only when piloted by their master's hand. See the Vehicles section in *Chapter 4: Technology* for more information on vehicles.

Bonus Features: Signature vehicles gain two bonus vehicle features in addition to the standard features listed in the Vehicle Table in *Chapter 4: Technology*. These are customizable add-ons that can increase the defense, offense, or utility of a vehicle. These bonus features are added when the Thunder Scout forms a bond with their vehicle. Switching out bonus features requires a new bonding ritual, as though the Thunder Scout were bonding with a new vehicle. These features rely entirely on the Thunder Scout's personal modifications, and thus completely cease to function if the vehicle ceases to be the Thunder Scout's signature vehicle. Additional bonus features may be obtained by taking the Technical Mind Edge. These bonus features allow the Thunder Scout to exceed the Maximum Weapons/Features limitations on their signature vehicles.

Personal Touch: All signature vehicles are visibly personalized to their owner's tastes, and all Thunder Scouts take some precautionary measures to protect their investment. Any Driving, Boating, or Piloting rolls made by other characters attempting to operate the Thunder Scout's vehicle are made at -2.

Vehicle Features: The following are bonus features which can be added to a signature vehicle; unless stated in the bonus feature description, each bonus feature may only be taken once per signature vehicle. Many standard vehicles already include some of these as standard features. Vehicles have already had the benefits and penalties of standard features calculated into their base statistics. Standard features ignore all prerequisites. See the Vehicle Section in *Chapter 4: Technology* for more details on standard vehicles.

✧ **All-Terrain:** These vehicles treat each inch of difficult or rough terrain as 1.5 (instead of 2).

✧ **Amphibious:** The vehicle can travel on both land and water. If it is normally a land vehicle, its Acc/Top Speed in water is halved, and vice versa. If two feature slots are spent on this feature, the vehicle's speed is the same on both land and water.

✧ **Armor (Light):** The vehicle gains +1 Armor.

✧ **Armor (Medium):** A vehicle must have the Light Armor feature before it can have the Medium Armor feature. This increases the Armor bonus to +3. Medium Armor reduces the vehicle's Top Speed by 2.

✧ **Armor (Heavy):** The vehicle has Heavy Armor if it did not already. Only weapons marked as Heavy Weapons can hurt this vehicle, regardless of the damage roll. Vehicles with Heavy Armor halve damage they take from colliding with other obstacles (including vehicles) that don't have Heavy Armor. Also, vehicles with Heavy Armor add their Armor rating as an AP value to their damage during collisions. A vehicle must have the Medium Armor feature before it can have the Heavy Armor feature. Heavy Armor even further reduces the vehicle's overall Top Speed by 2 (minimum of 1).

✧ **Emergency Booster:** The vehicle's engine is equipped with an emergency speed booster. This booster must be pre-loaded with a pint of oil to function, a process which requires a full round action. The pilot may then activate the emergency booster. The vehicle's Acceleration and Top Speed are doubled for 3 rounds, but the vehicle must move at least its full normal movement and the Thunder Scout receives -2 to his Boating, Driving, or Piloting skill rolls for this entire time, in addition to any other handling penalties for high speed. Using the emergency booster consumes the oil. The booster can only hold one pint of oil at a time. If the Thunder Scout uses an emergency booster more than once an hour it results in an immediate mechanical failure. The Thunder Scout must immediately make a successful Boating, Driving, or Piloting roll or roll on the Vehicle Critical Hits table in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook* if he fails.

✧ **Finely-Tuned Engine:** The vehicle's ability to speed up is altered – the Acceleration is increased by 2.

✧ **Gravity Pistons:** Powerful pistons are mounted within the roof and sides of the vehicle. If the vehicle is upended, the pilot can activate these pistons as an action, causing the vehicle to immediately flip over back onto its wheels. (This feature is also available for water-based vehicles, but acts as high-powered jets rather than pistons.)

✧ **Hardened Chassis:** The vehicle is designed to execute ram attacks, and halves all collision damage to itself when performing a Ram maneuver. This stacks with the effects of the Impact Resistant feature; a vehicle with both features allows its occupants to take only one quarter the normal collision damage when performing a Ram maneuver. The Hardened Chassis damage reduction for occupants does not stack with the effects of a safety harness (see the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*). A Hardened Chassis does not affect other forms of collision damage (including damage taken when rammed by another vehicle).

✧ **Illuminators:** A pair of bright magical lights is mounted on the vehicle. These give off normal light in a cone template in front of the vehicle. These draw upon the same mechanical power source that fuels the vehicle, allowing them to give off light as long as the vehicle's engine is powered. The pilot can light or douse these illuminators at will. This bonus feature may be taken an additional time, which allows the illuminators to cast light in all directions.

✧ **Impact Resistant:** The interior cabin of the vehicle is braced against collision. All occupants take half damage from collisions (the occupants roll one half of the damage dice, rounded down). If the occupants have a safety harness on (see the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*), these effects stack with these protective measures and the occupants roll one quarter of the damage dice (round down).

✧ **Reloader:** This feature must be applied to a specific vehicle weapon. The reloader reduces the number of actions which it takes to reload its associated weapon by one. This bonus feature may not be applied to gunner tripods.

✧ **Reversible:** A vehicle with this feature is uniquely designed such that it can move forward or reverse at no speed penalty and the driver suffers no Boating, Driving or Piloting penalties for moving in reverse, as he is able to switch his directional facing within the vehicle as a free action.

✧ **Sidocar:** This feature is unique to thunder cycles. The vehicle has been outfitted with a wheeled pod on one side, allowing the thunder cycle to carry one additional passenger and one additional weapon. The sidocar passenger serves as the gunner for this vehicular weapon (GM discretion as to types of weapons which may be mounted and any associated movement penalties for such mounted weapons).

✧ **Smooth Ride:** This vehicle is designed to absorb shock and discomfort that might otherwise disturb its passengers. Any unstable platform penalties affecting any fine physical skills such as Fighting and Shooting are reduced by 1.

✧ **Tempered Hull:** A vehicle with this feature has been treated to instill resistance against the elements. It gains an additional +2 Armor against all energy-based and magical attacks (this stacks with any armor the vehicle currently has).

	CLERIC	ENTOMANCER	MECHAMAGE	SEER	STEAMWRIGHT	THUNDER SCOUT	WIZARD
Animate Vehicle ☼							
Armor							
Banish							
Barrier							
Beast Friend							
Blast							
Blind							
Bolt							
Boost/ Lower Trait							
Burrow							
Burst							
Confusion							
Damage Field							
Darksight							
Deflection							
Detect/Conceal Arcana							
Direct Golem ☼							
Disguise							
Dispel							
Divination							
Drain Power Points							
Elemental Manipulation							
Entangle							
Environmental Protection							
Farsight							
Farspeech ☼							
Fear							
Fly							
Golembreath ☼							
Greater Healing							
Growth/Shrink							
Havoc							
Healing							
Helldriver ☼							
Intangibility							
Invisibility							
Light/Obscure							
Mind Reading							
Paralysis ☼							
Psychometry ☼							
Pummel							
Puppet							
Quickness							
Repair Vehicle ☼							
Retribution ☼							
Shape Change							
Slick ☼							
Slow							
Slumber							
Smite							
Speak Language							
Speed							
Stun							
Succor							
Summon Ally							
Summon Ride ☼							
Swarm Form ☼							
Telekinesis							
Teleport							
Time Loop ☼							
Velocity ☼							
Wall Walker							
Warrior's Gift							
Zombie							

SPELLS & POWERS

Different Arcane Backgrounds have access to different powers in *Savage Thunderscape*, and the table on the previous page conveniently lists all the allowed spells by Background. Powers with ✨ are new to this book. Each power's description below also lists typical Trappings or limitations to the powers, based on the Arcane Background.

Animate Vehicle ✨

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 6

Range: Smarts x2

Duration: 1 Minute (3/Minute)

This power allows the Thunder Scout to give their signature vehicle rudimentary intelligence. For the duration of this spell, the vehicle functions as if it were an Extra. The character can command the animated vehicle in the same manner that a mechamage commands a golem minion. The vehicle benefits from the Thunder Scout's appropriate Edges and Hindrances (such as Ace or Bad Eyes) as if they were piloting it. An animated vehicle is capable of piloting itself and operating all of its vehicle weapons as it uses the Thunder Scout's Fighting and Shooting skills. The vehicle acts on the Thunder Scout's turn and, if issued no other instructions, simply acts to protect its master in the same manner as a golem minion.

Thunder Scout: The vehicle begins to move on its own, with the controls manipulated by unseen hands.

All others: Not available.

Armor

Cleric: Holy light glitters over the target's skin.

Entomancer: The target grows a thin layer of protective chitin.

Steamwright: Powered armor, kinetic energy shield.

All others: Not available.

Banish

Cleric: The caster's faith drives away the creature.

Seer: The seer is able to see the target's plane of existence in his mind and speaks the target's name with powerful intent, sending it away.

All others: Not available.

Barrier

Cleric: Solid symbols of the cleric's faith.

Entomancer: Massed swarms of hardy beetles

Mechamage: Metal walls

Seer: The seer is able to view the target's physical state at an atomic level and speaks the target's name with powerful intent, creating a force barrier.

Wizard: Rocks rising from the ground.

All others: Not available.

Beast Friend

Entomancer: Insects and other vermin only.

Seer: The seer gets into the target's mind.

Thunder Scout: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Blast

Steamwright: Grenade.

Wizard: Ball of fire.

All others: Not available.

Blind

Cleric: Darkness clinging to the eyes.

Seer: The target's eyes go milky white.

Steamwright: Extremely bright light, called *flash gun*.

All others: Not available.

Bolt

Steamwright: Energy gun.

Wizard: Shards of elemental energy.

All others: Not available.

Boost/Lower Trait

Cleric: Cleric gives a blessing or curses the target.

Entomancer: Insects bite the target, releasing debilitating toxins or invigorating pheromones.

Mechamage: Affects constructs only, called *empower golem*.

Seer: Bends fate to aid or hinder the target.

Steamwright: A set of alchemical potions to affect the target.

Thunder Scout: Self only, called *pilot's guile*.

Wizard: Not available.

Burrow

Entomancer: The entomancer's appearance takes on ant-like features.

Mechamage: Arcane energies push the earth aside.

Steamwright: Digging machine.

Thunder Scout: Self only (no additional targets), called *penetrating drill*.

Wizard: Arcane energies push the earth aside.

All others: Not available.

Burst

Steamwright: Flamethrower.

Wizard: A shower of arcane energy.

All others: Not available.

Confusion

Entomancer: Swarming flies distract the enemy.

Seer: The seer speaks strange, beguiling words.

Steamwright: A subsonic noise generator disrupts the target's inner ear, called *balance inhibitor*.

Wizard: Swirling lights appear in front of the target.

All others: Not available.

Damage Field

Entomancer: Deadly swarm of insects surrounds the caster, called *swarmor*.

Wizard: Knives of fire surround the wizard.

All others: Not available.

Darksight

Cleric: Eyes glow in the colors of the cleric's order.

Entomancer: Entomancer's eyes become faceted.

Seer: No visible effect.

Steamwright: Night vision goggles.

Thunder Scout: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Deflection

Cleric: No visible effect.

Mechamage: Invisible hands turn away attacks.

Seer: Breezes arise at the wrong moment, attackers slip, all apparent coincidences protecting the target.

Wizard: Invisible hands turn away attacks.

All others: Not available.

Detect/Conceal Arcana

Cleric: No visible effect.

Entomancer: Ghostly antennae appear on the entomancer's forehead.

Mechamage: No visible effect.

Seer: No visible effect.

Steamwright: *Detect* only; a pair of magical goggles shows the caster auras.

Thunder Scout: Not available.

Wizard: No visible effect.

Direct Golem ✱

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 3

Range: 12" or special

Duration: 1 hour (1/hour)

This power confers a telepathic link between the mechamage and the targeted construct. The character becomes aware of the construct's general location and condition. The construct can inform the character of events it has witnessed (though depending on the intelligence level of the construct, this information may be vague at best). The character may use this connection to issue commands to the construct as if they were present. When cast upon the character's golem minion, the Range of this spell is unlimited so long as the golem minion is on the same plane.

Mechamage: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Disguise

Entomancer: The entomancer's skin shrivels away, molting to leave a new visage in her place.

Mechamage: The caster's form shimmers, replaced by a new face.

Seer: The seer implants the image of another person in the minds of those around her.

Wizard: The caster's form shimmers, replaced by a new face.

All others: Not available.

Dispel

Cleric: The cleric calls on his faith to break the spell.

Mechamage: A counterspell disrupts the magic.

Seer: No visible effect.

Wizard: A counterspell disrupts the magic.

All others: Not available.

Divination

Seer: The seer's third eye opens and she gets a glimpse of the patterns of fate.

All others: Not available.

Drain Power Points

Entomancer: Spectral mosquitos surround the target.

Steamwright: A pistol that fires darts of magic-dulling poison.

All others: Not available.

Elemental Manipulation

Wizard: The wizard gestures and the elements respond.

All others: Not available.

Entangle

Cleric: The cleric encourages plants to grow and wrap around the legs of the target.

Entomancer: Spider webs form all over the target.

Steamwright: The steamwright throws a ball that explodes into a tangle of wires and cables, called *entanglement sphere*.

All others: Not available.

Environmental Protection

Cleric: The cleric draws a protective rune on the target's forehead.

Steamwright: Personal protective gear.

Thunder Scout: Imbues a pair of goggles with magic that protects the wearer.

All others: Not available.



Farsight

Mechamage: A pair of glass lenses appears in front of the recipient's eyes.

Seer: The seer touches the target's eyes, enhancing their vision.

Steamwright: Binoculars.

Thunder Scout: The Thunder Scout shades her eyes.

Wizard: The target's eyes glow.

All others: Not available.

Farspeech ✧

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 2

Range: Special

Duration: 1 hour (1/hour)

Farspeech allows a character and their allies to communicate over vast distances. When casting this power, the caster touches up to five small tokens. For the duration of the power, anything spoken into one object will emanate from the others so long as they are all within five miles of each other.

Entomancer: The entomancer imbues inch-long insects (beetles, cockroaches, etc.) with this power.

Seer: The seer uses tiles on which she writes the names of the people with whom she intends to speak.

Steamwright: A set of communication devices.

All others: Not available.

Fear

Entomancer: The target is covered in crawling insects.

Seer: A vision of the target's worst fear.

Wizard: An illusion of a terrifying spectre.

All others: Not available.

Fly

Entomancer: A pair of insect's wings grows from the target's back.

Mechamage: Metal wings.

Steamwright: Steam-powered jetpack.

Wizard: Gusts of wind hold the target aloft.

All others: Not available.

Golembreath ✧

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 5

Range: Touch (Golem Minion)

Duration: One hour (1/hour)

This power gives the mechamage's golem minion a breath weapon which mimics the *burst* power. This power ends once the golem uses the breath weapon or the Duration runs out. The nature of the golem breath depends upon the type of golem minion it is cast upon. When the breath weapon is used, place the thin end of the Cone Template at the golem minion's front. Targets within the template may make Agility rolls versus the caster's Golemancy roll to avoid the effects.

✧ **Corpse golem:** The golem vomits a cone of burning, corrosive breath; the attack gains the Acid Corrosion and Burn Trappings.

✧ **Doll golem:** The golem exhales a cloud of swirling nightmare breath. Instead of doing damage, the *burst* creates the effect of the *obscure* power with a Necromantic Fear Trapping in a Large Burst Template centered on the wide end of the Cone Template and lasting for 3 rounds. The doll golem can see normally in this darkness cloud.

✧ **Metal golem:** The golem spits a cloud of swirling poisonous breath in a Small Burst Template centered on the wide end of the Cone Template and lasting for 1 round. In addition to the damage effect from

the *burst*, this poison is Venomous (see Hazards in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*) and affects all who come in contact with the poisonous cloud.

✧ **Rock golem:** The golem breathes a cloud of paralytic magic in a Medium Burst Template centered on the wide end of the Cone Template and lasting for 1 round. Any living creature within the cloud must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of a magical paralysis effect (similar to the effects of a Paralysis poison; see Hazards in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*).

Mechamage: A rune inscribed on the golem minion's forehead.

All others: Not available.

Greater Healing

Note: The *greater healing* power is limited to only affecting living creatures. Constructs, golems, and undead are not affected by the power. See the section of Golemoids & Greater Healing in *Chapter 4: Technology* for more details.

Cleric: Laying on hands.

All others: Not available.

Growth/Shrink

Cleric: Uses words of power.

Entomancer: Shrink only, called *vermin size*.

Mechamage: Only affects the mechamage's golem minion.

Wizard: Throws a pinch of powdered iron at the target.

All others: Not available.

Havoc

Steamwright: Repulsion Grenades.

Wizard: Summons a whirlwind.

All others: Not available.

Healing

Note: The *healing* power is limited to only affecting living creatures. Constructs, golems, and undead are not affected by the power.

Cleric: Laying on hands.

Entomancer: Insects swarm the target, closing wounds and sealing them with sterilizing secretions.

Mechamage: Only affects golems, called *repair golem*.

Seer: The seer closes her eyes and envisions the target whole again.

All others: Not available.

Helldriver ✧

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 6

Range: 6"

Duration: One hour (1/hour)

This spell summons a shimmering spectral steamwagon, piloted by a faceless, shadowy pilot. This vehicle has the same statistics as a normal steamwagon, but only has 2 wound levels for the purposes of taking damage (after taking its third wound, it is automatically wrecked and the driver must make a Driving roll or go out of control) and has a perpetual engine. No one other than the ghostly pilot can drive the vehicle (Driving d8), though he does so as you command. The pilot is inseparable from the vehicle and is considered a part of the steamwagon for all intents and purposes. As the vehicle is slightly out of phase with this reality, the steamwagon and its passengers are considered to have Medium cover at all times.

Mechamage: A schematic of the steamwagon is drawn on the ground where it will appear.

Thunder Scout: The Thunder Scout throws a handful of bolts and motor oil on the ground.

All others: Not available.

Intangibility

Entomancer: The entomancer becomes a swarm of miniscule gnats. Unlike *swarm form*, the entomancer cannot attack or take any actions while using this power. The entomancer can fit through the tiniest cracks in an object, but cannot actually pass through solid matter.

Mechamage: The mechamage takes on a ghostly form.

Seer: The seer is no longer quite part of the material world.

Wizard: The wizard takes on a ghostly form.

All others: Not available.

Invisibility

Cleric: The cleric gives a blessing that wards off sight.

Seer: The seer clouds the minds of those around her.

Thunder Scout: The Thunder Scout blends into her surroundings.

All others: Not available.

Light/Obscure

Cleric: A blessing of light or a curse of darkness.

Seer: Light focuses on the area round the target or bends away.

Steamwright: A powerful steam-powered lantern or a set of smoke grenades.

Thunder Scout: *Obscure* only. The Thunder Scout creates a very small dust storm around herself.

All others: Not available.

Mind Reading

Entomancer: A small insect burrows into the target's skull and sends thoughts back to the entomancer.

Seer: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Paralysis ✱

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 2

Range: Smarts

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Paralysis allows a character to freeze enemies in place. This is an opposed roll against the target's Vigor. On a success, the target's Pace is reduced to 0. On a raise, the target can take no actions.

Entomancer: Stinging insects inject a paralyzing poison.

Steamwright: An electric shock device.

All others: Not available.

Psychometry ✱

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 3

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

The seer is able to handle an object and catch some glimpses of its history as well as those who owned it. They may ask one question per round during the power's duration. Some examples are: "What

are you?" "Who created you?" "Who owned you?" (It will answer in order from its most recent owner backwards, one owner per question.) "What is your purpose?" "What are you made out of?" and other simple queries. The object answers in glimpses of the past, not words, so the resulting answers may only lead to more questions.

Seer: The seer touches the object and closes her eyes.

All others: Not available.

Pummel

Steamwright: Seismic shock cannon.

Thunder Scout: A powerful shout of defiance that knocks enemies back.

Wizard: Powerful winds issuing from the wizard's hands.

All others: Not available.

Puppet

Entomancer: Maggots dig into the target's skull and attempt to take over his actions.

Wizard: Strings of energy connect the wizard's fingers to the target's limbs.

All others: Not available.

Quickness

Cleric: A blessing of speed.

Seer: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Repair Vehicle ✱

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 2

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous

This power allows the caster to repair one wound level on a vehicle, or two on a raise.

Mechamage: Laying hands against the vehicle's chassis.

Thunder Scout: Laying hands against the vehicle's chassis.

All others: Not available.

Retribution ✱

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 5

Range: Spirit

Duration: Instantaneous

This power may only be cast after an enemy creature within Range rolls a raise on a Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing roll against one of your allies. Your ally's next attack or arcane skill roll against that enemy is automatically successful with a raise. This roll must be made before the end of your ally's next turn or the effect ends.

Cleric: A blessing of justice.

Seer: A vision of a set of scales balancing briefly appears in the target's mind.

All others: Not available.



Shape Change

Entomancer: Insect forms only, called *verminform*. See the following table for possible insect forms.

Wizard: The wizard throws a pinch of animal hair over the target. Uses the Shape Change table in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*.

All others: Not available.

Verminform

Cost	Rank	Insect Form
3	Novice	Giant Ant
4	Seasoned	Giant Spider
5	Veteran	Giant Scorpion
6	Heroic	Giant Wasp
7	Legendary	Giant Mantis

Slick ✱

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 3

Range: 12"

Duration: 3 rounds (1/minute)

This power fills a Medium Burst Template with a viscous, slippery substance. Those within the MBT must make an Agility roll to avoid the effects (at -2 if the caster got a raise on their arcane skill roll); failure results in becoming covered with the substance. Any movement except crawling by targets within the MBT during the power's Duration triggers an Agility roll (at -2 if the target is already covered with the substance already; at -4 if they are already covered with the substance and the caster got a raise on their arcane skill roll); failure results in falling prone.

Entomancer: Summons a horde of slugs, called *viscous carpet*.

Mechamage: Friction in the area is temporarily reduced.

Steamwright: A hydraulic device that pumps oil out at the enemy.

Thunder Scout: Grease coats all nearby surfaces.

Wizard: Grease coats all nearby surfaces.

All others: Not available.

Slow

Cleric: A curse of sloth.

Seer: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Slumber

Cleric: A paean to sleep.

Seer: No visible effect.

Steamwright: Sleeping gas grenades.

Wizard: Sand blown at the target.

All others: Not available.

Smite

Cleric: A blessing on the weapon.

Mechamage: Steam and fire appears around the weapon.

Seer: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Speak Language

Cleric: A prayer for understanding.

Seer: No visible effect.

Steamwright: Universal translation device.

Thunder Scout: Gestures and words from various languages and cultures, called *pidgin*.

All others: Not available.

Speed

Cleric: A rapid chant.

Entomancer: A swarm of insects inject adrenaline and other hormones into the target.

Seer: No visible effect.

Thunder Scout: No visible effect.

All others: Not available.

Stun

Cleric: A malediction on the target.

Steamwright: Stun grenades.

Wizard: A burst of dazing light.

All others: Not available.

Succor

Cleric: Laying on hands.

All others: Not available.

Summon Ally

Cleric: A prayer for aid.

Entomancer: Summons vermin only, called *vermin friend*. See the following table for possible insect allies summoned.

Mechamage: Can only bring nearby objects to life, called *animate object*. See the following table for Size ranges of objects which may be affected. Duration changes to 1 minute (1/minute).

Wizard: A circle is drawn on the ground.

All others: Not available.

Vermin Friend

Cost	Rank	Ally Type
3	Novice	Giant Ant
4	Seasoned	Giant Spider
5	Veteran	Giant Scorpion
6	Heroic	Giant Wasp
7	Legendary	Giant Mantis

Animate Object

Cost	Rank	Ally Type
1	Novice	Tiny Animated Object
3	Novice	Small Animated Object
4	Seasoned	Medium Animated Object
5	Veteran	Large Animated Object
6	Heroic	Huge Animated Object
7	Legendary	Gargantuan Animated Object

Summon Ride ✱


Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 10

Range: Smarts x100 yards

Duration: Instant

This power summons the Thunder Scout's signature vehicle, causing it to appear in an unoccupied space within range. This vehicle must be a signature vehicle upon which the Thunder Scout has



performed signature vehicle maintenance (as described in the Arcane Background (Thunder Scout) Edge) within the last 24 hours, and it must currently be powered. The Thunder

Scout may summon this vehicle in their own space, rather than an unoccupied space, so long as the space the signature vehicle will appear in is occupied only by the character, their allies, and unattended objects. The character immediately appears in the vehicle's pilot station, and their allies are moved into other stations within the vehicle. The unattended objects become the vehicle's cargo (provided there is sufficient room).

Thunder Scout: The Thunder Scout calls his vehicle's name while holding its key or other activation token.

All others: Not available.

Swarm Form ✧

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Self

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Swarm form transforms the entomancer into a swarm of vicious insects. The entomancer becomes a swarm (see the Bestiary chapter of the Savage Worlds core rulebook). Her abilities are the same as the base swarm, with the following modifications: the swarm covers an area equal to a Small Burst Template, she retains her own Smarts, Spirit, Charisma, and the Climbing, Intimidation, Knowledge, Notice, Stealth, Swimming, and Tracking skills (she loses access to all other skills while transformed) and she lacks the Split swarm special ability. She is unable to use her other powers for the power's Duration, but may still use her Vermin Empathy ability to command insects as normal.

Entomancer: Insects appear to tear out of the entomancer's skin, before she completely dissolves into a swarm.

All others: Not available.

Telekinesis

Mechamage: The mechamage gestures with a magnetic rod.

Seer: No visible effect.

Wizard: The wizard gestures as though moving things with his hands.

All others: Not available.

Teleport

Entomancer: The entomancer vanishes and reappears from a mass of insects, called *swarm step*.

Mechamage: The mechamage vanishes and reappears in a cloud of steam.

Seer: The seer simply disappears and reappears in the new position.

Steamwright: A matter disintegrator/rearranger.

Wizard: The portal appears in the air, letting the wizard step to a new location.

All others: Not available.

Time Loop ✧

Rank: Heroic

Power Points: 10

Range: Smarts

Duration: Instantaneous

This power grants a second chance to a single ally within Range. This power may only be cast at the end of an ally's action (regardless of the seer's place in the initiative order), and in addition to Power Point expenditure, costs one benny from the caster. This power resets time to the start of the ally's previous action, erasing any effects from the previous action before casting and reinstating all effects which were present at the start of the ally's last action. Everything is as it was before the allied character ever took his action (allowing him to either take the same action, hoping for better die rolls or to change his strategy altogether). All affected characters retain memory of their actions before the spell took effect. This power forces the seer to skip her ability to perform any actions the following round on her initiative after casting this power.

Seer: The seer's eyes flash, and time resets around her.

All others: Not available.

Velocity ✧

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Touch (one vehicle)

Duration: 10 minutes (1/minute)

The caster gains complete control of the vehicle's speed and acceleration. The vehicle's Top Speed is increased by a factor of 1.5 (round up).

Additional Effects: For double the Power Points, the Thunder Scout can double the vehicle's Top Speed.

Seer: No visible effect.

Thunder Scout: The Thunder Scout coaxes the vehicle's reserves, driving all dials into the red.

All others: Not available.

Wall Walker

Entomancer: Tiny hairs appear on the entomancer's fingers.

Thunder Scout: The Thunder Scout spits on his hands and rubs them together.

Wizard: A bit of spider web is rubbed between the wizard's fingers.

All others: Not available.

Warrior's Gift

Cleric: A benediction and call for martial power.

Mechamage: Only affects golems, called *empower golem*.

Seer: No apparent effect.

All others: Not available.

Zombie

Cleric: Spirits are bound to the corpse.

Entomancer: Parasitoid insect larvae bring the body back to a semblance of life.

Mechamage: No apparent effect.

Seer: No apparent effect.

Wizard: Dark necromantic energies are used to bring the body to shambling unlife.

All others: Not available.

TECHNOLOGY

STEAMREAPER WEAPONS



Steamreaver weapons are the signature weapons of golemoids and, much like golemoids themselves, are mechatmagical fusions of arcane power and high technology. These weapons are always slightly larger than their standard counterparts, and they are inlaid with a variety of mechanical apparatus. A steamreaver weapon is not innately magical; rather, it is designed to channel a golemoid's innate magical energies. A golemoid who possesses a steamreaver energy cell implant perpetually radiates an invisible aura that allows him to power the weapon (or depower it) as a free action. If the golemoid drops or throws a powered weapon, it maintains its charge until the end of the golemoid's place in initiative order that turn. A steamreaver weapon possesses two basic abilities: a passive ability (which is in effect so long as the weapon is powered) and a steam ability (which requires the wielder to expend Steam Points). A depowered steamreaver weapon possesses neither of these abilities, though it will still possess any abilities added via enchantment.

Steamreaver Weapon Descriptions



Lightning Sword

This enormous greatsword is covered with metal wires and exposed coils, designed to carry a powerful electrical charge.

Passive: A powered lightning sword sheds light as a torch.

Your attacks gain the Electricity Armor Piercing Trapping against opponents with metal armor, or those composed at least partially of metal.

Steam Ability: You may spend 1 Steam Point on your turn as a free action give the lightning sword the Electricity Conduction Trapping until the beginning of your next turn in initiative order.

Magmaxe

This enormous greataxe features a miniature forge fastened to its broad stone blade. When powered, the forge ignites, causing the blade to glow with molten heat.

Passive Ability: A powered magmaxe sheds light as a torch and can ignite flammable objects with a touch. Your attacks gain the Fire/Heat Armor Piercing Trapping on all attacks with a powered magmaxe.

Steam Ability: You may spend 1 Steam Point your turn as a free action to ignite your magmaxe. Until the beginning of your next turn in initiative order, the magmaxe gains the Fire/Heat Flammable and Fatigue Trappings.

Thunderhammer

The thunderhammer features a long steel haft capped with an enormous stone head attached to several small maneuvering steam jets. These jets not only allow the wielder to balance its incredible weight, but they also create thrust, causing the hammer to strike with enormous force.

Passive Ability: If you can move at least 6" in a straight line before attacking, you add +2 to the damage total when wielding a powered thunderhammer.

Steam Ability: You may spend 1 Steam Point on your turn as a free action to grant the thunderhammer the Sound Deafen Trapping until the beginning of your next turn in initiative order. Any opponent Shaken with the thunderhammer has a -2 to their Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.

Hand Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Auger	Str+d6	3	10	Steamwright, See notes
Gearspanner	Str+d8	5	15	Steamwright
Injector	Special	1	75	
Lightning Sword	Str+d10	16	450	Steamreaver, 2 hands, See notes
Magmaxe	Str+d10	24	450	Steamreaver, 2 hands, See notes
Rocbar	Str+d10	12	20	Steamwright, 2 hands, See notes
Ripfangs	Str+d4	2	35	See notes
Sanguine Wraps	See Notes	1	10	
Scaralla	Str+d4	2	10	
Shredders	Str+d4	2	70	See notes
Spring Blade Dagger	Str+d4	3	100	See notes
Spring Blade Spear	Str+d8	8	100	See notes
Stouthorn	Str+d6	5	35	
Thunder Hammer	Str+d10	30	450	Steamreaver, 2 hands, See notes



STEAMWRIGHT WEAPONS

These exotic weapons are the signature sidearms of Aden's fighting engineers – the steamwrights. Steamwright weapons resemble oversized, weaponized versions of normal engineering tools. Each of these weapons has a small toolkit built into its internal mechanisms, allowing it to serve the steamwright as an instrument of creation as well as destruction. The built-in toolkit of a steamwright's weapon is usable with the Knowledge (Engineering) skill and he suffers no negative penalties on Trait rolls for lack of equipment in most situations.

Auger

This is a slender, sinister hand drill sharpened to a fine point. While serviceable as a dagger, the weapon becomes even more fiendish when you operate the drill crank with your off hand. When the auger is wielded with two hands, it gains AP 2.

Gearspanner

This weapon is an oversized wrench, roughly the size of a large mace, with a sharpened blade inlaid along its crescent. Though it was originally designed for tightening large bolts, the steamwrights quickly adopted the gearspanner as their signature weapon.

Rocbar

This enormous tool is mightier than a mere crowbar, and thus it takes the name of Aden's most legendary bird. Like a crowbar, the rocbar grants a +2 bonus to damage rolls made to force open doors or chests

(see Breaking Things in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook). The rocbar may be extended into a weapon as an action with a Reach of 1 and doing Str+d8 damage, though all Fighting rolls with the weapon receive a -2 penalty while in this ungainly state. It may be collapsed into a regular two-handed weapon once more as an action.

OTHER MELEE WEAPONS

Aden is home to a vast array of cultures, each with its own military traditions. The following are a small handful of unique weapons devised by its people

Injector

This surgeon's tool is a simple glass or metal vial equipped with a hollow needle and plunger. Generally used to administer sedatives directly into a patient's bloodstream, it can also deliver injury poisons. As an injector is not designed to serve as an offensive weapon, you suffer a -2 penalty to all Fighting rolls with it.

Ripfangs

This weapon consists of a set of sinister curved blades mounted in the user's teeth. A set of ripfangs is usable only by a creature with a bite attack. A pair of ripfangs inflicts either Str+d4 damage or increases the creature's original bite damage by one die type (Str become Str+d4, Str+d4 become Str+d6, etc.). Proper use of this weapon requires surgical implantation as if it were a minor manite implant (however



Scaralla



Auger



Injector



Ripfang

the ripfangs are not an implant and do not increase the user's Impact). Ripfangs cannot be disarmed. They were named for the rapacian clan that developed them.

Sanguine Wraps

These are silk wraps inlaid with metal and treated with salt, gravel, or other rough materials. When wrapped around one's hands, wrists, feet, and shins, these allow you to inflict greater damage with unarmed attacks and increase unarmed damage by one die type (Str become Str+d4, Str+d4 become Str+d6, etc.). Like all weapons, magical versions of sanguine wraps can be created, and they bestow their benefits to the user's unarmed attacks. The Sanguine Monks devised these wraps to augment their martial arts.

Scaralla

This weapon is a simple hand-axe with twin, parallel blades and a sharp spike at the end of the haft. This strange weapon was first devised by the Sanguine Monks of the High Steppes.

Shredders

Often utilized by ferrans, these weapons are clawed gloves designed to brace and support the wearer's natural claws. A pair of shredders is usable only by a creature with a natural claw attack. Shredders inflict either inflicts either Str+d4 damage or increases the creature's original claw damage by one die type (Str become Str+d4, Str+d4 become Str+d6, etc.). Shredders come in pairs - magical shredders confer their bonuses on up to two claw attacks.

Magical shredders do not confer their enchantment unless both are worn by the same creature. Shredders cannot be disarmed.

Spring Blade Weapons

Another mechanized invention the Urbanan steamwrights have devised, the spring blade dagger and spear resemble ordinary weapons of their type, albeit with a thicker hilt and two smaller, spring-loaded blades recessed alongside the main blade. A character wielding a spring blade weapon can launch the extra blades one at a time, as ranged attacks using the Shooting skill. The blades are highly inaccurate (Range: 2/4/8), suffering a -2 penalty to hit all such targets in addition to normal range penalties. However, the powerful winch mechanism housed in the hilt increases the damage of such projectile blades to Str+d6. The blades may be retrieved and reused after being launched. Reloading a spring blade weapon takes one action.

When you get a raise on a Fighting roll using a spring blade weapon, you may immediately launch both blades into your target as a free action. If this is done, the attack gains AP 2 to reflect the blades penetrating deep into the wound created by the initial stab.

Replacement spring blades may be used as crude knives but you suffer a -2 penalty to all Fighting rolls when these blades are not mounted appropriately in a spring blade weapon.

Stouthorn

This ferran weapon consists of a stout club, blade, or vicious spike mounted on a creature's natural horn or antlers. A stouthorn is usable only by creatures with a gore attack. Stouthorns inflict either Str+d4 damage or increase the creature's original gore damage by one die type (Str become Str+d4, Str+d4 become Str+d6, etc.). A stouthorn can be removable, or it can be permanently mounted as if it were a minor manite implant (however the stouthorn is not an implant and does not increase the user's Impact). A stouthorn cannot be disarmed.

RANGED WEAPONS

Firearms

Holdout

This is an extremely small and easily concealed firearm (-2 to Notice rolls to detect it), designed to be used as a last resort. The weapon is highly inaccurate and the Range modifiers for a holdout firearm are double that of a normal ranged weapon (-4m for Medium range and -8 for Long range).

Pistol

This basic weapon is the most common firearm weapon. It consists of a short handle and trigger and a short barrel.

Rifle

You need at least two hands to use a rifle, regardless of its size. This firearm features a long barrel and a sturdy stock, granting the weapon an excellent mix of range and firepower.

Scattergun

This weapon acts in all ways as a shotgun (see the Gear chapter in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook* for shotgun rules).

Sniper Rifle

The sniper rifle has much greater range than a standard rifle.

Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Shots	Min. Str.	Notes
Crossbow, Carraway	15/30/60	2d8+special	1	200	5	1	d6	AP 2, 1 action to reload, See notes
Crystal Bow	30/60/120	Str+d8	1	500	2	1	d8	See notes
Pistol	5/10/20	1d8	1	100	2	—	—	
Rifle	15/30/60	1d10	1	150	7	—	—	2 hands
Thunder Bow (long bow)	15/30/60	Str+2d6	1	400	5	1	d8	2 hands
Thunder Bow (short bow)	8/16/32	Str+2d4	1	300	4	1	d6	2 hands
Springblade Dagger	2/4/8	d4+2	1	100	3	1	d6	See notes
Springblade Spear	2/4/8	d8+2	1	100	8	1	d6	2 hands, See notes
Sniper Rifle	25/50/100	2d6	1	400	10	1	—	
Scattergun	5/10/20	1-3d6	1	150	5	—	d6	2 hands, +2 Shooting
Holdout	2/4/8	1d6	1	50	1	—	—	

Firearm Ammunition

Each type of firearm requires specific ammunition. Thankfully, Aden's gunsmiths have standardized ammunition types enough that most ammunition is readily transferable between weapons of the same type. These clever craftsmen have also created a variety of ammunition capable of granting great versatility to one's firearms. Once fired, ammunition becomes entirely worthless. Ammunition designed for a specific weapon type (such as pistols) can only be used in weapons of that type. If a weapon can be loaded with multiple shots (such as a scattergun), all of its ammunition must be of the same type.

✧ **Armor Piercing:** This ammunition gains AP 2.

✧ **Bull Shot:** This special scattergun ammunition is designed to deliver extreme amounts of kinetic energy to its targets over a wide area, knocking targets off their feet. A scattergun loaded with bull shot does one die type lower damage (2d8 becomes 2d6, 2d6 becomes 2d4, etc.) but the target must make an Agility roll (-2 if the attack scored a raise) or fall prone.

✧ **Heavy Shot:** This ammunition type is expensive but is made of purer metals and hits especially hard. Shooting rolls while using heavy shot suffer a -1 penalty to hit but add +2 to damage.

✧ **Rubberized Shot:** This advanced form of ammunition uses a magically treated form of Kyanite tree sap. These bullets are designed to remain as hard and inflexible as metal until exposed to high velocities, whereupon they soften and flatten. The resulting mass strikes its

target with great force, but does relatively little lasting harm. Damage inflicted by these bullets is nonlethal and cannot kill their targets. The Range of a weapon using this type of ammunition is halved (round down).

✧ **Sniper Shot:** This type of ammunition is designed for maximum aerodynamics and range. The Range modifiers for this ammunition are +0/-1/-2 instead of the normal modifiers. This ammunition can only be used with rifles and sniper rifles.

✧ **Standard Ammunition:** This is the normal ammunition for all firearms and no special abilities are gained from it.

✧ **Wounding Shot:** This type of ammunition is designed to fragment upon striking, and it causes grisly wounds. All Vigor rolls for Bleeding Out are made at -2.

Ammunition

Type	Cost	Weight	Notes
Armor Piercing	5	1/10	AP 2
Bull	10	1/5	Knock Prone
Heavy	2	1/2	+2 damage, -2 to hit
Rubberized	1	1/10	Nonlethal, half Range
Sniper	3	1/10	Half Range modifiers
Standard	2	1/10	
Wounding	20	1/10	



Other Ranged Weapons

Thunder Bow

This powerful mechanized bow was first devised by Urbanan engineers, but it has quickly found popularity throughout Aden. A thunder bow packs the punch of a composite bow but requires a fraction of the strength due to a built in system of pulleys and levers. A thunder bow functions as a bow of the appropriate type, except the shooter adds his Strength die as extra damage, just as in attacking with melee weapons. More advanced bows can increase the shooter's effective Strength die by up to two die types. For each die type increase, the price increases by 200 gold.

Crystal Bow

These extremely rare bows are highly prized treasures produced in the nation of Arasteen. They are crafted of rare wood of exceptional flexibility and strength. Like the thunder bows, crystal bows are crafted to add Strength damage as well. As with other bows, you need two hands to use a crystal bow.

Carraway Crossbow

First devised by the magistrates of Carraway, this powerful crossbow utilizes a winch mechanism far more advanced than those found in standard crossbows. A Carraway crossbow can be fired, but not loaded, with one hand but suffers a -2 penalty to Shooting rolls. Shooting a Carraway crossbow with each hand imposes the normal multi-action penalties for attacking with two weapons, as well as the penalty for firing one handed. You can increase the tension on a loaded Carraway crossbow by tightening the winch as an action; this grants an additional +1d6 bonus to damage on a raise. This damage bonus increases up to four times (maximum +4d6), at a cost of one action per +1d6 of damage bonus acquired. The weapon can be loaded and winched in advance with no harm to the weapon or danger of misfire.



Carapace armor

ARMOR

While weapons are relatively common among Aden's citizenry since the Darkfall, armor is still relatively rare. The expense, weight, and general discomfort of armor make it unattainable, inconvenient, or both for normal folk. To wear armor openly is to proclaim one's status as a professional fighter. Only soldiers, mercenaries, and law enforcement commonly wear such attire.

Carapace Armor

This sturdy armor forged from the shells of giant beetles is the standard issue armor of the Swarmers, the stalwart insect-riding cavalry of Kyan. This armor grants its wearer relatively good protection while being light enough not to unduly encumber its mount. Carapace armor is smooth and usually shiny black or glossy brown in color. At a casual glance, most mistake it for enameled metal.

Dragon Armor

This armor is the signature armor of the Sons of the Dragon, the staunch samurai warriors of Vanora. This armor is lighter than full plate and allows for a greater range of mobility. True Vanoran armor is always custom-made for a specific samurai, though smiths throughout Aden have long since copied the style and produced lower-quality copies of the Vanoran style.

Ilithix Resin Armor

This armor is sculpted from pliable resin excreted by an ilithix hive queen. As all ilithix queens are either corrupted or refuse to communicate with other creatures, the only way to acquire the armor is to take it from an ilithix (the high gold cost assumes it was resold by a previous owner). The flexible material makes resin armor extremely customizable, allowing it to be worn by any humanoid of Size -1 or 0. When donned by a new wearer for the first time, resin armor's Armor value is reduced by 2. After a suit is worn for a total of eight hours, the armor slowly warms and reshapes to the wearer's body and the armor's Armor value increases to its full amount. A starting ilithix character can begin with one suit of resin armor for a cost of only 25 gold.

Kite Shield

This large shield is popular among Aden's warriors and has become synonymous with Carraway's arbiters.

Sanguine Robes

These thin linen robes are inlaid with thin metal plates, granting a modicum of protection while not encumbering the wearer.

Armor

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes
Sanguine Robes	+2	1	300	Covers torso, arms, legs
Shadow Armor	+2	2	1150	Covers torso, See notes
Webweave Armor	+2	2	600	Covers torso
Ilithix Resin Armor	+3	15	500	Covers torso, See notes
Carapace Armor	+3	25	1100	Covers torso, arms, legs
Dragon Armor	+5	40	1200	Covers torso, arms, legs

Shields

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes
Small Shield (Buckler)	--	8	25	+1 Parry
Medium Shield	--	12	50	+1 Parry, +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit
Kite Shield	--	20	200	+2 Parry, +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit

Shadow Armor

The armor is fashioned from fine leather which has been magically transmuted to be nearly weightless and is seemingly composed of shadow (though the armor is not inherently magical). The armor grants a +1 bonus to all Stealth rolls. The armor is almost completely undetectable when worn under regular clothing (-4 to Notice rolls to detect), as long as the wearer has long sleeves.

Webweave Armor

The entomancers of Kyan created this light armor, weaving it from the thick webbing of giant arachnids. It is thin and light enough to be worn beneath normal clothing while granting its wearer an excellent mix of protection and flexibility.

SPECIAL MATERIALS

Aden features a variety of existing special materials in *Savage Thunderscape* campaigns.

Adamantine

Adamantine is an alloy of iron and manite developed by the dwarves. Metal weapons crafted from adamantine gain AP 2 and metal armor crafted from it gains 2 extra points of Armor value. The drawback is that the cost of each type of item is increased by five times its normal amount and the weight is doubled.

Heartwood

This sturdy wood is harvested from rare trees known as Spirit Oaks, and is anathema to undead creatures. Weapons made of heartwood gain a +1 damage bonus against undead, and they count as magical weapons when targeting undead with the Ethereal monstrous ability. Armor and shields crafted of heartwood gain 1 extra point of Armor value against all attacks from undead creatures or necromancy effects. Undead can innately sense heartwood and will avoid it, for its very touch causes pain (burning them for 1d6 damage each round they are in contact with it). Only armor and weapons that are made mostly of wood can gain any benefit from being made of heartwood (a weapon with a wooden haft or shaft, such as an axe or arrow, gains full benefit). Items made of heartwood cost twice as much as their normal counterparts. Enchanting

heartwood is difficult due to its innate anti-magical properties. Adding any magical properties to heartwood items costs an additional +1000 gold and incurs -2 to any skill rolls made to enchant it. This increase is added only the first time the item is enhanced.

Ionaran Ice

The elemental mages of Ionara developed this special material, which does not melt when exposed to heat, but merely becomes workable like metal. Though Ionaran ice wraps its wearer in perpetual chill, it also maintains a constant temperature at all times. Armor made of Ionaran ice bestows a perpetual endure elements effect upon its wearer, allowing him to tolerate both hot and cold temperature extremes with no discomfort. The armor also grants limited cold resistance, giving +2 Toughness versus cold-based attacks. Weapons crafted from the ice are considered to have various Cold/Ice Trappings for the purpose of harming creatures with weaknesses to cold. Items crafted from Ionaran Ice cost triple the normal price.

Mithral

Mithral is an alloy of silver and manite developed by the elves of Sylfanus. Weapons and armor crafted from mithral weigh half of what it normally does, but the cost is tripled.

Shadowhide

Shadowhide is a special leather that the mechamages of Urbana developed and transformed into a semi-solid, shadowy substance. Shadowhide armor grants a +1 bonus to all Stealth rolls while wearing the armor. Only armor normally made of leather or hide can be crafted out of shadowhide. (The shadow armor described elsewhere in this book is one example of such armor.) Armor crafted from shadowhide cost double their normal price.

VEHICLE WEAPONS & SIEGE ENGINES

With the rise of the Nocturnals, the people of Aden have been forced to rediscover the lost art of siege warfare. As many Nocturnals are massive beasts easily capable of taking on walled cities, weapons once used in the assault or defense of those cities have proven to be quite



Siege Engines

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	AP	Cost	Min Str.	Burst	Weight	Notes
Carraway Ballista	25/50/100	3d6	1	3	600	--	--	500	See notes, Heavy weapon
Gunner Tripod	--	--	1	--	50	--	--	15	See notes
Light Cannon									
✧ <i>Solid Shot</i>	50/100/200	3d6+1	1	4	750	--	--	200	See notes, Heavy Weapon
✧ <i>Canister Shot</i>	24" path	2d6	1	--	--	--	MBT	200	See notes
✧ <i>Explosive Shot</i>	50/100/200	3d6	1	--	--	--	MBT	200	Double damage vs. objects, See notes, Heavy Weapon
✧ <i>Incendiary Shot</i>	50/100/200	1d6 +2d6 fire	1	--	--	--	MBT	200	See notes
✧ <i>Shrapnel Shot</i>	50/100/200	3d6	1	--	--	--	MBT	200	See notes
Storm Cannon									
✧ <i>Solid Shot</i>	100/200/400*	3d10	1	7	2000	--	--	1000	See notes, Heavy Weapon
✧ <i>Canister Shot</i>	24" path	2d10	1	--	2000	--	LBT	1000	See notes
✧ <i>Explosive Shot</i>	100/200/400*	3d10	1	--	2000	--	LBT	1000	See notes, Heavy Weapon
✧ <i>Incendiary Shot</i>	100/200/400*	1d10 +2d6 fire	1	--	2000	--	LBT	1000	See notes
✧ <i>Shrapnel Shot</i>	100/200/400*	3d10	1	--	2000	--	LBT	1000	See notes

* can be extended to 150/300/600

useful. These large, ungainly weapons have proven particularly useful when combined with Aden's swift mechemagical vehicles. Modern innovations such as black powder weapons have also provided other powerful new innovations – such as cannons. The siege weapons listed here can also be utilized as vehicle weapons. Vehicle weapons can be installed onto any vehicle, so long as it is large enough to support them and has sufficient space. Each vehicle lists how many weapons it can support.

Carraway Ballista

The Carraway ballista is similar to other ballistae in that it is merely a Huge Carraway crossbow. Like its crossbow counterpart, it has winches and levering mechanisms to make it easier to use. The Carraway ballista imposes no penalties when used so long as it is still mounted on its turret. As with the standard Carraway crossbow, you can increase the tension on a loaded Carraway ballista by tightening the winch as an action, imposing a +1 damage bonus to the next attack roll with the weapon. This damage bonus stacks up to four times, at a cost of action per +1 of damage bonus. These actions can be divided among the ballista's crew in the same round. A Carraway ballista takes an action to reload. The weapon can be loaded and winched in advance with no harm to the weapon or danger of misfire.

Gunner Tripod

A gunner tripod allows any crossbow or firearm to be secured to it. It takes two actions to secure the weapons to it. Once secured, the weapon is fixed to the immobile tripod and cannot be disarmed as long as the wielder is in the same square as the tripod. The tripod reduces all unstable platform penalties for firing from a moving vehicle by 1. The gunner tripod takes up a weapon/feature slot in a vehicle.

Light Cannon

The light cannon refers to a variety of types of black powder field weaponry. These devices are relatively mobile, often found mounted on vehicles. While these weapons do not pack the same punch as Urbanan storm cannons, they are nonetheless weapons to be reckoned with and can be found throughout Aden. Loading a light cannon requires 2 actions by one person or 1 action by two people.

Storm Cannon

The storm cannon is the ultimate embodiment of black powder technology. This massive firearm can deliver a deadly payload from nearly a mile away. The cities of Urbana are all well-fortified and defended with outward-facing storm cannons.

Cannon Ammunition

Type	Cost	Weight
Canister Shot	8	12
Explosive Shot	20	10
Incendiary Shot	30	6
Shrapnel Shot	20	10
Solid Shot	5	8

Cities in other nations have been slow to adopt this technology – and Urbana has not been particularly forthcoming about sharing its secrets. Optionally, the crew chief can extend the storm cannon's Range. To do so, he must spend an additional 1d4 rounds (these may not be divided among the crew members, though they may reload the weapon during this time) to calculate a longer trajectory, which requires a successful Smarts roll at -2. When the storm cannon is fired, its Range becomes 150/300/600. Deviation rules apply if the storm cannon misses its shot. Barring magical assistance, this option is best used against enemy fortifications, large vehicles, or stationary targets. This weapon takes two weapon slots on a vehicle, and ammunition for it has double the cost.

Special Ammunition

The following type of specialized ammunition is available for cannons, in addition to solid shot, shrapnel shot and canister shot from the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*.

✧ **Explosive Shot:** Explosive shot is designed to detonate on impact and cause the maximum possible destruction over a wide area. A cannon utilizing explosive shot inflicts damage in a Medium Burst Template and does double damage to objects and structures.

✧ **Incendiary Shot:** Incendiary shot consists of a hollow shell containing alchemical oil, designed to explode on impact and scatter its contents over a large area. A cannon firing incendiary shot inflicts two fewer dice of damage (minimum of one die). However, everything in a Medium Burst Template is immediately ignited by the burning oil (for storm cannons, this area is a Large Burst Template). Even without any combustible materials, the flames will burn for 6 rounds, inflicting 2d6 damage per round to anyone or anything caught in the area.

VEHICLES

Purchased vehicles come with standard features only. While their weapons and engines can be replaced, or various parts of the vehicle enchanted, adding or removing features cannot be done without the aid of one of the Arcane Backgrounds designed to specialize in doing so (Thunder Scout, steamwright, or mechatmage). Many of these vehicles are prohibitively expensive, and purposefully so, as they are quite rare outside of the possession of a Thunder Scout, steamwright, or mechatmage. Wind Reavers are particularly rare, as their price suggests. Even if one has the money available, they can be extremely difficult to obtain. Dawnbringers cannot be bought with mere money.

Vehicle Rams

These weapons are typically reinforced metal projections, sometimes covered with spikes or sharp edges, mounted on a vehicle to increase damage during a Ram maneuver. Rams do not count against a vehicle's maximum weapon/features, but a vehicle may only have one type of ram on each side of the vehicle at a time. Only lateral rams may be installed on the side of a vehicle. If a vehicle is outfitted with a vehicle ram, it gains a damage bonus when making a ram attack. The attacking vehicle takes normal collision damage (unless the target also has a ram and the two are ramming one another simultaneously or is using a lateral ram). Rams are treated as Heavy Weapons for damage purposes when performing a Ram maneuver.

✧ **Extended Ram:** An extended ram can be combined with any other sort of ram, extending that ram's Reach by 1. An extended ram doubles the base cost of the type of ram being extended.

✧ **Lateral Ram:** This ram consists of reinforced metal braces attached to the side of the vehicle rather than to the front. To use a lateral ram, the vehicle performs a Ram maneuver normally, but it ends its move adjacent to the target (with the target on the same side as the lateral ram) rather than colliding with it directly. If the attack is successful, the target takes only the ram's damage; neither the target nor the ramming vehicle takes collision damage.

✧ **Pilot Ram:** This thick, angled ram comes to a sharp point directly in front of the vehicle. It is designed not for maximum damage, but to clear a path. Any target struck with a pilot ram requires the opposing driver to make a Driving roll at -2. On a failure, the target is automatically moved as a Skid (see the Out of Control table in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*) in addition to whatever result the driver rolls on their Out of Control roll for failing the Driving roll. The pilot ram may only be used for maneuvers which are against targets up to one Size larger than the vehicle. Anything larger and the ram's damage is ignored and a collision occurs as normal.

✧ **Siege Ram:** This thick, extended wooden ram is braced with metal. While this is very effective in taking down barricades, it is not precise enough for smaller targets. Target vehicles smaller in Size than the ramming vehicle with the siege ram installed gain +2 to their Driving rolls to avoid getting hit with the ram. When used for breaking barricades (see *Breaking Things* in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*),

Vehicle Rams

Type	Damage*	Cost	Weight
Extended	—	x2	x1.5
Lateral	2d6	125	125
Pilot	1d8	125	150
Siege	2d6	250	200
Spiked	2d6	200	75
Standard	3d6	150	200

* Considered Heavy Weapon damage

if the vehicle moves at least 6" in a straight line before performing the ram maneuver, it adds +4 to the ram's damage total.

✧ **Spiked Ram:** This is a vicious ram layered in metal spikes or serrated wire and intended primarily for damaging living creatures. On a raise, it impales any target smaller than the vehicle on its spikes. Impaled targets take collision damage whenever the vehicle rams other targets. Creatures impaled on the ram remain impaled until they make a Strength roll at -2 to free themselves.

✧ **Standard Ram:** This basic ram inflicts damage as a Heavy Weapon on anything that gets in the vehicle's way. The design of such rams can vary, from a heavily fortified bumper to a large, blunt shovel.

Basic Vehicles

Thunder Cycle

The thunder cycle is a simple vehicle comprised of little more than a sturdy metal frame, an engine, a seat/small cargo container, and three wheels. Despite its simple design, a thunder cycle is remarkably sturdy and well suited to the rigors of Aden's vast wilderness. The cycle's size, durability, versatility, and relatively modest price have combined to make this vehicle the trademark transportation of the Thunder Scouts. The thunder cycle is relatively small and can carry only a single passenger, just behind the pilot.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 2

Standard Features

Maneuverable: Driving rolls while driving a Thunder Cycle are made at +1.

Standard Weapons: 1 Gunner Tripod, 1 Pilot Ram

Steamwagon

Steamwagons are much as their name suggests – sturdy wagons designed to use manite-powered steam engines for propulsion in place of horses or other draft animals. These simple vehicles are quite popular among merchants and transportation services. They are less popular among mercenaries and adventurers due to their notorious tendency to become mired in rough terrain. Such individuals typically use them to haul cargo and supplies, or merely to get from place to place. That being said, judicious customization can transform even a simple steamwagon into a formidable combat vehicle.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 4

Standard Features

Compartmentalized: This vehicle is designed to be a cargo vehicle and has multiple compartments for storage which provides some protection against assault. As a result, steamwagons will never suffer more than two wounds from a single attack regardless of damage result. The attacker still rolls a Critical Hit for each wound the attack would have caused as normal and a Wrecked Critical Hit destroys the steamwagon as normal. This vehicle feature counts as two feature slots.

Standard Weapons: 2 Gunner Tripods

Special

Ponderous: Every turn a steamwagon navigates difficult terrain, the pilot must make a Driving roll at -3 or the vehicle becomes immobilized. This penalty increases by 1 for every round that the vehicle continues to navigate difficult terrain, but it resets to -3 if it spends at least one round moving across normal terrain once more. Once the vehicle is immobilized, it must be physically moved to normal terrain before it functions again. A steamwagon can spend one feature slot to overcome this disadvantage.

Sea Star

Invented in Aramyst, this aquatic vehicle basically amounts to a small, manite-powered gunboat. The Sea Star was originally designed for the evacuation and protection of Aramystian refugees. As a result, they are small, quick, and maneuverable. These vessels have also

Vehicles

Vehicle	Size	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Cost	Notes
Thunder Cycle	2	20/36	8 (2)	1+1	800	Off-Road (4WD), Maneuverable, +3 Toughness vs. jumps
Steamwagon	4	4/8	12 (4)	1+2	1000	Compartmentalized, Ponderous; See notes
Sea Star	3	4/8	6 (2)	1+3	1200	Stability
Velocipede	1	4/8	6 (1)	1	200	Weight: 30
Dragon Glider	1	10/20	5 (2)	1	3000	Secured Harness
Scuttler	3	1/4	12 (4)	1+2	4000	Impact Resistant, Reversible, Wall-Walker
Squall	6	4/8	14 (2)	1+6	3000	Amphibious, Heavy Armor
Dawnbringer	8	3/6	21/16 (6/3)	2+10	N/A	Heavy Armor (Less protection on underside), Hardened Chassis, Impact Resistant, Reloader, Reversible, Stability, Tracked
Wind Reaver	8	9 (water), 18 (fly)	19 (4)	2+9	10000	Heavy Armor, Impact Resistant, Stability

become quite popular with both pirates and adventurers. Despite the name, a Sea Star is not particularly seaworthy and is most effective when it remains within sight of the coastline.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 4

✦ Standard Features

Stability: The vehicle has a low center of gravity, making it difficult to upend. Any result of a Roll Over or Flip on the Out of Control table results in a Slip or Skid instead.

Standard Weapons: 1 Carraway Ballista, 2 Gunner Tripods, 1 Standard Ram.

Velocipede

Though not manite-powered, this simple vehicle was only made possible via Aden's modern technological innovations. The velocipede consists of a pair of large wheels connected by a sturdy frame, upon which its pilot sits and propels the vehicle using a system of chain-driven pedals. A velocipede carries a single pilot of Size -1 or 0. A velocipede has an Acc/Top Speed of 4/8 and cannot navigate difficult terrain.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 0

Standard Features: None

Standard Weapons: None

Advanced Vehicles

Dragon Glider

This steam-powered, self-propelled glider was devised by a band of Arastinian mechamages. It consists of a large, kiteshaped web of silk over a thin metal frame, which is attached to a single pilot's harness and a small mechamagical engine. When operative, this engine enchants the entire vehicle the ability to fly, reducing its weight so that it can glide on air currents indefinitely. The engine also provides thrust and direction, causing the glider to constantly emit the thick plume of smoke and flame from which it gets its name. While the machines are extremely fast and adept at long-range scouting and aerial skirmishes, many consider dragon gliders to be little more than flying coffins and avoid them like the plague.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 2



✧ Standard Features

Secured Harness: This vehicle features secured harnesses that protect its pilot from impact and prevent them from falling out of the vehicle. Removing or securing the harness requires a full round doing nothing else (though the harness can be cut with a slashing weapon as a called shot (-4)). The harness protects the crew from collision damage. Roll half the normal damage dice (round down) for the pilot.

Standard Weapons: 1 Gunner Tripod

✧ Special

The dragon glider cannot carry any crew or passengers other than its pilot. When not in use, the glider folds up into a man-sized object weighing 150 lbs. The dragon glider is capable of a crude, limited form of flight. In order to gain flight, the pilot must run in a straight line for at least 20", at which time the glider becomes airborne (Flying Pace of 24" and Climb 0; It costs 2" of Pace to gain 1" of height; may not run). The pilot makes Piloting rolls to perform maneuvers and otherwise must abide by the rules for flying. When on land, a pilot suffers a -4 penalty to his Agility rolls while carrying the glider. Attempting to pilot a dragon glider with an unsecured harness requires a Piloting roll at -2 every round to keep from falling out of the vehicle.

Scuttler

A bizarre vehicle originally of Kyanite design, the scuttler resembles an enormous steel beetle on six segmented mechanical legs. The scuttler has become widely accepted as a scouting vehicle. Though it is not fast, it is not intimidated by even the harshest terrains and offers a great deal of protection to its crew.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 5

✧ Standard Features

Impact Resistant: The interior cabin of the vehicle is braced against collision. All occupants take half damage from collisions (the occupants roll one half of the damage dice (round down)). If the occupants have a safety harness on (see the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*), these effects stack with these protective measures and the occupants roll one quarter of the damage dice (round down).

Reversible: A vehicle with this feature is uniquely designed such that it can move forward or reverse at no speed penalty and the driver suffers no Boating, Driving or Piloting penalties for moving in reverse, as he is able to switch his directional facing within the vehicle as a free action.

Standard Weapons: 3 Gunner Tripods

✧ Special

The scuttler is affected by a permanent *wall walker* power, allowing it to navigate even sheer cliff faces and the like. This power remains in effect as long as the engine is powered.

Squall

This heavily armed, amphibious Ionaran vessel was originally designed to defend the shores of that coastal nation. It has gained something of a reputation as a vessel for pirates and raiders, as many such individuals have copied the design and put it to good use in such ventures – a fact that fills the Ionarans with a great deal of resentment. It works on both water and land, driven alternately by a powerful propeller or six massive wheels.

Maximum Weapon Feature Slots: 6

✧ Standard Features

Amphibious: The vehicle can travel on both land and water. Squalls are normally designed to function either primarily on land or primarily in the water. If it is normally a land vehicle, its Acc/Top Speed in water is halved, and vice versa. If two feature slots are spent on this feature, the vehicle's speed is the same on both land and water. If a Thunder Scout takes a squall as their signature vehicle, they can select Amphibious once as one of their bonus features to give it full speed in both.

Standard Weapons: 2 Light Cannons, 3 Gunner Tripods

Superior Vehicles

Dawnbringer

Developed by Urbanan mechemages, the dawnbringer is a special heavy-duty combat vehicle – Aden's first steam-powered battle tank. Its name hints at its purpose – to destroy all nocturnals.

Only a handful or so of these vehicles exist, all of them driven by skilled steamwrights, Thunder Scouts, and mechemages. The Urbanans have never used a dawnbringer in combat against their fellow nations. The idea that they might, however, encourages their neighbors to treat them with cautious respect. Dawnbringer crews have affectionately nicknamed these vehicles "Turtles," though the name is intended to describe the tank's design more than its speed. The main body consists of a massive black steel dome propelled by a quartet of durable treads and surrounded by a trio of high-powered cannons.

Crew Stations: Pilot, co-pilot, 10 gunners

Maximum Weapon Feature Slots: 11

✧ Standard Features

Hardened Chassis: The dawnbringer is designed to execute ram attacks, and halves all collision damage to itself when performing a Ram maneuver. This stacks with the effects of the Impact Resistant feature; a vehicle with both features allows its occupants to take only one quarter the normal collision damage when performing a Ram maneuver. The Hardened Chassis damage reduction for occupants does not stack with the effects of a safety harness (see the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*). A Hardened Chassis does not affect other forms of collision damage (including damage taken when rammed by another vehicle).

Impact Resistant: The interior cabin of dawnbringer is braced against collision. All occupants take half damage from collisions (the occupants roll one half of the damage dice (round down)). If the occupants have a safety harness on (see the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*), these effects stack with these protective measures and the occupants roll one quarter of the damage dice (round down).

Reloader: The reloader reduces the number of actions which it takes to reload the dawnbringer's storm cannon weapon by one.

Reversible: The dawnbringer is uniquely designed such that it can move forward or reverse at no speed penalty and the driver suffers no Boating, Driving or Piloting penalties for moving in reverse, as he is able to switch his directional facing within the vehicle as a free action.

Stability: The dawnbringer has a low center of gravity, making it difficult to upend. Any result of a Roll Over or Flip on the Out of Control table results in a Slip or Skid instead.

Tracked: Tracked vehicles can climb over most low obstacles such as logs, and treat each inch of difficult terrain as 1.5 (instead of 2).

Standard Weapons: 1 Extended Siege Ram, 1 Storm Cannon, 2 Light Cannons, 3 Gunner Tripods

✧ Special

The dawnbringer is completely enclosed, blocking all line of sight or effect inside the vehicle and providing total cover from all direct attacks; crew are still subject to collision damage as normal, however. The vehicle has been equipped with potent divination magic, allowing its occupants to see normally through its hull, while still maintaining total cover. The vehicle's gunner tripods each have similar hatches. To use the gunner tripods, the gunners must emerge from these hatches. When a gunner's hatch is open, opponents may make called shots at -4 to attempt to damage the gunner directly.

Wind Weaver

An extremely recent invention, the wind weaver is Aden's first mechemagic airship. These vehicles are exceedingly rare and jealously guarded by their owners. The wind weaver resembles an enclosed sailing ship when at rest. When its engine is powered, the vessel rises into the air and extends sails from all sides of its hull to aid it in navigating

Aden's atmosphere. While a wind reaver may not match a dawnbringer for sheer firepower, its speed, grace and maneuverability are unmatched.

Maximum Weapon/Feature Slots: 9

✧ Standard Features

Impact Resistant: The interior cabin of wind reaver is braced against collision. All occupants take half damage from collisions (the occupants roll one half of the damage dice (round down)). If the occupants have a safety harness on (see the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*), these effects stack with these protective measures and the occupants roll one quarter of the damage dice (round down).

Stability: The wind reaver has a low center of gravity, making it difficult to upend. Any result of a Roll Over or Flip on the Out of Control table results in a Slip or Skid instead.

Standard Weapons: 3 Carraway Ballistae, 2 Light Cannons, 2 Gunner Tripods

EQUIPMENT

✧ **Driving Goggles:** These goggles allow a driver to ignore one point of cover penalties from natural hazards, such as sandstorms, that would hamper eyesight or damage the eyes.

✧ **Engineer's Toolkit:** The engineer's toolkit is a small satchel containing gears, tools, and manite samples. These materials are necessary for creating steamwright inventions. They are also used to perform maintenance and repairs on mechemagical vehicles, making them a necessary accessory for Thunder Scouts as well.

✧ **Ready Harness:** Another common piece of steamwright equipment, a ready harness consists of a set of steel-reinforced leather harnesses that crisscross the user's torso. The harness has a number of pouches (capable of holding 10 lbs. of items or small weapons) but its true value lies in its efficient design, granting greater support and distribution of weight to the wearer's carried gear. When wearing a ready harness, the wearer can carry six times his Strength die type without incurring any penalties.

✧ **Scope:** The discovery of the refractive lens was a boon not only to Aden's astronomers and cartographers, but also to snipers throughout the land. This small metal tube is essentially a specialized telescope designed to be fastened to the back of a rifle or sniper rifle. A scope provides +2 to Shooting rolls to shots at Medium range or higher when using the Aim maneuver.

✧ **Silencer:** This short, flared tube slides easily into the end of a firearm barrel and reduces the weapon's explosive retort. It imposes a -2 penalty on Notice rolls to hear the sound of the gun firing. Silencers are custom crafted for specific firearm types – a silencer designed for a rifle, for example, will not function if used with a pistol. Silencers cannot be applied to scatterguns.

Equipment

Item	Cost	Weight
Driving Goggles	25	1
Engineer's Toolkit	30	5
Pocket Watch	50	--
Ready Harness	25	3
Scope	200	1
Silencer	50	--
Urbanan Spyglass	300	1
Utility Belt	10	2

✧ **Urbanan Spyglass:** This item is more powerful than the standard spyglass and, thanks to the cheap mass production provided by Urbanan factories, it is cheaper. The penalty to the user's Notice rolls to see distant objects is -2, rather than the normal -4 when using the spyglass. Because of its intense magnification, the spyglass is ineffective against targets within 20".

✧ **Utility Belt:** A common element of any self-respecting steamwright's apparel, this belt has also found a home in many an adventurer's inventory. The utility belt consists of a sturdy leather belt situated around the waist and fitted with six waterproof pouches. These pouches fasten with an advanced form of cloth that adheres only to itself, allowing the pouches to open quickly and snap closed again instantly. Each pouch can hold a small item weighing no more than 2 lbs. If a pouch contains only a single item, the wearer can draw or stow its contents as a free action on his turn.

ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Though frequently overshadowed by their steamwright and mechamage brethren, Aden's alchemists are also responsible for a variety of extraordinary achievements. The following are a few examples.

✧ **Alchemical Oil:** This powerful lubricant severely decreases surface tension when spilled; however, the effect is non-magical and persists for an hour, or until the oil is burned or washed away. If ignited, alchemical oil will burn fiercely for three rounds in a Medium Burst Template, possibly igniting other combustibles (see Spreading under Fire in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*) and inflicting an initial 2d6 damage on any creatures affected by the oil who fail to avoid the initial MBT by Diving for Cover. A barrel (one application) of alchemical oil contains three gallons, making it unwieldy and impractical to use as a personal weapon. However, the substance is popular for use in siege weapons and vehicles.

✧ **Gill Jelly:** This thick, fatty unguent is liberally applied to the insides of the user's nose and grants a limited ability to draw oxygen from water. While it does not grant true water breathing, it does allow a character to survive underwater for a number of rounds equal to two plus five times his Vigor die type before Swimming rolls must be made to avoid Fatigue. A single application of gill jelly will last for one hour after it is applied before it dries out and becomes useless.

✧ **Liquid Night:** This strange concoction was devised by a family of enterprising goreaux thieves and quickly spread across the lands of Aden. When its container is broken on the ground, this liquid produces dark smoke in a Small Burst Template, granting near total cover and obscuring normal vision (-6 obscurement penalty to vision-based actions) for up to 3 rounds. This smoke is indistinguishable from normal shadows and is sufficient to obscure normal vision. However, the unusual chemical makeup of the smoke does nothing to hamper infravision. Liquid night requires some amount of shadow to function, and it is ineffective in anything brighter than Dim light. Despite its limitations, it has found popularity among thieves (especially those

Alchemical Items

Item	Cost	Weight
Alchemical Oil	30	25
Gill Jelly	75	1
Liquid Night	50	1
Pepper Bomb	15	1

possessing infravision) looking for a moment of cover in which to pick a lock, sneak past a guarded doorway, or pilfer a few items undetected.

♦ **Pepper Bomb:** These simple alchemical tools are popular among thieves, who use them to foul the senses of pursuing hounds. This satchel of herbs and alchemical reagents bursts when struck or thrown against a solid object, scattering its contents in a Small Burst Template. Targets failing to Dive for Cover must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. Creatures that have enhanced smelling abilities (such as dogs) have a -4 penalty to this Vigor roll and, if they fail, lose use their Notice bonuses for enhanced smelling for one hour. The cloud persists for one minute and then is instantly scattered in strong winds.

POISONS

Some drugs (both medicinal and recreational) are described using poison stat blocks. Individuals who partake in these drugs on purpose are assumed to fail their Vigor rolls voluntarily.

Arkana: This strange poison was first devised by Urbanan mechemages in an attempt to exterminate the ratling populace dwelling beneath their capital city. This plan was ultimately a failure and only succeeded in granting the surviving ratlings the natural ability to produce arkana directly from their bodies. Despite this setback, arkana remains a virulent poison and sees frequent use versus all manner of pests.

Green Jellyfish Venom: The venom of the flame jellyfish, native to the Green Sea just southwest of the Spike Fens, is said to be one of the most virulent poisons in the world. The native slurgithians have learned to harvest this poison and apply it to their weapons both for use in hunting and in warfare.

Liquid Haze: This rare herb is prized among the Sanguine Monks of the High Steppes, who encourage its use in their trainees as they attempt to capture the “red haze,” the core of their aggressive philosophy. When consumed or smoked, a dose of liquid haze places its owner in a heightened state of consciousness. If the user possesses the Berserk Edge, he may voluntarily enter a Berserk rage once per day without needing to be Shaken or suffer a wound to do so. (Characters without the Berserk Edge are merely filled with a slightly pleasurable nervous anxiety.) If

an individual uses more than one dose of liquid haze in a twenty-four hour period, his Smarts die type is permanently reduced by 1 die step (minimum d4) and may only be raised again if targeted by the *greater healing* power or by an Advance.

Powdered Nightmare: This terrifying drug is refined from the ground bones of certain nocturnals. Whisper fiends, in particular, are a rich source of powdered nightmare. The drug causes an intense feeling of dread and paranoia as well as minor hallucinations. Certain individuals find the experience strangely pleasurable and develop an addiction to powdered nightmare.

Royal Jelly: This substance is secreted by ilithix guardians and, under appropriate circumstances, can allow an ilithix to develop the capacity to bear offspring and mutate into a queen. When ingested by non-ilithix, royal jelly is an extremely powerful aphrodisiac and makes its subject extremely sensitive to suggestion. A small segment of the population is highly allergic to ilithix royal jelly and could experience a deadly allergic reaction upon ingesting it (1d100 roll; subject is affected adversely on a 1-2 and suffers as if from a Lethal poison). While popular rumor suggests that excessive use of royal jelly can permanently alter one’s gender, thus far there have been no documented cases of such a thing occurring (considering how difficult it is to acquire, this lack of evidence is not conclusive). Due to their separation from the ilithix hive mind and appropriate transformation conditions, ilithix exiles who consume royal jelly are wracked with uncontrollable vomiting and suffer a Fatigue level for one hour (no Vigor roll allowed to avoid effects). The ilithix hive sense racial ability allows them to detect any amount of royal jelly just as it detects other ilithix.

Silverroot: A common tool for surgeons of every stripe, this powerful anesthetic is harvested from the outer regions of the Spike Fens. Once injected, it deadens the subject’s senses and eventually causes a blissful, dreamless sleep. It is most effective on relaxed, receptive subjects and is thus frequently used to sedate patients about to undergo major surgery (particularly manite implantation).

Tincture of Manite: In its concentrated form, manite has extremely harmful effects on living creatures. Given its great value, it is rare to see it used in such a manner. Certain professional assassins favor tincture of manite not merely due to its potency, but also for its rarity. Most criminal investigators are simply untrained to recognize the rare poison’s handiwork.



Aden Poisons

Type	Vigor Roll	Failure	Success	Raise	Cost
Arkana	-3	Strength reduced by 1 die step (minimum d4) for 24 hours	Fatigue	No effect	100
Green Jellyfish Venom	-4	Paralyzed for one minute and Vigor reduced by 1 die step (minimum d4) for 24 hours	1 wound and Exhausted for 2d6 minutes	Exhausted for 2d6 rounds	600
Liquid Haze	--	See Notes	Exhaustion	No effect	400
Powdered Nightmare	-3	-1 to Spirit and Spirit-linked skill rolls for 2d6 minutes	Uncontrolled screaming for 2d6 rounds	Exhausted for 2d6 rounds	60
Royal Jelly	-3; See notes	-1 to Spirit and Spirit-linked skill rolls for 2d6 minutes; See notes	-1 to Vigor rolls and uncontrollable choking (1 Fatigue level) for 2d6 rounds; See notes	Exhausted for 2d6 rounds; See notes	50
Silverroot	-2	Unconsciousness for 3d4 hours	Spirit reduced by 1 die step (minimum d4) and ignores all wound modifiers for 2d6 minutes	Exhausted for 2d6 rounds and ignores all wound modifiers for 2d6 minutes	50
Tincture of Manite	-4	Vigor reduced by 1 die step (minimum d4) for 24 hours	-1 to Vigor rolls for 2d6 minutes	Exhausted for 2d6 rounds	2500

MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items found in the *Savage Worlds Fantasy Companion* are allowed in *Savage Thunderscape*. GMs should use those items as a guide for creating new magic items. Make note of the “How Much Can I Wear?” sidebar on page 51 of the *Savage Worlds Fantasy Companion*.

Vehicular weapons can gain the same enhancements to attack skill and damage as other weapons, though it costs an extra 1000 gold to the initial enchantment. Likewise, a vehicle’s Toughness may also be increased as with normal armor, again with an additional 1000 gold for the first enchantment made to the vehicle’s Toughness. Other magical properties (non-attack skill bonuses, Edges, and powers) cannot normally be placed on vehicles.

New Miscellaneous Magic Items

Myrmidon’s Bracers

Price: 1000 gold; **Weight:** 2 lbs.

This enchanted pair of manite bracers bears an elaborate engraving on each forearm, depicting a specific type of weapon that can be wielded one-handed. If the wielder wields a pair of weapons of the same type as the engraving on the bracers, any enchantments on the weapon in the wearer’s right hand also affect the weapon in his left. Any enchantments on the left hand weapon are negated while the bracers are worn. The bracers have no effect whatsoever if an enchanted weapon is not wielded in the right hand. The bracers cannot copy the abilities of intelligent weapons or true relics.

Eternal Pocket watch

Price: 500 gold; **Weight:** 1 lb.

This enchanted pocket watch gives perfect time without ever requiring winding. Its face glows faintly when opened, giving off light as a torch and allowing the time to be read.

Pilot’s Goggles

Price: 1,000 gold; **Weight:** 1 lb.

These enchanted lenses resemble the sleek tinted lenses occasionally worn by engineers and Thunder Scouts. While the goggles are worn, the wearer is considered to have a d4 in the Piloting skill. No other benefits are gained if the wearer already has a higher skill die type in Piloting.

Spellbullets

Price: 1,000 gold; **Weight:** 4 lb/50

These strange magic items were once the exclusive domain of Urbanan mechemages. The secret of their creation has recently spread to the world at large, to Lord Urbane’s great chagrin. A spellbullet resembles a normal piece of firearm ammunition, albeit deeply carved with runes and magical symbols. When loaded into a firearm and shot,

the bullet’s magic is released. A spellbullet can be prepared to hold a single power of any Rank, but the creator must know the power to be used and cast it during the bullet’s creation. Any power effects normally determined by the caster must be determined at the time of the bullet’s creation. The power must be one that can target a single creature or area. A power that targets a creature will affect any creature shot by the bullet (but will not affect additional creatures, even if the original power could). If a bullet carrying a target-based power misses, its magic is wasted. A power that targets an area will take effect as if the effect was centered on the bullet’s target. If the bullet carrying an area-based power misses its original target, determine where the area originates (using the deviation rules under Area of Effect in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*). The bullet does standard ammunition damage if it strikes its target. The power’s effects are otherwise determined as if it were an active artifact, using a d8 arcane skill die and d6 Wild Die.

The price is for the raw materials to make a spellbullet. Purchasing a spellbullet that already has a power cast into it costs an addition 50 gold per Power Point, multiplied by the required Rank of the power (Novice is 1, Seasoned 2, Veteran 3, etc.).

Crafting Magic Items

By default, *Savage Worlds* does not have rules for crafting magic items. You can simply have the players find or purchase magic items and not bother with crafting. However, if your players show interest in magic item crafting, an optional Edge (see the sidebar below) grants the ability to craft magical items.

Crafting a magical item requires raw materials with the same value as the item’s price. Requirements for crafting a magical item include a main crafter who must: 1) have the Craft Magic Items Edge, 2) be able to cast any powers that the item mimics, 2) have any Edges the item grants, and 3) must have any skill the item boosts at a minimum die step of d6+ (+1 bonus), d8+ (+2 bonus), or d12+ (+3 bonus). Any of these requirements can be met by another character(s) (except for the Craft Magic Item Edge, which must be had by the main crafter) so long as that character(s) is assisting during every day of the item’s creation. However, the assisting character(s) must be one Rank higher than the requirements for any Edges being imbued, and their associated skill must be one die step higher to grant the skill bonus (d8+ for +1, d10+ for +2, D12+1 for +3).

Crafting takes one day per \$1000 of the item’s price, with the crafter working at least eight hours a day. Once all work has been completed, the crafter must make either a Repair or arcane skill roll with a -2 to the roll for every \$5000 of the item’s price (rounded up). The crafter can take double the time in order to reduce this penalty to -1 for every \$5000. If the crafter fails the roll, half of the value of raw materials is wasted.

Adding new magical properties to an object requires obtaining new raw materials worth the cost of the new magical property, then spending the required time and making an arcane skill or Repair roll in line with the item’s new total cost.



NEW EDGE: CRAFT MAGIC ITEMS

Requirement: Seasoned, Arcane Background, Repair d6+

Choose one type of magic item (Armor and Shields, Weapons, Miscellaneous Magic Items, Potions, Rings, Scrolls, Tomes, Wands and Staves). You can now craft that kind of magic item. This Edge may be taken multiple times. Each time it applies to a different kind of magic item. Note that intelligent items and true relics are beyond the scope of PCs to craft using the Craft Magic Items Edge.

MANITE IMPLANTS & GOLEMIZATION

Creating Manite Implants

Generally speaking, only steamwrights and mechatronics with the Create Magic Item Edge can create manite implants and place them in a person's body. Manite implants are always crafted for creatures of a specific Size. They can be magically resized at a cost of 10% of the implant's cost per Size difference (so a Size +1 character could use an implant intended for a Size -1 character by paying 20% of the original item's cost). The requirements to create and install an implant are as follows:

Installing Manite Implants

To install a manite implant, the caster must make a Healing roll adjusted by any Implanting Modifiers that takes eight hours, or four hours on a raise. On a successful Healing roll, the implants are installed and the subject suffers no problems aside from potential Wasting. On a failure, the subject's Vigor die is lowered by one die step for a week and the implants are inert. On a critical failure (snake eyes) on the Healing roll, the Vigor reduction is permanent. The subject must be anesthetized (or, at the very least, completely restrained) in order for the surgeon to perform the procedure safely.

The cost for this surgery is typically equal to the material cost for the implant, though the caster may choose alternate forms of payment or services instead. After a new implant is installed, a character immediately incurs the appropriate effects and penalties for his current Wasting Level (see The Wasting, later in this section). The first time a character receives his first manite implant, he gains a weaker version of a golemoid warrior's Steam Reserve ability. The number of Steam Points in the character's steam reserve is 2.

The Manite Threshold

A character's Manite Threshold defines the number and quality of manite implants a particular individual's body can endure before succumbing to serious and immediate symptoms of the Wasting. True golemoids do not have a manite threshold, and instead use the Manite Implants table under the Golemoid Edge to determine how many implants they can receive and what at what rank they can receive them.

In game terms, a character's base Manite Threshold is equal to half of his Vigor die. Every two points beyond d12 Vigor increases the Manite Threshold by one. This represents the amount of Wasting a subject can tolerate before he begins to show advanced symptoms. Each implant has a certain level of Impact, which is the amount of potential Wasting it introduces. So long as the total Impact of all implants is equal to or lower than the character's Manite Threshold, he suffers no advanced

Manite Threshold & Implants

Type of Implant	Impact	Minimum Rank
Prosthetic	1	Novice
Minor	2	Seasoned
Basic	3	Heroic
Advanced	4	Veteran
Superior	6	Legendary

symptoms. A character's body and spirit must also be powerful enough to handle the implant's enchantment – and for this reason each type of implant also has a minimum associated character Rank. If a character receives a manite implant that exceeds his Rank, its impact is applied directly as Wasting, regardless of his Manite Threshold. The Manite Blood Edge can increase a non-golemoid character's Manite Threshold, as can any effects that increase his Vigor. Likewise, anything that lowers his Vigor inflicts penalties upon his Manite Threshold, causing the character to suffer symptoms of the Wasting until he is restored.

If a character suffers symptoms and then later increases his Manite Threshold enough to decrease his Wasting Level (either by repairing attribute damage, acquiring magic items that boost his Vigor, or raising his Vigor attribute permanently), those symptoms are suppressed so long as his Manite Threshold is high enough to support his current implants. Should his Manite Threshold ever dip below the amount needed to support his implants, even temporarily, all advanced symptoms immediately return.

For example, a Seasoned character with a d8 in Vigor has a Manite Threshold of 4. He can safely handle four prosthetics, two minor implants, or one minor implant and two prosthetics. While his Manite Threshold is high enough to handle one basic implant, he is not strong enough (not high enough in Rank) yet to receive one.

Golemoids & Greater Healing

Greater Healing can be used to remove unwanted implants and negate the effects of the Wasting. For each *greater healing* power cast upon a willing non-golemoid subject, that target can permanently and irrevocably expel one implant of his choice from his body. This reduces the target's Impact and any Wasting they may be suffering. This only affects willing non-golemoid targets. If the target does not wish to have his original organic body parts restored, *greater healing* automatically fails to expel any implants. Alternately, the GM may instead have both characters make opposed Spirit rolls to determine if the *greater healing* power succeeds. If it does happen to succeed, any lowest Rank implant (target character's choice) is immediately ejected from the non-golemoid character's body.

Greater healing does not affect true golemoids. Any true golemoid is so in tune with his manite implants that they are his true body. He has forsaken his mortal flesh forever.

Manite Implant Requirements

Implant Type	Caster Rank	Creation Time	Material Cost (Size -1/Size 0/Size +1)	Implanting modifiers
Prosthetic	Novice	1 day	250/275/375	--
Minor	Novice	1 day	500/550/750	-1
Basic	Seasoned	1 day	1000/1100/1500	-2
Advanced	Heroic	6 days	4000/4400/6000	-3
Superior	Veteran	12 days	16000/17600/24000	-3
Golemization	Heroic	5 days	5000/5500/7500	-3

THE WASTING

The Wasting is the mental and physical effects of Manite Implants on a character. A character with Manite Implants typically lives half as long as one without. A human with implants rarely lives to forty years. A character's Wasting Level is determined by how much their implants' Impact exceeds their Manite Threshold. Wasting Level can never be lower than zero. Wasting Level effects are not cumulative.

Total Impact of all implants - Manite Threshold = Wasting Level

The effects of each Wasting Level are as follows:

✧ **True Golemoid:** Characters with the Golemoid Edge stabilize at this Wasting Level. Their Manite Threshold is determined by their Rank, as per the Manite Implants table under the Golemoid Edge. Their lifespan is still reduced, though usually only by a few decades. A true golemoid human may live to fifty or sixty.

✧ **Growing Into It:** A character who suffers from a higher Wasting Level and gains a higher Vigor die may elect to assign his free implant slots toward implants that currently increase his total Impact. His Wasting Level then decreases accordingly. In this manner, a character suffering from the Wasting might stave off some of the effects by becoming a golemoid. Likewise, a golemoid might risk temporary symptoms by obtaining an implant before he can handle it, in hopes of Advancing into the "safe zone" before the symptoms become an issue.

✧ **Stable Golemization (Wasting Level equal to or less than zero):** The subject suffers no short-term symptoms. His maximum age is reduced to half of the normal maximum age for his race.

✧ **Minor Wasting (Wasting Level 1):** The subject begins to show minor signs of paranoia, as well as physical deterioration. His Spirit and Vigor die are both reduced by 1 step (no minimum; see below).

✧ **Major Wasting (Wasting Level 2-3):** The subject may develop a nervous twitch or begin to experience minor visual and auditory hallucinations as well as a constant sensation of being watched. He permanently suffers one level of Fatigue (effects that remove Fatigue can negate this condition for twenty-four hours). As with the previous Wasting Level, his Spirit and Vigor die are both again reduced by 1 step (no minimum; see below).

✧ **Advanced Wasting (Wasting Level 4-7):** The subject is prone to fits of nervous shaking and deep paranoia. He has trouble sleeping, and both his vision and hearing are plagued by strange, shadowy hallucinations. He begins to experience memory loss. He permanently suffers from being Exhausted (effects that remove Exhausted can negate this condition for twenty-four hours). His Spirit, Smarts and Vigor die are all reduced by 2 steps (no minimum; see below).

✧ **Terminal Wasting (Wasting Level 8):** The subject no longer remembers who he is and is consumed with rage and paranoia. His senses are entirely overcome by hallucination. He can only perceive a strange, distorted vision of reality. His maximum age is permanently reduced by 4d10 years the first time he reaches this Wasting Level. He is permanently Exhausted and blinded (these effects cannot be negated so long as he suffers from this Wasting Level). His Spirit, Smarts and Vigor die are all reduced by 2 steps (no minimum; see below) and two points of Charisma. None of this attribute damage may be repaired by any means so long as the subject has any manite implants.

Note: If any of the subject's attributes go below d4 as a result of the Wasting, he is immediately cured of all Trait damage except possible damage to Charisma but he permanently receives the Undead monstrous ability and becomes an NPC under the GM's control (see the Aden Bestiary later in this book for details regarding

the Wasted). There is no known cure for a character who becomes one of the Wasted.

The Bleak Wasting (Optional)

For a darker game, use any of the following options to make the Wasting a great deal less predictable. A character never knows when the next implant will be the one that puts him over the edge and causes the Wasting. Make certain everyone is on the same page and all right with it before you start being this mean.

✧ **Random Threshold:** For each golemoid character, secretly roll 1d6-4. Apply the resulting number to the character's Manite Threshold without telling the players the result. Some characters may have a higher Manite Threshold than normal – but half the time the Manite Threshold will be lower than they expect. Characters may end up with negative Manite Thresholds. This has no effect until they gain implants, but when they do gain the implants, they will immediately suffer far greater symptoms than expected.

✧ **A Select Few:** Not every character has the potential to become a true golemoid. Only those with a higher than normal Manite Threshold (those who rolled a 5 or a 6 when you randomly modified it) may become a true golemoid. There is no way to determine a character's suitability until he attempts to undergo golemization, in which case he is allowed a Vigor roll at -4 once surgery begins. If this Vigor roll is successful, he survives long enough for the surgeon to realize his unsuitability and abort the procedure. If it fails, he dies on the operating table. (Characters who wish to select the Golemoid Edge at Novice Rank should generally be allowed to play what they want and not be subject to this rule. If you prefer to enforce it even for starting characters, be sure your players are comfortable with the fact that they may die during character creation, and that you're an extremely petty person.)



❖ **Flawed Materials:** The GM makes all skill rolls for implantation in secret. If the caster's Healing die is a 1, but the Wild Die succeeds, it appears to have succeeded but the resulting implant is flawed. Flawed implants impose double the normal amount of Impact when implanted on its subject.

❖ **Rejection:** Any time a character undergoes surgery to receive a new implant, there is a chance that his body will simply reject the implant. Once a week for the month following the surgery, the character must make a Vigor roll at -2. On a failure, the implant becomes permanently inert and nonfunctional. (If it was an eye implant, he becomes blind in that eye. If it was a hand implant, that hand becomes paralyzed and unusable. If it was a leg implant, he may no longer walk, etc.).

❖ **Uncertain Future:** True golemoids have a minimum Wasting Level of 1, requiring them to constantly seek expensive treatments to repair their attribute damage.

Keep in mind that these rules will make the Wasting a great deal more terrifying. As a result, your characters may react by simply avoiding manite implants like the plague that they are. If you wish to balance out the above cruelties by making implants more tempting, consider the following:

❖ **Dirty Candy:** All manite implants on enemy creatures remain fully functional and reusable upon their deaths. The gold cost of all implants is reduced by half. The Rank requirement of all implants is reduced by one.

❖ **Steam Driven:** All characters with a steam reserve may spend 1 Steam Point as a free action to inflict an additional 1d4 points of extra damage with any Fighting, Shooting or Throwing roll.

❖ **Golemoid Power:** True golemoids increase the number of minor, basic, advanced, and superior implants granted by one. (A true golemoid must gain at least one implant of the appropriate type before receiving this bonus implant.)

❖ **Wasted Frenzy:** All characters receive a damage bonus on all Fighting and Throwing rolls equal to their current Wasting Level.

MANITE IMPLANTS BY LEVEL

Minor Implants

❖ **Body Compartment:** The character's body features a small, airtight, lead-lined compartment that can completely conceal a small item (such as a dagger, potion bottle, or grappling hook) of Size -2 or smaller. This implant can be installed multiple times, either as multiple small compartments, or as a combination of two small compartments into a single compartment capable of concealing a larger item (such as a shortsword, telescope, or tightly coiled rope) of Size -1 or smaller. Items within these compartments may be drawn as an action (as if they were a weapon), or as a free action if the user spends 1 Steam Point.

❖ **Chest Spikes:** The character's body features retractable spikes that can be extended or withdrawn as a free action. These inflict Str+d4 damage during a grapple, and can be enchanted as magical weapons for the usual cost.



✧ **Climbing Hooks:** Retractable hooks set into the character's wrists and ankles give him a +2 to Climbing rolls. These can be used as weapons, inflicting Str+d4 damage. The hooks may be retracted or extended as a free action once per round.

✧ **Finger Gun:** The character has a holdout firearm (as seen in the Gear section) built into one of his fingers. This does not prevent the character's hand from functioning normally. The finger must be unscrewed and removed to be reloaded (a single action each to remove, reload, and replace). This counts as a concealed weapon (-2 to Notice rolls to detect the weapon). This implant may be chosen multiple times, granting the golemoid multiple finger blasters that may each be used individually.

✧ **Integrated Scabbard:** This implant adds a (non-concealed) sheath or scabbard to the character, allowing him to securely carry a single weapon or a pair of light weapons. Weapons in integrated scabbards can be drawn as a free action. Alternately, a gunner golemoid can use this implant to store ammunition for firearms. It can store up to 50 bullets, which are considered part of the gunner golemoid's internal ammunition stockpile.

✧ **Internal Toolkit:** Master tools are incorporated into the character's body. Such devices could be thieves' tools that pop out of the wrist, an arm that transforms into a smith's hammer, an anvil that retracts from the knee with a miniature forge in the torso, or any number of similar items. This tool is completely retractable as a free action, grants everything needed to practice the associated skill in the field, and, if desired, is undetectable when not in use.

✧ **Iron Grip:** The character can lock his grip around an object. This provides a +2 to Strength rolls to resist being disarmed or to maintain a grip on an object.

✧ **Minor Luminescent Implants:** Small gems implanted in the character's eyes, wrists, or chest can glow brightly upon command. These gems are as bright as a torch when lit, and can be lit or doused with a free action.

✧ **Nocturnal Vision Enhancement:** The character has low-light vision. If he already possesses low-light vision, no additional benefit is gained.

Basic Manite Implants

✧ **Basic Detachable Sensor:** The character can detach a small part of himself (a finger, ear, or eye) and leave it behind (-2 to Notice rolls to detect the sensor). By spending 1 Steam Point and concentrating as an action, the character can choose to see, feel or hear through this detached part using his own Notice skill die type. This leaves his body blind or deaf in the meantime, depending on the detached part for sensory input. He can return to normal sight and vision at will, and will do so instantly if his remote part is destroyed. Such remote viewing has a maximum range of one mile. If the detached body part is lost or destroyed, the character can replace it with an hour of work and 25 gold worth of spare parts. The detached part has the same Toughness and Notice skill die type of the character, but may not move nor perform any action other than its sensory function.

✧ **Empowered Strikes:** The character is reinforced with specialized enchantments that allow him to leverage his Strength more effectively. He gains +1 to all Strength rolls when Breaking Things and Fighting and Throwing damage.

✧ **Fist Cannon:** The character can spend one Steam Point to launch a rocket propelled fist which uses Shooting to hit. The fist disconnects from his arm, flies at a Range of 12/24/48 to its target, and deals Str+d4 damage against a single opponent. The fist flies back to the character after its action and reattaches to his wrist at the end of his next action. This ability may also be used to perform any other action that could be performed with one hand as an action, such as securing a rope to a hook, opening a door, or picking up an unattended object. Edges that apply to a gunner golemoid's implants also apply to fist cannons.

✧ **Fortified Flesh:** The character's reinforced skin grants him +1 Toughness.

✧ **Greater Luminescent Implant:** These function identically to the minor luminescent implants, except that they radiate bright light in a 6" radius which eliminates Dim lighting penalties in the illuminated area. The light can also be pointed in a single direction as an action, in which case the illumination is focused into a Cone Template.

✧ **Integrated Armor:** The character can integrate one suit of armor into his body. This process causes the character to look even more bulky, mechanical, and inhuman, granting a +1 bonus to Intimidation rolls. Integrated armor can be made into magical armor (or have magical abilities added to it) for the usual cost. Integrated armor may not be removed unless this implant is removed (via interchangeable parts, for example).

✧ **Manite Buffering System:** The character can create a field of mechamagical energy around himself, deflecting small amounts of damage. By spending 1 Steam Point as an action, he ignores 1 AP until the end of his next turn.

✧ **Manite Injector:** A small hydraulic injector system is located at the base of the character's neck. As an action, he may insert one potion into the injector. If a potion is loaded into the injector, the character may drink the potion as a free action. Only one potion may be loaded into the injector at a time, but this implant may be taken up to three times, allowing three potions to be stored and used separately. Only one potion may be used in this manner per round.

✧ **Manite Speed Boost:** The character's legs and ankles are reinforced with powerful pistons. He gains a +1 bonus to his Pace. He may spend one Steam Point to gain an additional +2 to his Pace (+3 total) for one round.

✧ **Manite Tracking System:** Advanced sensor systems transform the character into a preternaturally skilled tracker. The character gains the +1 to Tracking rolls.

✧ **Personal Defense Aura:** The character can radiate intense heat or electricity from his body as an action by spending from 1 to 6 Steam Points. Each Steam Point spent inflicts 1d6 damage with either the Fire Flammable Trapping or the Electricity Armor Piercing Trapping to any enemy (and ally) adjacent to the character. This damage can Ace.

✧ **Steam Breath:** The character can spend 1 Steam Point to exhale boiling steam from his mouth in a Cone Template as an action. This steam inflicts 2d10 points of damage. Anyone caught in the area may try to Dive for Cover to avoid damage.

✧ **Steam Reservoir:** The character may spend up to 2 Steam Points as an action, storing the Steam Points in a special reservoir. These Steam Points remain in the reservoir until they are used, and do not prevent the character from recovering Steam Points normally. This implant may store a maximum of 2 Steam Points, but may be chosen multiple times. Each time it is selected, the maximum Steam Points that may be stored is increased by two.

✧ **Threat Analysis Matrix:** Special sensory implants grant the user a keen awareness of potentially threatening objects. The character adds +1 to his Notice rolls to locate traps or secret doors.

✧ **Utility Arm:** The character has a small, retractable limb in his lower torso. While this limb is far too small to wield weapons effectively, it can hold and manipulate items. This effectively gives the character a free action per round that may be used to reload, draw, stow, pick up, or put away weapons and items. The arm can also be used to perform delicate actions such as picking locks, cutting ropes, and the like. The arm is undetectable when not in use.

✧ **Wall Walker:** Due to a series of magical adhesive pads built into his hands, elbows, knees, and feet, the character can stick to any surface, allowing him to climb walls and even hang from the ceiling. He may move at full Pace and even run. This ability is activated by spending 1 Steam Point as an action and lasts up to ten rounds.

Advanced Implants

✧ **Advanced Detachable Sensor:** This implant functions as the basic detachable sensor, except that the sensor has a movement Pace of 3" via retractable arachnid legs. The sensor has a rudimentary intelligence; if the character is not actively controlling it, it will attempt to evade detection or discreetly follow a specified target (-2 to Notice rolls to detect the sensor). The detached sensor can innately detect the range and direction of the character, and will attempt to return to him if he leaves range or fails to give it commands for several hours.

✧ **Advanced Resistance Generator:** The character gains a +2 bonus to one of his physical Traits (Agility, Vigor, or Strength). This does not affect linked skills. The character may change the affected Trait by spending 1 Steam Point as an action. The bonus affects the chosen Trait until the character spends another Steam Point to change it again.

✧ **Blazing Thrusters:** By spending 1 Steam Point as a free action, the character can ignite small thrusters mounted on his back. These thrusters grant the character a Pace of 24" for a single turn, and allow him to move in any direction (even straight up). If he does not end his turn on a solid surface, he will fall normally at the end of his turn. Anything behind or beneath the character within a Small Burst Template when the thrusters are ignited has a chance to catch fire (see Fire in the *Savage Worlds core rulebook*) until they succeed on an Agility roll to extinguish themselves by rolling on the ground or in some other fashion.

✧ **Enhanced Night Vision:** The character gains the infravision monstrous ability.

✧ **Combustion Breath:** The character can spend 1 Steam Point to exhale searing fire from his mouth in a Cone Template. Targets which fail to Dive for Cover are affected and the fire inflicts 2d10 points of damage with the Fire Flammable Trapping.

✧ **Greater Empowered Strikes:** The character is reinforced with stronger specialized enchantments that allow him to leverage his Strength more effectively. He gains +2 to all Strength rolls when Breaking Things and Fighting and Throwing damage. This does not stack with other versions of empowered strikes.

✧ **Manite Cannibalizer:** This dangerous implant can supply the character with an emergency boost of steam, at the cost of his own life force. As a free action, the character can activate this implant to add 1d4 Steam Points to his current steam reserve (though no more than his maximum). Use of this implant inflicts 2d4 points of damage to the character. The character uses his base Toughness to resist this damage, ignoring the protection of Armor.

✧ **Manite Girding System:** The character can create a field of mechemagical energy around himself, deflecting moderate amounts of damage. By spending 1 Steam Point as an action, he ignores 2 AP until the beginning of his next turn.

✧ **Reckoning:** The character can take advantage of momentary weaknesses in his opponent's defenses due to powerful divination enchantments etched into his artificial nervous system. He may spend two Steam Points as a free action when making Fighting rolls to get an extra +1d6 damage if the attack hits. The choice to use this implant must be made before the Fighting roll is made.

✧ **Underwater Adaptation:** Due to a series of mechanical gills and underwater maneuvering jets, the character cannot drown in water, moves at full Swimming skill, and get a free d6 Swimming.

Superior Manite Implants

✧ **Chest Cannon:** The character has a light cannon (see Gear section in this chapter) built into his chest. This cannon can be fired at an opponent and uses ammunition normally. The cannon is self-loading, effectively granting the character a free action each round that can only be dedicated toward reloading the cannon. Extra ammunition is stored within a reservoir inside the character's body. The character can load this reservoir with multiple ammunition types, and load from among them at will. Cannon ammunition within the reservoir only contributes one third of its normal weight toward the character's encumbrance. The character can store up to six extra shells within this reservoir, and can reload the reservoir as an action if he has access to cannon ammunition.

✧ **Enhanced Manite Steam Thrusters:** The character can spend 1 Steam Point as an action to *fly*, as per the power, but with the following changes: Duration is 10 (1/round), cannot affect others and cannot spend extra Steam Points to fly faster.

✧ **Environmental Adaptation:** The character can spend 1 Steam Point as a free action to instantly adapt himself to any environment (such as the interior of a volcano, a hostile alternate plane, or the vacuum of space) for one hour as if under the effects of the *environmental protection* power.

✧ **Manite Invulnerability System:** The character can create a field of mechemagical energy around himself, deflecting large amounts of damage. By spending 1 Steam Point as an action, he can ignore 3 AP. This effect lasts for one hour.

✧ **Manite Proximity Sensors:** The character may spend 1 Steam Point as a free action to activate these powerful sensors, granting him the ability to see in complete darkness, negating all darkness penalties up to the maximum of -6. This ability lasts for ten rounds.

✧ **Spell Resistance:** The character gains the Arcane Resistance Edge. This ability can be activated or deactivated as a free action. The character does not receive any additional benefits from the Arcane Resistance Edge if he already has it.

✧ **Steamwrought Frenzy:** When activated, this implant causes the character to release a loud, shrill whistle and glow with mechemagical energy for one round. He must spend 2 Steam Points as a free action and, in so doing, he reduces the Steam Point costs of all activated implants to zero until the beginning of his next turn (he must still take an action to activate them normally). When the effects of this implant fade, the character suffers one level of Fatigue, which automatically improves one step 24 hours after the activation.

✧ **Superior Resistance Generator:** The character may spend 1 Steam Point before making a Soak roll. The generator grants him a special benny that is to be used for the Soak roll only. The character does not need to use his pool of bennies. No other benefits or rolls can be gained from this benny.

✧ **Supreme Empowered Strikes:** The character is reinforced with specialized enchantments that allow him to leverage his Strength more effectively. He gains +3 to all Strength rolls when Breaking Things and Fighting and Throwing damage. This does not stack with other versions of empowered strikes.

✧ **Volcanic Breath:** The character can spend 2 Steam Points to exhale superheated gasses from his mouth in a Cone Template. This molten breath inflicts 2d10 points of fire damage (AP 2) which counts as Heavy Weapon damage. Targets which fail to Dive for Cover are affected and the fire inflicts 2d10 points of damage (AP 2) with the Fire Flammable Trapping and counts as Heavy Weapon damage.

NATIONS OF ADEN

ARAMYST, THE RUINED KINGDOM

*"We have lost everything except our lives.
That is enough for Aramyst to rise again."*

— Jerek of Refuge

GOVERNMENT: No centralized government remains. The only government that presently exists within Aramyst is limited to single-settlement governments, each typically overseen by a mayor or governor.

PREDOMINANT RACES: No race is particularly over- or under-represented in Aramyst.

EXPORTS: Magical items, spellcaster services.

IMPORTS: Foodstuffs.

History

Prior to the advent of the Darkfall, the nation of Aramyst enjoyed more than a thousand years of peace and prosperity. Broadly speaking, this could be said of all modern Aden nations since the Peace of the Rose was established. Unlike the majority of other nations, however, the people of Aramyst took this peace almost as a divine mandate to achieve the pinnacle of culture and sophistication. The pervasive use of magic throughout the country ensured that the people were able to enjoy a pleasant lifestyle without the necessary difficult work that the people of Arasteen indulged in, and without the discrepancy between the nobility and the peasantry that existed within Columbey. Only in Vanora was there a relative similarity in terms of how efficient society functioned, and even then the common folk of Vanora did not have the access to high end cultural activities in the same manner as the people of Aramyst.

It should come as no surprise that a nation with as pervasive an embrace of the arcane as Aramyst was in fact founded by arcane spellcasters. The region that comprises the modern nation was once home to numerous warring factions of nomadic tribe, as much of the continent was in the days leading up to the outbreak of the Great War. Unlike many other regions, however, the bloodlines of these tribes enjoyed powerful magic-using capabilities. Although originally naturally gifted sorcerers and shamans, these individuals sought out others with the same latent gifts and began to teach them, giving rise to a system of instruction in the arcane arts that eventually, in turn, gave way to magic colleges. These institutions have given rise to more advancements in the understanding and practice of magic than any other in Aden over the course of the past one thousand years.

Immediately prior to the meeting at Rose, Aramyst was a region united under the rule of a single, exceptionally powerful wizard. This position, known as High Arcanist, existed only for two generations prior to the Peace of the Rose, meaning that Aramyst was one of the most stable pre-Rose nations in existence. The third High Arcanist was a faerkin named Quintus, a wizard of tremendous power who ignored all stereotypes painting his race as talented but undisciplined in the

magical arts. It was Quintus who participated in the unprecedented meeting that resulted in the Peace of the Rose, and only a short time later, Quintus abolished the position of High Arcanist in favor of a ruling body he created called the Celestial College. A secondary position, Minister of State, was simultaneously created to take care of the day-to-day affairs that did not warrant the Celestial College's attention, but all true authority over the guidance of Aramyst fell to the latter. Quintus remained a member of the Celestial College for some years, perhaps ensuring that it met with his vision for the nation's future, then quietly retired and disappeared from public view. Although his ultimate fate is unknown to history, the name Quintus was celebrated in the halls of the Celestial College right up until the time that the coast of Aramyst was consumed and all members of that august body disappeared, presumably killed in the conflagration.

Throughout its history, Aramyst has largely been a peaceful nation. There have been the inevitable border skirmishes with other regions, primarily with the bandits of the Sundered Desert and occasionally there have been long-distance raids from the High Steppes, but very rarely there have been minor conflicts with neighbors Carraway and Vanora. For the most part, however, Aramyst has avoided large-scale military conflict over the years. What little conflict the nation has endured through its history has typically been internal and small in scale with individual wizards or factions of wizards battling with one another over matters both material and philosophical. Unfortunately, the power commanded by these combatants has ensured that, while the battles were small in scale, the devastation unleashed has occasionally been enormous. Perhaps for this reason, the people of Aramyst have always preferred to resolve their problems through debate and discussion rather than through force of arms or arcane might.

At some point prior to the Darkfall, some particularly brilliant wizard within Aramyst attempted to create a servant race of evolved animals. The process succeeded beyond the wizard's wildest dreams, but unfortunately for the wizard, it also resulted in these animals gaining a much higher degree of intelligence and sentience than anticipated. These animal-men, later to be known as ferrans, rejected servitude and threw off the bonds of slavery less than a century following their creation, resulting in one of the only large-scale conflicts that Aramyst has ever known within its borders. This conflict, the War of the Beasts, which lasted for almost a decade and caused tremendous loss of life within the nation's boundaries, ended with a continent-wide condemnation of Aramyst that included a stigma that took generations to shed.

Lands

The most significant geographical feature of Aramyst is without question the Burning Coast. Once the greatest center of learning and civilization in all of Aden, the entire coastline of Aramyst was consumed in a supernatural conflagration at the moment of the Darkfall, and the unholy flames that consumed it have never abated, rendering a sizeable portion of the country completely uninhabitable by the civilized races. The nature of this conflagration is not understood by the people of modern Aden; in a twist of irony that was perhaps intended by the Darkfall, those best suited to divine its nature and purpose were among those consumed by the fires when they first manifested. The loss of life was great indeed, but it seems that life may literally have been all that was lost. Those who are able to receive enchantments that render them able



to endure the heat and flames have reported that the cities of eastern Aramyst appear to remain completely intact, and only living matter has been consumed by the fire. In the wake of the conflagration, creatures indigenous to or at least well-suited to such fiery environments have taken up residence in the region. Both nocturnals and normal creatures infest the area, and those who have ventured into the region often find that their extensive preparations to endure the heat and fire have failed to prepare them for the threat of the new wildlife occupying the area.

Beyond the easternmost Burning Coast, much of Aramyst is comprised of plains and rolling hills, often dotted by small woodlands here and there. Once, these lands were incredibly fertile and productive, naturally so at first and then later increasingly enhanced by powerful nature magic as dictated by the Celestial College. Unfortunately, most of those capable of maintaining such powerful enhancements were lost during the Darkfall, and those few who remain find their time consumed with protecting the survivors of their ravaged land which has caused the productivity of Aramyst's farmlands to plummet. They remain arable, presumably, but precious little farming takes place due to the lack of natural or man-made defenses against nocturnal attacks in the vast, open plains that make up the majority of the country's center regions. Terrible, sinister predators hunt these lands, almost as if they were guided by some all-seeing malevolence to ensure that the survivors of Aramyst are denied the desperately needed products of the land.

The southern regions of the nation are dominated by the ancient, gentle slopes of the mountains called the Knuckles. These old peaks have stood since the dawn of time, as near as anyone can tell, and unlike the other mountains of Aden, they have been worn down gently, exposing the veins of precious minerals that might once have remained hidden deep within the earth. Mining operations have been conducted within the Knuckles for more than a thousand years, predating even the Peace of the Rose and remaining in place literally up until the day of the Darkfall, although there has been some degree of interruption since that time, obviously. The Knuckles appear to have some of the richest manite deposits outside the borders of Urbana, which is how the nation of Aramyst has maintained a reputation for the creation of enchanted items for so many centuries. It is often speculated by outsiders that the Celestial College divined some means of magically locating manite, a feat that has escaped other nations, and that is how they have maintained such a constant rate of production over the centuries.

The northern border of Aramyst is home to Great Moss Lake, the largest freshwater lake in all of Aden. Despite the lake's enormous size and the incredible variety of wildlife living within it, for much of its history it has been almost completely inaccessible to those who would make a living off of it. The lake takes its name from the thick moss that floats upon much of its surface, a species of plant unique to the lake. This plant, a strange hybrid of moss and weed, seems to flourish in the upper levels of the lake and is capable of movement. The strands seek out anything that moves upon the surface and hopelessly ensnare it, constricting to a degree that individuals or even wooden ships are crushed by it, and then the plant slowly feeds as the dead prey wrapped within it decomposes in the water. This unfortunate situation which had rendered a vast natural resource virtually unusable for centuries was resolved seven years ago when an innovative dwarf named Gentor determined that he would not be defeated by some mindless plant. Gentor's first plan was to utilize a metal-hulled ship, reasoning that the moss-weed would be unable to crush its hull. This proved correct, but the ship was still ensnared for so long that Gentor and his men nearly starved to death aboard their ship before they were finally able to hack their way clear and escape back to port. After this, Gentor was stymied for a time until he noticed that a lightning strike during a storm appeared to stun the weeds into a stupor for a time. Calling on an old acquaintance who was also a mechamage, Gentor purchased the design for prods that could be attached to a ship's hull and that could generate an electrical discharge. After finally securing a crew willing to test his theory, Gentor set out on the lake once more, and this time he had much better results. The prods from his ship stunned the predatory weed, allowing his men to gather it in the nets and then administer a sufficient shock to kill it permanently. Hoping at first to clear the lake, Gentor gathered an entire haul of the dead weed and he returned to shore. It was quickly discovered that the weed was edible, although not particularly flavorful, and Gentor realized he had just discovered the only way a new and inexpensive crop could be gathered. This had a dramatic impact on the surviving settlements of Aramyst, and many survivors now subsist on a diet that includes a tremendous amount of dried moss-weed prepared in a number of different ways.

Culture

Aramyst has always been known for its rich cultural traditions, many of which revolve around scholarly and philosophical pursuits. It is certainly the case that Aramyst's past has often been associated with the greatest endeavors of its citizens. It would be disingenuous to claim that the nation is not without its blemishes, however, for the nation is one with a shadowy undercurrent of blood and oppression.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most significant developments in Aramyst's history was the creation of the ferran race. The ferrans were intended as a step between man and beast, cunning enough and possessed of enough manipulative abilities to undertake physical labor at the direction of a master, but dull enough of wit to be content with servitude. The situation did not develop as anticipated, however, and either as an unforeseen result of their creation or as a result of evolution that occurred within the first few generations, the average ferran was as intelligent as the average member of any other race. The Aramystians did not accept this simple fact, however, and maintained the ferrans as a slave race for almost a century before the inevitable rebellion took place. Up until that time, however, the ferrans were employed in all manner of ways, not the least of which was in public exhibitions. For the entertainment of the masses, they were pitted against one another in mortal combat or against deadly creatures captured or summoned by magic. The conflict between the people of Aramyst and their ferran slaves was short but bloody, and it shamed the nation before the entirety of Aden, resulting in diplomatic and trade sanctions that lasted for the better part of a decade. Up until the Darkfall, ferrans were still treated as something like second class citizens in many of the more developed regions of the country, but the devastation of the past ten years has rendered all men equal in the wake of the greatest disaster the world has ever known.

Major Settlements

All settlements within Aramyst fall into one of two broad categories: relatively minor or completely ruined. Everything that could be called a city stands lost to the forces of the Darkfall, and those which remain were once small villages or other settlements that are now choked and overflowing with refugees from the Burning Coast.

Refuge is the only remaining settlement within Aramyst that could be called a city, and even then only by the most generous standards. Much of the city appears to be very hastily constructed, and for good reason. Ten years ago, in the days leading up to the Darkfall, Refuge was little more than a mining encampment nestled against the base of the mountains known as the Knuckles. When the surviving masses from the coast flooded the area, construction began almost immediately. At first the outskirts of the city became little more than a flimsy shantytown, but as attacks from nocturnals became more frequent, walls were erected and people began to build sturdier dwellings. Within a few months, when even those most fully in the grip of denial began to accept that the situation was not going to change, everyone began to fully contribute to the construction effort. The mining efforts that were once the entire point of Refuge's existence have become a secondary concern, eclipsed by the need for simple survival. However, mining has not disappeared; indeed, with the dramatically larger population the city now possesses, more souls are busily plumbing the depths of the Knuckles than ever before. Every possible scrap of manite is being dredged from the mountains in hopes that enough can be gathered to gain the attention of Lord Urbane and ensure that a Thunder Station is constructed within the city. Thus far, their efforts have not yielded success, but this has only encouraged the Refugees to redouble their efforts.

After Refuge, **Mossburg** is the next largest settlement in Aramyst, but it is not large enough to be considered a proper city. The town's only real claim to fame is that, since the Darkfall, the activities of the ironclad sailing vessels created by the dwarven entrepreneur Gentor are the largest single source of food being produced within the ruined kingdom. Plying a trade on the lake is the primary industry of the town, and there are many who follow the ironclads in much smaller, wooden ships, making use of the temporary window of opportunity to catch other forms of fish from the lake before the moss-weed grows back (which it does very, very quickly). Built on the shore of the lake as it is, Mossburg is more easily defended against nocturnal attacks, or so many believe. This is perhaps partially true, but throughout its history the Great Moss Lake has had many strange creatures dwelling within its unfathomable depths, and they occasionally crawl free of the lake to visit their wrath upon those who dwell within the town. Whether they are nocturnals or mundane creatures, no one is certain, for many of them defy categorization according to modern understanding of zoology.

The village of **Merea** is the nearest settlement to the southern boundary of the Burning Coast, and as such was one of the natural places to which the first survivors flocked when the conflagration took place. Although many later moved on to larger settlements like Refuge and Mossburg, Merea remains several times larger than it was shortly before the cataclysm, and its leaders struggle every day to meet the needs of its denizens. Its distance from Mossburg ensures that precious little of the vital food from that settlement ever reaches them, and for that reason the people of Merea are constantly negotiating with the trading houses of Vanora to the southwest in a desperate attempt to keep everyone fed. The less altruistic trading houses will no longer heed Merea's pleas, having long since grown disgruntled with Merea's constant haggling upon delivery of goods in an attempt to secure lower prices than previously agreed upon. There are similar difficulties in trading for weapons, which Merea always seems to need, but fewer among the Vanorans are inclined to be as generous in that regard.

As Merea marks the southern boundary of the Burning Coast, so does **Lora** mark the northern border. The similarities do not end there, for while Lora remains a great deal larger than it was originally, many

of those who gathered there during the first days after the Darkfall moved west to Mossburg or southwest toward Refuge, while still others fled north across the border into Carraway. The village's much closer proximity to Mossburg ensures that they have a steady supply of dried moss-weed, so much so that there have been attempts to trade the excess with the people of Carraway. Unfortunately, the plant decays rapidly and the lands between Lora and their neighbors to the north are extremely dangerous; these two conditions have kept the burgeoning industry very meager thus far.

The village of **Syldan** marks the western edge of the Burning Coast. It is far smaller than Merea and Lora, although it does have a larger populace than it can easily accommodate. Many of those who arrived after the immolation of the Burning Coast were wounded, some gravely, and the villagers of Syldan have united in their attempts to aid their kinsmen. Syldan was a peaceful and scholarly village, however, and efforts to provide for so many refugees have been extremely difficult.

Military

There is no military to speak of remaining in Aramyst. Each individual settlement has its own guards and defenders, but there is nothing that approaches the level of organization and training necessary to be defined as an army, even within Refuge. Service in to the nation is a mandatory thing in Aramyst, with all able-bodied adults being expected to assist in the defense of their home when an attack takes place. Typically, all but the most essential individuals are required to participate daily in training, patrol, or some other form of defense. Only those whose time is better spent in some other area, such as particularly skilled healers, blacksmiths, or wizards, are exempt from this expectation.

While many other nations have their own champions in the form of different organizations such as the Radiant Order of Arasteen or the Inquisitors of Carraway, Aramyst has nothing of the sort. For this reason, the people of Aramyst depend heavily upon freelancers and adventurers, and individuals of that type tend to congregate within the nation's borders in significant numbers. The promise of treasure taken from the many ruins across the land attracts some, while others operate on a more altruistic standard and seek only to aid those who have lost everything.

Relations with Other Nations

The people of Aramyst depend heavily upon the good will of Carraway and Vanora, the governments of which are willing to offer trade to the various settlements there at a rate lower than they could likely achieve elsewhere. It is this charitable treatment that has allowed the people of Aramyst to survive the past decade, and while they are tremendously grateful to their neighbors, they also fear the day when such charity is forced by pragmatism to take a back seat to more realistic concerns. Arasteen has lent what aid it is able, which has been limited to the assistance of far-roaming members of the Radiant Order simply by dint of the great distance between the two nations.

Conversely, the generally lawless nature of the Rhanate and the High Steppes has ensured that some of the more ambitious among those nations' denizens have taken it upon themselves to prey upon Aramyst. Raids from the Rhanate are much more common, given that the barbarians from the High Steppes have much farther to travel if they wish to plunder in such a manner, but the latter is not unheard of.

The people of Refuge have been attempting for some time to convince Lord Urbane to add their city to the Thunder Trail so recently blazed in eastern Aden, but as of yet they have had little success. The most common theory behind this is that the notoriously cruel and callous Lord Urbane considers there to be nothing of importance worth trading for in Refuge and therefore does not consider the trip a cost-effective endeavor for his precious Thunder Trains.

ARASTEEN, THE RADIANT NORTH

"Before the Darkfall, our land was the most beautiful in Aden. Since that terrible event, Arasteen has only grown more resplendent through the courage and the nobility of its people in the face of hardship."

— Corben, King of Arasteen

GOVERNMENT: Benevolent monarchy (meritocratic succession).

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented, higher number of elves and dwarves.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Foodstuffs, timber, precious minerals.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Manufactured goods.

History

Arasteen has a long and noble history, one remarkable for its general lack of internal conflict; rare is the nation that can claim so little strife among its own people. Although records from before the Peace of the Rose are never particularly detailed, most scholars agree that Arasteen was formed approximately a century before that historical accord was reached. It began as a traditional monarchy, with a royal line chosen from the leaders of the various tribes of nomads who had settled in that region. As a nation, its early history was unremarkable up until the ascension of a man named Tirrian to the throne. Tirrian was an incredibly gifted warrior, and an even more skilled leader, with much of his fifty-year rule seeing incredible advances in Arasteen's culture and society. His greatest achievement, however, is unquestionably the creation of the Radiant Order, an organization that would come to exemplify all Arasteen stands for in the generations to come.

In Tirrian's time, the coast of Arasteen was terrorized by a powerful sorcerer and his minions, raiders who dwelled just off the coast in the

island chain known as the Grey Isles. In a surprise attack, the raiders seized control of the coastal city of Sea Reach and put it to the torch. Tirrian, who was in the area on a hunting expedition, heard of the attack from refugees and quickly gathered warriors to his side. The majority came from his hunting entourage, but he did not turn away any who was bold enough to stand with him, and many poor refugees and fishermen joined him as well. With a considerable force amassed, Tirrian declared the men his knights and issued a royal decree creating the Radiant Order.

The nascent Order's battle with the forces of the sorcerer was extremely bloody, and while Tirrian's knights were successful, the loss of life was staggering. It was at this point that Tirrian recognized that if his knights and the Order were truly to protect the people of Arasteen, they needed not only force of arms, but compassion and healing as well. It was from this realization that the Radiant Order's twin tenets of justice and compassion were eventually crystallized. Tirrian proclaimed that Sea Reach would ever after be his capital, but he refused to construct a palace for himself until all the damage from the battle had been repaired. For more than a year, the king lived among the people in simple fare, and they loved him for it. When Sea Reach was whole again, he constructed a great castle, and adjacent to it, a lighthouse that would serve as a symbol and a headquarters for the Radiant Order.

In the centuries since Tirrian's rule, Arasteen has flourished. Tirrian ended the heredity of the nation's monarchy, instituting a meritocratic means of succession wherein each new king would select his successor by appointing that person to the position of Paladin within the Radiant Order. This ensured that all monarchs would come from the order and thus, in theory, ensure that they would be of a just and virtuous nature. Since the Darkfall, the Radiant Order has assumed more and more responsibility for the everyday lives of Arasteen's people, and the people beyond its borders as well. The tireless efforts of their protectors has ensured that the people of Arasteen have never been more closely knit and supportive of the order's works, but while there are many in other nations who share that same sentiment, there are an equal if not greater number who resent the order's interference even as they benefit from their endless war against the Darkfall and its hellish creations.

Lands

The people of Arasteen hold natural beauty in very high regard and consequently have avoided the sort of industrialization that has so blighted Urbana, their neighbor to the south. Indeed, it could be argued that the first hint of conflict with Lord Urbane began, if not with his usurpation of the throne of Columbey, then with his egregious disregard for the land under his rule. Even in the wake of the Darkfall, much of Arasteen remains remarkably beautiful despite the constant danger of nocturnal attacks.

One of the most noteworthy physical features of Arasteen is the Crystal Forest, enormous woodland in the nation's northern reaches. The Crystal Forest is so named for the crystalwood trees that grow there and nowhere else in Aden. The name is somewhat misleading, for the trees are not of crystal. The wood of these trees is almost supernaturally dense, however, and when harvested (which is an incredibly difficult and painstaking process) it can be crafted into a variety of forms, none so famous as the crystalwood bow. This bow is well known all across Aden as one of the most powerful non-magical weapons an individual can possess. Its range is superior to all but the most advanced and specialized firearms, and the sheer tensile strength of the bow increases its penetration far beyond what one would expect for such a relatively primitive weapon. The value of crystalwood bows and their combat effectiveness is such that Arasteen has long restricted their sale outside the boundaries of the country. The years following the Darkfall have seen their already significant value increase tenfold.

Another of Arasteen's most prominent geographical features is the massive lake called Tirrian's Eye. It is obviously named for the famous monarch who gave rise to the Radiant Order and is the same brilliant blue color as the eyes of those who undergo the ritual to become Templars. Although there are fish aplenty in the crystal clear waters of this lake, it



is not fished, even in the days since the Darkfall. The reason for this is the presence of the slurgithains, a freshwater race of aquatic humanoids whose entire civilization exists on the floor of the lake and within the tunnels that permeate the ground upon which it rests. Relations between the slurgithians and the people of Arasteen can best be described as delicate, and there are constant fears that some small, seemingly innocent action on the part of the people of Sutter's Reach, the largest settlement bordering on the lake, might set the strange beings onto the path of war. Certainly the predations of the Darkfall have nearly brought about that exact fate on numerous occasions, and members of the Radiant Order are often kept on post near the lake to ensure the peace is maintained.

Arasteen's eastern border is defined by the North Wall mountains where they touch the shore of Brissom's Bay. The people of Arasteen care little for working stone, preferring instead to work the soil. Fortunately, the North Wall mountains are home to a large population of dwarves, and indeed the city Top of the World is the very location where the first dwarves to emerge upon the surface world established their beachhead. The region yet holds a significant population of dwarves. Although dwarves are a small portion of the nation's total population, Top of the World is overwhelming dwarven in its make-up, and a vast majority of them are miners, smiths, and metal-workers of all sorts. The mountains hold a variety of metals, primarily precious in nature, but also iron and the rare vein of manite, jealously hoarded for the nation's own use while much of the rest is traded with other countries to secure much needed resources.

Culture

It is impossible to have a discussion concerning the culture of Arasteen without discussing the Radiant Order, the noble order of warriors who have shaped the culture of an entire nation. For almost the entire length of its history, Arasteen has been governed and policed by the warriors and priests of the Radiant Order. In addition to their duties as commanders of armed forces, elite soldiers, and defenders of the realm, the paladins of the order also serve as its primary form of law enforcement and its most prevalent healers. Individual members of the order can be expected to spend their training not only pursuing the arts of war, but also learning the arts of healing and of mediation.

The governance of the Radiant Order, while certainly benevolent, has not always been regarded as ideal by those who find themselves governed. Like all paladins, the members of the order are relatively inflexible in their moral code, and they tend toward pressing that code upon others. During the centuries of the Peace of the Rose, for instance, there was an undercurrent of resentment among a minority of subjects in Arasteen toward the methods of the order, which could be charitably described as interventionist, and less charitably as meddling. As with so much else in Aden, however, the years since the calamity of the Darkfall have seen the people of Arasteen fall utterly in step with the leadership of the Radiant Order, and the individual members of the order are perhaps now more adored by their subjects than they ever have been, historically speaking.

Although the Radiant Order represents the most elite of Arasteen's military and nobility, its membership is not restricted. Indeed, any citizen of Arasteen can join the Order. Most who join, however, discover that the rigors of the work expected of applicants as well as the strict code of behavior that governs all members are such that they are unwilling or unable to continue. Those applicants who are equal to the task comprise the Order's rank and file, each holding the rank of Hospitaler. Hospitalers are essentially squires who assist the higher ranking members of the Order, and who spend a great deal of time learning the healing arts. In what little spare time remains after the completion of their duties, Hospitalers are expected to study the ways of warfare. Those who excel in their studies in both healing and battle are eventually recruited to become Knights.

The Knights of the Radiant Order are the individuals that most imagine when they think of the organization. Prior to the Darkfall, Hospitalers had to be at least twenty years of age before they could be considered to join the Knights, for no other reason but to ensure that

they had received adequate training and practice in the arts of healing and battle. Since the Darkfall, necessity has forced the age limit to be reduced to fifteen, although it is rare for anyone so young to become a Knight. Most Knights have duties that keep them within Arasteen the majority of the time, but there is always a small number of them working beyond its borders to ensure the nation's interests.

Above the rank of Knight, there are the Order's leaders, the Templars. There are precisely one hundred Templars at any given time, and a new Templar can only be appointed upon the death or retirement of one of his predecessors. Unfortunately for the Order, since the Darkfall came to Aden, there have been several instances where Templars have gone missing, and the Order's code prohibits the appointment of a new Templar until the fate of the first can be ascertained. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of available Templars during a time when Arasteen needs them desperately, but King Corben is reluctant to alter the Order's code even given the circumstances. The Templars are the Order's leaders, frequently taking command of Arasteen's militia or navy to ensure success in any battle deemed necessary. They possess the authority to marshal Knights, Hospitalers, and significant national resources as necessary to oppose any threat that endangers Arasteen or its people. A potential entrant into this rank must be nominated by a standing Templar and confirmed by a vote of the existing members of that rank.

The only ranks above the Templars are those of the King, the Queen, and the Paladin. The King and Queen are the absolute rulers of the realm, as discussed previously. The Paladin is the highest ranking member of the Radiant Order, hand-selected by the King to serve as his replacement upon his death or abdication. In this regard, the Paladin is similar to the position of prince. Given that the Paladin is chosen by the King, he enjoys the absolute trust and confidence of his monarch and may act with almost complete autonomy, as his actions are inevitably in the best interests of the nation as a whole.

In terms of culture, the people of Arasteen are generally a very hardy, hard-working sort, spending much of their days in pursuit of their trades, primarily that of farming. There is little time for distractions, but the nature of the government is such that the average citizen has a greater interest in civic matters than those of many other nations. Every settlement larger than a village has an amphitheater, and while they are most frequently used for town discussions of important matters, they are also utilized for orations and performances by a number of traveling actor troupes that frequent the land. These troupes have endured the years following the Darkfall due in large part to King Corben's love of theater.

Major Settlements

Sea Reach is the shining capital of Arasteen and one of the wealthiest cities in western Aden, rivaled only by the city-state of Ionara to the north. As the headquarters of both the Radiant Order and the fledgling navy of Arasteen, the city is exceptionally well protected, ensuring that its citizens have little to fear from the nocturnal attacks that plague so many other settlements in Aden. Sea Reach is home of one of the largest fishing industries in Arasteen, exceeded only by the significant fishing culture along the northern shore, and a great deal of food comes into the city as tithes from the different regions of the nation. In Sea Reach, it is quickly counted and preserved, then re-distributed throughout the country to ensure that the nation's people are not hungry. Indeed, while other cities with sufficient defenses and food often become home to self-entitlement and excess, the people of Sea Reach constantly keep the well-being of their countrymen in mind and work to ensure that they are well cared for. Sea Reach is home to both the Gleaming Palace, home of the nation's king and queen, and the Lighthouse, the headquarters of the Radiant Order and the site of the Paladin's oversight of all interests.

Other than Sea Reach, the largest settlement in Arasteen is **Sylfanus**, a city that sits astride the Bright River, which connects the Blue Floes to the north to Tirrian's Eye in the south. Sylfanus is built within the boundaries of the Crystalwood Forest, and it is home to the largest

population of elves in western Aden. Before their integration into the greater population of Aden prior to the Peace of the Rose, the elves called the Crystalwood their home. More than a thousand years later, however, their way of life has been almost completely integrated into that of the people of Arasteen. Sylfanus is home to one of the two governors who aid their king in administration of Arasteen. Veronus and his wife Syrian are close personal friends of Corben and the queen Moriana. Both the governor and his wife are of ancient elven lineage, and Syrian commands significant arcane might as a result. The entire city they oversee is surrounded by a wall of semi-sentient tree spirits that bar entry to all save those who are granted permission to enter. These enchantments, and many others that protect the city, are maintained by a cabal of wizards operating under Syrian's direction within the Jade Tower that serves as the center of governance within the city as well as the headquarters of the Doom Flyers, an order of griffon-riding soldiers in service to the city and its king.

Although not as large as Sea Reach or Sylfanus, **Top of the World** is by far Arasteen's most profitable city. All mining that occurs in the name of the nation is coordinated from the mountain fortress, overseen by its dwarven masters and their expertise. Governor Drummel, one of the king's most trusted men, is a notoriously surly individual, albeit a gifted administrator. Unlike his king and his fellow governor, he lacks the counsel of a strong wife, for his betrothed was rendered undead by a nocturnal shortly after the Darkfall, and Drummel was forced to end her existence himself. In the decade since, he has not fully recovered, and it seems unlikely that he shall ever again be the jovial, cheerful dwarf he once was. Despite this, he has established his city as a nigh-impregnable fortress that is more successfully defended against the predations of the nocturnals than perhaps any other within Arasteen's borders. Unfortunately, this is not a guarantee of safety for the city's denizens, for the tunnels they carve within the earth are filled with all manner of threats, those spawned by the Darkfall and many natural subterranean ones as well.

The ruins of **Longou** are a stark reminder of one of the innumerable tragedies that took place in the years immediately following the Darkfall, and they are a particularly unpleasant reminder to the citizens of Arasteen as to exactly what fate awaits them if their vigilance wavers. Longou was a large and thriving village that survived the Darkfall largely unscathed due to the industrious nature and sheer determination of its denizens. The acumen of the village's leader allowed them to quickly fortify and defend their home after the initial shock of the catastrophe, and Longou soon became a center for many refugees fleeing smaller settlements that did not survive the Darkfall. Tragically, it was this same absolute faith in their leader that undid the people of Longou. For unknown reasons, the serpent-ferran leader of Longou became corrupted and formed a sinister alliance with the hostile Naga people in the area. His treachery allowed for a devastating attack by the Naga that, in a fit of disastrous consequence, occurred almost simultaneously with an attack by a large force of nocturnals. Virtually everyone within the town was killed in the attack, with perhaps a few dozen out of more than a thousand residents escaping. The king was said to be enraged by the incident and his Templars soon hunted the traitor to ground and presented his head to their monarch, who decreed that his name would never be spoken again by any loyal citizen of Arasteen.

Military

The heart of Arasteen's military is the Radiant Order, as discussed above. The numbers of the order cannot possibly compete with the armies of other nations, however, and therefore it is expected that all able-bodied citizens be prepared to do what is necessary when the occasion arises. The militia of each settlement is unique in organization and training, but it always befits the needs of the city. The men of Sea Reach are trained in the use of cannons to defend the city, while those of Sylfanus prefer stealth and the silent strike of the crystalwood bow. Smaller settlements have more traditional soldiers who train with simple swords and shields. Individual soldiers who demonstrate skill at command and arms may find themselves promoted and may hold the rank of corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, or captain. A captain is usually

the highest ranking member of the militia in an individual settlement, although particularly large cities may have more than one. A captain is considered roughly the equivalent of a knight in the Radiant Order, and while most militiamen defer to the paladins, many of the knights find it wise to heed the counsel of talented and experienced subordinates.

Because of their extensive fishing industry, the people of Arasteen have a navy of sorts, although it lacks the structure of the militia. The ships of Arasteen are small and favor speed and maneuverability. No permanent, large-scale organization exists. Instead, whenever the need arises and ships gather, the captain with the most experience is afforded the right of command. Unique among the nations of Aden, Arasteen's navy also includes a small number of airships, the Dauntless being the first and most famous of them. The resources necessary to keep these vessels in the sky are significant, however, and so they see limited use. Still, the strategic advantage offered by them is such that the king is considering how to add more to the ranks while at the same time fending off numerous attempts by agents of other nations to acquire the plans for their construction.

Relations with Other Nations

The people and rulers of Arasteen are not overly militaristic, and they do not seek conflicts with others. Indeed, it could be said that Arasteen instead actively seeks peace and prosperity for all. However, injustice and tyranny are anathema to the Radiant Order, and as a result, Arasteen presently enjoys tense relations at best with its immediate neighbors to the north and south, Ionara and Urbana respectively. Recent rumors that these two nations have united in a covert alliance greatly trouble those who stand in defense of Arasteen, for they fear that the two will attempt to seize the rich farmlands of the hills for themselves.

Among the common folk of Aden, the people of Arasteen are often seen as saviors, for even before the Darkfall the Radiant Order often sent caravans across the land to lend aid to any who needed it. Among the nation's greatest allies were the rulers of Aramyst, now tragically lost, and the Emperor of Vanora, who remains a friend of King Corben. The nations of Yzeem, Carraway, and the High Steppes are neutral, with the former two more inclined toward Arasteen than the latter. The Rhanate, which did not truly exist as a nation prior to the Darkfall, is something of a wild card, but the Dust King who claims to rule it is a great admirer of King Corben and an ardent detractor of Lord Urbane, which is a comfort to the members of the Radiant Order who must often travel across the sands of the Sundered Desert.

CARRAWAY, HOME OF THE FAITHFUL

"The Saints watch over us and guide us. If we are but true, we will be led to inevitable victory over the scourge of unclean beasts that plague our lands."

— Theocrat Telos

GOVERNMENT: Theocracy.

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented, no particular concentrations.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Stone, lumber, foodstuffs.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Ore and refined metals.

History

Carraway is the oldest of the nations currently existing in Aden, predating the Peace of the Rose by more than two centuries. The eastern region that makes up the country's lands was spared the worst fighting in the Great War that ravaged other parts of the continent for four centuries. The story of the nation begins with the story of a young elven woman who was known for her spirituality and her love of learning.

Named Chandrey, this woman wrote extensively on her thoughts about the existence of spirits who had passed on, a divergent path of the ancient beliefs of the elven people. Constantly refining her theories and beliefs, Chandrey wrote extensively and these writings became very popular with those who read them or heard of them, for the people of ancient Carraway had always believed strongly in the spirits of their ancestors. Almost without intending to do so, Chandrey gave rise to the religion that would come to be called the Church of All Saints, and she was named the Theocrat, highest ruler of the church, by her followers. Humbled by the honor and willing to accept the burden of responsibility, Chandrey began construction of a grand cathedral on the site of an ancient ruin, and both the Church of All Saints and the nation of Carraway were born.

In the sixth century after the Peace of the Rose was established, a dire threat to all of Aden arose in the eastern portion of the continent. A wizard, presumably a native of Aramyst, secluded himself and a handful of assistants in the remote wilderness of the High Steppes where he worked to perfect his dark arts. Even in the enlightened society of Aramyst, certain necromantic pursuits were condemned and forbidden, but this particular individual was certain that he had discovered a path leading to power the like of which none had ever known, and it seemed he was right. The wizard fully embraced necromancy and raised a large number of undead to follow his commands. These forces he used to attack small settlements in the steppes, which only increased the size of his army, and he continued this process in the hidden wilderness of the north until he commanded entire legions. By the time the desperate pleas of the few scant survivors were believed, the necromancer, simply known to most as the Silent One, had begun to invade the northern portions of Carraway as well as portions of the Sundered Desert and even a few remote settlements in Aramyst.

The response from the nations of Aden was swift and unanimous. Even as Aramyst and Vanora were massing their troops, rapid response units arrived from Arasteen and Columbey, and ships bearing Yzeem troops arrived on Carraway's coast. If such a force had been ready when the Silent One began his campaign, his attacks would have ended almost immediately. Unfortunately, the sheer number of undead in his army ensured that the struggle would go on for some time. For the better part of a year, the massed forces of Aden fought against a seemingly endless legion of undead monstrosities. Ultimately, the power of the Aramystian wizards broke the earth itself, shearing it into the now well-known Alabaster Cliffs as they created a natural barrier between the High Steppes and Carraway. Simultaneously, the blessings of the Radiant Order and their allies among the Arbiters of Carraway breached the enemy's defenses and allowed a small, elite unit led by the Theocrat himself to engage the Silent One. The duel between the two men was one that would be told in song for centuries, and in the end, Theocrat Illovich sacrificed himself to destroy the necromancer.

The victory was not without cost. In addition to the loss of the Theocrat, the death spasms of the necromancer and the mysterious ritual he had been conducting created a shockwave of negative energy that washed over large portions of Carraway and the High Steppes. The effect was not immediately obvious, but in the years to follow it became quite obvious: the entire region was cursed with a much greater frequency of undead manifestation than anywhere else in the known world. Even with his dying action, however, Theocrat Illovich did not abandon his people. The forest where the final duel with the necromancer took place is an enchanted woodland. The trees that grow there possess unique qualities, and when weapons utilizing this wood are used against undead, the effect is dramatic. This wood, known as heartwood, is among the most valued commodities in all of Carraway.

Three years after the Darkfall, there was a season of extremely heavy rain that caused the banks of the Thunder River in eastern Carraway to swell significantly. This in itself was cause for concern, but the true effect had yet to be seen; secretly manipulated by a powerful corrupted sorcerer called the Swamp Lord, the bloated river suddenly produced legions of muck-men, violent creatures composed of the mud itself. This army hurled itself against the city of Stone in such numbers and with such violence that the High Arbiter of the city, Hugh Lee, had no



choice but to order an evacuation. This process lasted for two months and was joined by the people of the various surviving villages around Stone. When the caravan of survivors finally reached Karstan, many had perished, and the land east of the Thunder River had all but been abandoned to the nocturnals. That region has remained lost for the better part of a decade despite all efforts to reclaim it, and it is known as the Forsaken Lands. For reasons as yet unknown, it remains one of the most heavily nocturnal-infested regions of Aden, and the situation is further complicated by large numbers of undead which have been a curse on Carraway for centuries before the Darkfall.

Lands

By the standards of most outsiders, Carraway is a bleak and unpleasant place. The general climate ranges from bitter, agonizing cold during the depths of winter to mild during the summer with the majority of spring and summer being significantly cooler than in most other lands in Aden. The lands are hilly and often rocky with sparse vegetation broken by occasional patches of dense forest. The nation is surrounded by natural boundaries; the Thunder Peaks and the coastline beyond form the eastern border, the Alabaster Cliffs separate it from the High Steppes to the North, the Great Moss Lake largely cuts it off from Aramyst to the south, and the Sundered Desert to the west provides the only large point of egress available to those who live within Carraway. It is no surprise that so few denizens of this harsh land choose to leave for other countries; it seems virtually impossible to do so for the common man.

Despite the harshness of the land, Carraway was an incredibly productive farmland prior to the Darkfall. This speaks more to the quality of the men and women working the land than the land itself, but the end result is the same: there was always a surplus that allowed Carraway to trade advantageously with other nations. Since the cataclysm, however, much of the most arable land has been lost to the nocturnals. Still, the people of Carraway are nothing if not determined, and the fact that they have had to adapt new lands to farming has not changed their dedication and effectiveness; Carraway is still able to trade food to the desperate refugees of Aramyst to the south.

Sadly, the most notable feature of Carraway's geography is also the most tragic. The Forsaken Lands have been lost to the forces of the Darkfall for less than a decade, and yet those who have ventured into that region report that the lost settlements show growth more in keeping with twenty years of abandonment. The rapid growth has no known cause, but it is assumed to be linked with the extremely large numbers of nocturnals in that area. Large areas of what was once farmland has been reclaimed by dense, dark forest, much of which suffers from an infestation by the undead. Some scholars believe that something important or linked to the Darkfall may be hidden in this region, and that is why there is such rampant corruption.

Culture

The culture of Carraway is inextricably bound to the beliefs and rituals of the Church of All Saints, the religion to which virtually every citizen of the country belongs. Easily the largest religion in Aden, the Church of All Saints had its origin many centuries before the Darkfall, and it is based upon the writings of one of history's greatest scholars and philosophers, Chandrey. She believed that the spirits of those who lived great lives lingered in the mortal realm and offered their blessing and protection to those who properly venerated them. This philosophy was based upon one of the ancient faiths of the elven people, one abandoned thousands of years ago but still studied among the race's scholars. The central belief of the church, refined from Chandrey's writings after more than one thousand years, is that the spirits of the dead remain near to the mortal world, and when afforded reverence and worship, they gain power and can offer their guidance to the living. The process of canonization, which is what formally elevates a departed soul to the position of Saint, is conducted by the ranks of the clergy, who are both the leaders of the Church of All Saints and the leaders of the nation of Carraway.

The pantheon of Saints is a large one, with dozens of individual Saints having been recognized over the course of Carraway's history. Individual members of the Church each choose a single Saint whose life and deeds they respect above others, and take that Saint on as their patron. Citizens often sew the symbol of their patron Saints into their clothing and display it in their homes, which serves both as a reminder of the heights to which they aspire as well as a means of protecting themselves against the darkness and evils of the world. The day of a Saint's canonization is a day of celebration for those who regard him or her as a patron. Some of the most common patron Saints include:

✧ *Albrecht, the Saint of Justice* – While Chandrey was the founder of the Church and was its first Theocrat, it was the fourth Theocrat, a dwarf named Albrecht, who truly brought civilization to Carraway. When he came to power, much of modern Carraway was rife with bandits and lawlessness. It was Albrecht who created the holy knights of the Church and established the organization they still use today. The national boundaries of Carraway were formalized by his efforts, and upon his death, his successor's first act was to canonize him as the Saint of Justice. Albrecht is celebrated as a patron by more citizens than any other Saint.

✧ *Deighan, the Saint of Wits* – A popular Saint among the common folk of Carraway, Jon Deighan was a dwarven farmer who lived in the northern reaches, near the High Steppes. The region where Deighan lived was plagued by raids from Rhalak, a notorious warlord of that barbarous land. Each winter, Rhalak descended into Carraway's farmlands to prey upon the people there and escape the more severe winters in the north. The people despised Rhalak, but only Deighan constantly outwitted the warlord. His deceptions and trickery constantly robbed the bandit king of his intended targets, and tales of his exploits have become something like fables to many. It is said that Deighan was one of the only living beings that the bloodthirsty Rhalak truly respected.

✧ *Illovich, the Saint of Sacrifice* – Another of Carraway's Theocrats, several of whom have become Saints, Illovich was a rapacious who led the Church centuries ago during the rise of the undead plague that threatened all of eastern Aden. It was his courage and sacrifice that saw the Silent One defeated, and that created the sacred forest where heart-

wood grows. Unlike that of most Saints, the day of Illovich's canonization is regarded as a day of mourning.

✧ *Leera, the Saint of Music* – Leera Melodan was an elf from St. Lucca who was regarded as the greatest musician of Aden's Golden Age. Legends hold that her ballads could quiet a riotous crowd, and her dirges could bring the strongest of men to tears. Her canonization is something of a controversy, as she was finally made a Saint only a few years prior to the Darkfall, but her death is undocumented. Her bloodied harp was discovered in the wilderness, but her body was never found, and as she is an elf, it is possible that she is still alive even a century later.

In addition to the Church having an impact on the culture of Carraway, it is also its governing body. The Theocrat is head of both the Church and the government, and he is supported by an organization of clergy that serve both as religious leaders and organizers of the nation's bureaucracy. The Theocrat, currently a ferran named Lara Telos, rules from the capital of St. Chandrey, and has Chancellors who advise her in all matters. Presently, the Church has a Chancellor in each of the areas of Faith, Security, and War. The Theocrat and Chancellor rule the capital, but each of Carraway's other cities, Sentinel, Karstan, and St. Lucca, are overseen by a High Vicar. Within a given city, an individual district may be appointed its own Vicar at the High Vicar's discretion if he deems it necessary for the benefit of the people.

Realistically, Vicars are the highest ranking members of the clergy that an individual citizen can easily access. They act much as city councilmen or village elders might be expected to act in a non-religious government. In settlements smaller than cities, Magistrates fill these roles. A Magistrate is the authority in a smaller settlement, much as a mayor might be elsewhere, and is also given authority over any and all military assets stationed in an individual settlement. Some Magistrates who recognize they lack military experience appoint others to oversee such affairs. These individuals are generally referred to as Marshals, although the name can sometimes vary depending upon the traditions of an individual settlement.

Major Settlements

Carraway was never a particularly urbanized area of Aden. The cities within its borders are very old, most predating the Peace of the Rose by a significant period of time. The industrialization that is so common in the west is almost completely absent from Carraway. There are no factories, and very little metal is used in the creation of most buildings. Stone and wood are the materials of choice, and individual craftsmen are still the most common source of goods.

The capital city of **St. Chandrey** is named for the founder of the Church and of Carraway as a whole. She essentially founded the city when she ordered the creation of the massive Cathedral of All Saints, which makes up the center of the city. The ruins over which the Cathedral were built are one of Aden's most enduring mysteries, and prior to the Darkfall there was a perpetual rotation of scholars from Aramyst investigating for any hint of the ruins' original purpose, although nothing conclusive was ever discovered. The Cathedral is not only a place of reverence, but is also a fortress as well as the center of government. The Theocrat and her Chancellors are headquartered within the Cathedral, and it is the central base for the nation's military as well. During the Darkfall, the Cathedral was besieged by a massive force of nocturnals, but it endured and the horde was repelled. The damage done to the church took years to repair, however. In addition to its religious, bureaucratic, and military importance, St. Chandrey is also home to a large number of Carraway's greatest artisans. The stone masons and bowyers in particular are well organized and hold a reasonable amount of political power. Both guild members and independent artisans ply their wares in the city's Grand Bazaar, and it is not uncommon to find a large number of foreigners circulating there, looking for the best prices on the famous Carraway crossbows and other such items.

Karstan is a city on the brink of disaster. When the survivors from the lost city of Stone, those who participated in the so-called "Karstan Death March," reached civilization, it was within Karstan's walls that

they took shelter. Unfortunately, the enemies pursuing them did not abandon their pursuit, and although the Swamp Lord and his forces were repelled, the sorcerer's curse had a seemingly permanent effect upon Karstan. Fully half the city has been reclaimed by nature and is partially submerged within a nocturnal-infested swamp. This portion of the city has been walled off, but it is difficult to maintain the barrier. The city is also well known because its High Vicar, a radiant elven woman named Estable Rewn, is generally believed to be the next Theocrat, due both to her centuries of experience and her close friendship with the present Theocrat. Despite Karstan's hardships, it has a relatively booming economy due to the efforts of the Perth Trading House, a dwarven-owned enterprise which operates numerous caravans throughout Carraway and south into Aramyst.

The city of **St. Lucca** has a rather storied past. In Carraway's history, the campaign of the fourth Theocrat, Albrecht, is what unified it into a true nation. During this campaign, Albrecht came up against many bandit lords and defeated them all. One among them, however, formed a close friendship with the knight and instead joined his ranks. Dell Lucca, a jurak, aided Albrecht in gaining the allegiance of other bandits and in defeating those who would not join. Upon his death many years later, he was canonized as Lucca, the Patron of Allegiance, and a city that was in the planning stages was named in his honor. Modern St. Lucca has developed into a vital source of food production for post-Darkfall Carraway, both in terms of raising crops as well as large herds of livestock. The majority of the city is devoted to this industry, and protecting both crops and livestock from nocturnals is an extremely difficult task that consumes the attention of virtually the entire city. Although he has never confirmed his true feelings, many can easily tell that High Vicar Rak Lucca, a descendant of the city's founder, is greatly frustrated with the constant attrition among his city's defenders.

The city of **Sentinel** was founded as a means of stopping the attacks from raiders from the High Steppes to the north. Due to that, it was constructed with military purposes in mind, and it fared better than any other city in Carraway when the Darkfall occurred. The city's High Vicar, a goeaux named Verabus, is a wise and just ruler who has a more militaristic mind than most other clergy. For many years he has advocated the construction of a wall that would completely separate the two nations by cutting off the fifty-mile wide natural ramp that is the only passage between them. The response to this notion from the High Steppes has been decidedly hostile, and so far the High Theocrat has politely declined each time Verabus has brought the matter up.

Military

Two separate military bodies protect Carraway. The first is the militia, which is structured much the same as it is in most other modern countries. Carraway's population has not suffered as much as some other nations, and as a result not every citizen is expected to train with the militia. Those whose duties aid their kinsmen, whether as farmers or essential craftsmen, are excused from such duties. Still, most citizens recognize the necessity of strong self-defense skills, and in smaller settlements virtually everyone is proficient with at least one kind of weapon.

The fourth Theocrat organized a military arm of the Church, members of which are commonly referred to as knights or, for those with potent spellcasting abilities, clerics, to assist in the defense of its people against bandits and barbarians. Citizens who are so inclined may petition a Magistrate or Vicar for entrance into the knighthood. Those who succeed at tests of virtue, wisdom, and strength of arms are admitted to the ranks of the military as Watchmen, who assist in the defense of their home region. Watchmen who serve for a period of at least a year may advance to the rank of Arbiter of they are deemed worthy by their superiors. Arbiters are granted an allowance to purchase weapons and armor of superior quality and which are customized to suit the individual. Arbiters are given assignments that take them all over the nation and frequently beyond its borders.

After serving as Arbiters, knights may advance into higher ranks where their duties take on more tactical and administrative aspects.

The first of these is the Justice. A Justice oversees units of Arbiters and Watchmen. Justices are often the highest ranking knights found outside of Carraway's cities. After Justice comes the rank of Judge. Judges track down the corrupted and dangerous criminals. Denizens of western Aden often associate their duties and their severe demeanor with the Inquisitors of the Eye in Urbana, which is one of the reasons that they are sometimes called inquisitors by outsiders. Although many knights of Arbiter rank and above are known for their proficiency with the exquisite crossbows common to Carraway, Judges are more often associated with the Justice Sword, a terrifying, serrated blade meant to cripple opponents so that they can stand trial, although Judges are empowered to conduct executions in the field as necessary.

The only rank above that of Judge is Master Arbiter, of which there are only three. A Master Arbiter oversees all military and judicial matters within each of Carraway's three major cities outside of St. Chandrey, working hand in hand with the High Vicars of those cities. Technically the High Vicars outrank the Master Arbiters, but Master Arbiters are often shown a great deal of deference by those individuals in recognition of the incredible experience and skill they must have displayed in order to reach such a rank.

Relations with Other Nations

Carraway is a very insular nation, shaped very much by the history of raids from the Sundered Desert to the west and the High Steppes to the north, not to mention the national boundaries created by geography. The Church has always had polite relations with Aramyst and Vanora to the south, although socially they have vastly different beliefs and are disdained for their decadent or misguided philosophies. Arasteen is the one country that the people of Carraway truly respect, and members of the Radiant Order often visit to collaborate with the Arbiters and Inquisitors of the Church. Carraway does not hold the nation of Urbana in the same disdain that many others do because they understand the harsh necessities of life in the era after the Darkfall. The presence of a Thunder Station within their borders has only increased their acceptance of Lord Urbane's harsher policies.

THE HIGH STEPPES, REALM OF THE LAWLESS

*"The High Steppes are not so much a nation,
but rather a land no other nation wishes to claim."*

— Emperor Dyok of Vanora

GOVERNMENT: Feudal Warlord.

PREDOMINANT RACES: Higher than average population of jurak, low numbers of elves and faerkin.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Mercenary forces.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Manufactured goods, raw materials.

History

The High Steppes is the youngest nation in Aden, and some vigorously argue that it is not a nation at all; rather, it is a land where the law of other nations has failed to be implemented properly. Regardless of whether or not this is true has become largely academic in the years since the Darkfall, when points of political clarification have become increasingly unimportant in the face of mere survival.

The people of the southern High Steppes, known as the Kurzaks, are among the oldest cultural groups still existing in modern Aden. As a group, they do not have a great deal of written history, but instead they depend upon a storytelling style of oral history intended to preserve the great deeds of their people. Hyperbole is the rule with these oral histories, of course, but if there is a kernel of truth to be believed in



their tales, then at one point the vast forests that dominate the eastern and western portions of the Kurzak lands contained gateways to other worlds. The trickster beings that emerged were the foils for many great Kurzak heroes, or so the stories tell. The stories also mention that the tricksters, whose descriptions bear great resemblance to many types of fey creatures known to citizens of modern Aden, took wives and brides from enchanted Kurzaks, creating a mischievous race of “forever children” that were despised among Kurzak society. This is the only real inkling as to the origins of the faerkin race, and the veracity of it is highly questionable, but it does at least explain the cultural bias against that race within the boundaries of the High Steppes.

Throughout history, the people of the High Steppes have never willingly submitted to the rule of a single individual. The region did not become a nation, or an approximation that was accepted as a nation, until several centuries after the Peace of the Rose. Even then, the region was not governed in anything resembling a traditionally accepted manner. The most powerful warlords of the entire region, individuals bearing the title of Kazan, came together to stop the constant fighting among themselves so that they could stop merely surviving and begin to genuinely profit from their enterprises. This took place roughly a decade following the defeat of a necromancer who laid much of the High Steppes and portions of Carraway to waste in his bid for power, and perhaps the Kazans realized what could be accomplished by working together when they saw the armies of the other nations fighting against the endless waves of undead. One among the Kazans was deemed to be the Grand Kazan, and he was tasked with maintaining relations with other nations. The other nations of Aden, eager to be rid of the threat of steppe raiders, acknowledged the existence of the High Steppes as a sovereign country, then promptly were disappointed when the Grand Kazan proved unwilling or unable to regulate the activities of his people. In less than a generation, the position of Grand Kazan ceased to have any meaning and was often unfilled, leaving the High Steppes without any sort of recognized ruler. This state persisted until the Darkfall occurred.

In the wake of the Darkfall, chaos reigned in the High Steppes. The nation's general lack of organization was such that it was unable to defend itself in many instances, and entire settlements were washed away in a tide of darkness and violence. The many Kazans of the region suffered as their people did. In some instances, they died not at the hands of nocturnals, but at the hands of their own subordinates; Kazan

Lilith rose to power in this manner. When the attacks finally lessened in their intensity, Lilith sent word to the only two other Kazans to survive the attacks, a vicious human bandit named Tovar and a brutal jurak warrior called Mikal, requesting a meeting. The three came together in a historic meeting and agreed that unity was the only hope of survival. They also agreed that one among them must hold the highest authority. Lilith herself, with a well-deserved reputation as a manipulator, preferred to remain behind the scenes and out of the public eye. Neither Tovar nor Mikal was willing to submit to the other, however. It seemed that a civil war was in the offing until Lilith suggested a traditional Kurzak joust. Mikal, vastly larger and more powerful than his rival, readily agreed. Tovar was far more cunning than the others recognized, however, and utilized a thunder-lance in the duel. The weapon had not been seen in the High Steppes at that point, and Mikal had no inkling as to its abilities. He was easily unseated by the powerful weapon, and Tovar became the first Grand Kazan of the High Steppes, a position he would hold for ten years, at which point the three would meet again and determine who would rule for the next ten years.

Lands

The High Steppes is generally an inhospitable environment, which may explain why the region was never claimed by other nations early on during Aden's history. The climate varies from unpleasant to downright dangerous, the wildlife can be exceptionally deadly, and the flora is either unremarkable or at best bland and unexciting. In ages past, the entire region was subdivided into countless small fiefdoms according to the strength of arms of the warlords controlling it. Since the post-Darkfall truce among the Kazans, however, the entire nation has been divided into three provinces based largely upon geographical features.

The southernmost province is Kurzak, so named for the culture of people who have historically called the region home. The Kurzak province is home to the capital city of Bulgrak and is the domain of Grand Kazan Tovar. The region contains large forests in the east and west, split in the center by a wide plain and the Meander River. The river is an important source of food, and much of its length has fertile rice paddies dotting the landscape. As the plain sweeps south, it descends in a fifty-mile wide natural ramp that is the only easy source of egress from the High Steppes into Carraway and the Rhanate to the south. Historically the Kurzak region has been home to the most notorious and bloodthirsty of the Steppes' raiders. The western forest of the province is heavily populated with game, including the legendary steppe boars, but the nocturnal population is likewise heavy, and as a result hunting is a dangerous proposition. In the east, the forest that Kurzak shares with Yprom to the north is notorious throughout eastern Aden for its population of lycanthropes and fey creatures, both of which predate the Darkfall by many generations. While this has helped keep the number of nocturnals in the forest under control, it has not made the forest any more hospitable for outsiders.

The northwestern province is Trace, home of Kazan Mikal. It is the coldest of the regions by far and rivals northern Arasteen or even Ionara in terms of climate. Frost remains on most of the evergreen trees much of the year, and the White Forest of this region takes its name from it. Much of Trace is separated from the rest of the Steppes by mountains, and Kazan Mikal has taken advantage of this to ensure that his province is the only one with consistent mining taking place. Because of the climate, farming is difficult, but fortunately Trace is the only portion of eastern Aden where anials, a leafy vegetable normally only found in Ionara, grows in abundance, and it is the staple of most denizens' diets. Trace also boasts the only significant population of ice-elves in Aden outside of Ionara, although they are relatively few in number.

The northeastern province of Yprom is considerably different from its neighbors. It is cold there, although not as severely so as in Trace, but due more to the constant gloom than anything else. For reasons most can only ascribe to supernatural causes, there is often dense fog and cloud cover in Yprom, making even the brightest day relatively dim. This renders farming a difficult proposition, but there are hardy species of pumpkin and certain kinds of squash that flourish despite the circumstances, and so many of the dependable common folk of the region

maintain farms as they did before the Darkfall, albeit with significantly greater risk. Despite Yprom's significant coastline, fishing is not extensive in the region, owing largely to the deadly aquatic predators native to the region as well as the tendency for the fish caught to have certain deformities that render them unpalatable to most.

Culture

The people of the High Steppes are a hardy, traditional sort; that their traditions are misunderstood or unappreciated by virtually everyone else in Aden is not something that concerns them in the least. There are two separate cultural groups within the region, generally separated into the colder northern regions and the more arid southern provinces. Both have strong warrior traditions, but they vary somewhat in many other areas.

The southern part of the nation, currently known as the Kurzak province, has historically been home to a cultural group also known as the Kurzak. Skilled horsemen who are notoriously inclined toward banditry, the Kurzaks are the primary reason that the High Steppes have such a questionable reputation among other nations. Originally a nomadic culture, the Kurzaks eventually settled into small settlements all across the region. Individuals of Kurzak descent are notoriously proud and stubborn, and they are not particularly inclined to change their ways unless no other course is available... and sometimes not even then.

The people who have historically lived in the northern regions of the Steppes have no identifying name as do their neighbors in the south. They have some distinct physical differences, notably a paler hue to their skin and eyes that are slightly more slanted than others. These differences have caused some scholars to speculate that this group began as exiles from the lands currently making up Vanora; this theory is supported by records indicating that the first Emperor drove out those who would not join his banner, and that the outcasts traveled north in search of a new home. The northerners also have a longstanding tradition of bandit activity, but historically they have not delighted in violence, mayhem, and mischief in the same way as the Kurzaks. Instead, the northerners seemed to regard their violence as a matter of honor and pursued anyone who had proven himself an enemy to the ends of the earth to exact brutal vengeance. As might be expected, the bandits in the north eventually died out as they either perished at the hands of a superior enemy or gradually retired to lives of luxury with their ill-gotten gains.

The modern High Steppes, such as it is, has not changed as much as might be expected. The Kazans rule the country with an iron fist, and delegate authority only to others who exemplify the philosophy that "might makes right." Typically, this takes the form of a caste called the Bagyards. The Bagyards are essentially families that possess both the wealth to purchase a Kazan's favor and the strength of arms to maintain dominion over that which the Kazans grant them. Every Bagyar controls a specific region, either a section of the countryside or, for the wealthier and more influential families, an entire village or city district. The region controlled by a Bagyar is known as a voyetra, another word from the ancient dialects of the Steppes. Each Bagyar typically also employs a number of mercenaries as enforcers known as Wachovs, and these individuals replace the need for a common militia as described elsewhere in the description of the Steppes' military traditions.

The common folk of the Steppes are known as thralls, and they long ago accepted oppression as their lot in life. Indeed, many of them have never known any other kind of life, and the only difference in the post-Darkfall world is that they now are more grateful to have an oppressive warlord rule them because he or she is more likely to protect them from nocturnals than to ignore them. Thralls are typically fiercely loyal to their friends and family regardless of circumstances. They band together instantly to face threats of nocturnal attack, and although they do not openly defy their lords in civil matters, as soon as an oppressor has departed, the community will come together to aid any who suffered under their boot heels. For their part, the Kazans and the Bagyards understand that the people of the Steppes are proud, strong, and not above revolt, and they temper their excesses accordingly.

Celebrations in the Steppes are rare but lavish affairs, for the rulers understand that a little merriment goes a long way toward mitigating regular oppression. Harvest time and the coming of spring are each celebrated with a week-long festival, and a Bagyar typically allows births or weddings to be celebrated with at least a day of merriment in the voyetra it controls.

Major Settlements

The capital of the High Steppes, **Bulgrak** is also its southernmost and most notorious city. In ages past it was a mere hideout for bandit raiders who plagued the nations to the south, but over the centuries it has grown into a true city, particularly in the years since the Darkfall and Kazan Tovar's selection of it as the seat of his power. Very recently, it has also become a major center of commerce for the entire region due to Urbana's establishment of a Thunder Station within the city. It has not been lost upon the other Kazans that Tovar now has a distinct advantage when it comes to trading within the country as well as without, but there is little that can be done with it; the situation has not lessened Mikal's resolve to supplant Tovar in the next meeting.

Although it is not as influential as Bulgrak, **Synthacia**, also called the Wicked City, is its equal in size. It also is home to a sizeable amount of trading and commerce, given that it is a port city, and virtually all trade with Mikal's city of Vochny takes place here in an attempt to avoid the prying of Tovar's spies. Kazan Lilith, also known as the Black Sorceress, rules from her sinister palace, the Groaning Keep, overlooking the Bay of Blood; surely there are few places in Aden with such sinister appellations! Rumors that Lilith is corrupted abound, but it is not clear whether there is truth to these rumors, or if they stem from the simple fact that she permits all manner of dark sorceries that were once banned to be practiced within her domain. There is no greater concentration of necromancers or occultists anywhere in Aden, and there are surely many corrupted who conceal themselves among the ranks. On one rare instance when Lilith deigned to speak concerning these policies to outsiders, she commented that it did not matter to her if nocturnals were slain with steel or with summoned undead, as long as they were eradicated from her domain. This seems to have quieted all but her most ardent critics. What few outsiders recognize is the extent to which Lilith has extended this policy. There is a large population of intelligent undead, vampires the most numerous among them, living within Synthacia. As long as they assist in the defense of the city and do not act against Lilith's subjects in a harmful manner, she permits them to remain, going so far as to sentence criminals who violate her laws to contribute to her vampire citizens an amount of blood commensurate with the offense. As one might imagine, the level of crime in Synthacia is extremely low. Among her other highly questionable talents, Lilith is an accomplished mechatmage, and her city is home to the most advanced steam technology in the High Steppes.

Vochny is the smallest of the three provincial capitals in the High Steppes, and perhaps the most inaccessible. The city sits atop a high cliff overlooking the sea, and the docks constructed to conduct trade with outsiders are upon the seashore far below. Travel between the docks and the city takes a number of hours of arduous hiking on steep cliff-side trails, and most choose to remain in the small cluster of buildings around the docks, unimaginatively named Docktown. Despite its smaller size and lack of undead defenders, Vochny remains exceptionally well defended, owing to Kazan Mikal's militant nature and complete refusal to tolerate weaklings among his ranks. Only children and the elderly are not expected to be able to defend themselves in the event of an attack, although honestly the strength of arms of the Iron Order renders such a possibility extremely unlikely. Perhaps as an outgrowth of this philosophy, faerkin and goreaux are not as welcome within the city as in other places, although the latter are tolerated if they have skills in mechatmagic or gunsmithing. In addition to its other interests, Vochny is home to the only mines in the High Steppes. The dwarves and jurak of the region have had their natural talents for stone well exploited by their Kazan, and Mikal has invested in the development of mechatmagical technologies as well. While the resources of ore and metals are freely traded with Synthacia, very little of it makes its

way south toward Bulgrak. Mikal anticipates becoming Grand Kazan in the next duel and does not wish to supply his rival with anything that might give him an advantage.

Military

There is no national military force within the High Steppes. Each individual settlement is expected to defend itself, in keeping with the general attitude of the people in the Steppes. Each individual settlement maintains its own force, both to defend its cities and to ensure that it cannot be attacked by outsiders (or by the other Kazans). Depending upon the preferences of the individual warlords, they may be willing to lend their personal forces to protect the settlements within their domain; Kazan Mikhal in particular is prone to doing this, while Kazans Tovar and Lilith prefer to conserve their forces until opportunities to strike back at the nocturnals present themselves. Regardless, according to the traditions of the Steppes, each of the Kazans maintains his own order of warriors.

Kazan Tovar's military arm, the Order of the Lance, is the largest. The majority of Tovar's champions are former bandits, many of whom served him in the years before his ascension. As can be gathered from the name, the Order of the Lance is predominantly a cavalry force, which Tovar prefers both for its speed and the potency of its attacks. Other components of the order exist, of course, but the majority of its ranks are comprised of heavy cavalry.

If Tovar's force is the largest, Kazan Lilith's is certainly the smallest. The ominously named Dark Order contains a disproportionately large number of spellcasters, including wizards, sorcerers, priests, and virtually any other sort of individual capable of utilizing magic in the name of his dark lady. The Dark Order favors tactics that employ deception, subterfuge, and sabotage, among many other unsavory means of achieving victory. When not employed in military roles, many members of the Dark Order serve Lilith as a sort of secret police, ensuring that her other vassals are not plotting treachery against her.

The Iron Order of Kazan Mikal is the best organized and most effective of all the High Steppes military groups. The order is largely heavy infantry, and Mikal prefers to employ only the most ruthless of troops; feral jurak, bestial ferrans, and scarred raiders are among his favorite troops, but anyone with sufficient bloodlust will be accepted. Mikal mitigates their violent tendencies by permitting them to patrol his province at the discretion of their officers, so long as a certain minimum number of defenders are present in his home city of Vochny. The Iron Order is the only military group in the High Steppes to make significant use of firearms, as they favor arquebuses and the like.

Relations with Other Nations

Like Kyan in the west, the High Steppes engages in very minimal trade with other nations. Individual settlements have traders and merchants who may travel south to Carraway, the Rhanate, or even the ruins of Aramyst to conduct trade for things that are required, but for the most part, commerce in the High Steppes is an internal matter. Trade with other nations is limited largely to the nation's cities which are, of course, overseen by the three Kazans. Kazan Tovar in particular is a tremendous supporter of Lord Urbane of Urbana, and this likely has a great deal to do with the placement of a Thunder Station in the city of Bulgrak. Other than this notable relationship and a handful of alliances with specific bandit groups operating out of the northern Rhanate, the High Steppes have no particular diplomatic ties to other nations. Relations between the Dust King of the Rhanate and Kazan Tovar are cool because of their disagreement with regard to Lord Urbane (the Dust King is an enormous detractor of the Iron Tyrant), but other than that, trade between the Rhanate and the Steppes is regular and profitable. The raiders who descend from the Steppes have preyed upon the nations of Carraway and Aramyst for generations, and as might be expected, natives of the Steppes are not received warmly in those regions.

IONARA, THE KINGDOM OF ICE

*"The only things colder than the Ice Wastes
are the hearts of those who live upon them."*

— Common saying among the fishermen of Arasteen

GOVERNMENT: Monarchy.

PREDOMINANT RACES: High population of elves and humans, notably few rapacians.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Diamonds.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Foodstuffs, metal.

History

As is so often the case with the history of nations, the story of Ionara's founding begins with the story of a single man, an elven expatriate named Ionarus. Ionarus had been cast out from the elven kingdoms in the waning days of those empires some time before the Peace of the Rose was established. He spent two hundred years after the accords were established developing the alchemical secrets that would permit him to survive in the harsh northern ice plains that were as of yet completely undeveloped. Gathering his extended family to him, Ionarus set sail for the frozen north, convinced that there was vast wealth to be had there if one could but master the secrets of survival.

In the ice plains of the north, Ionarus discovered that his suspicions were not only correct, but that he had drastically underestimated the bounty of the land. Although the lands were frozen, it seemed that in the ancient past they had been subjected to tremendous heat and pressure, for the ground beneath the ice was rife with diamonds. Using the warmth-radiating hearthstones he had created, Ionarus quickly established a small settlement for his family and, using his powerful magic, began extracting the diamonds from the soil beneath the ice using his powerful magic. The first few months were difficult, and some among his family perished, but the hearthstones kept the rest safe, and when they took their first shipment of diamonds back to the mainland, they all quickly became wealthy beyond their wildest dreams. They hired servants and recruited vassals, and their small settlement quickly began to grow. Within a year of their first successful shipment, those who had proven themselves to Ionarus had swollen his family's settlement to a village with their own hearthstone-warmed dwellings. Within a decade, it had become a city.

The line of Ionarus has ruled the nation he founded without interruption in the time since its inception. The family's rule has been marked not only by tremendous prosperity, but also by the severity of their condemnations: all who have presented themselves as potential enemies to the throne have been dealt with in an exceptionally harsh and brutal manner, ensuring that there has never been any significant threat to the ruling family's reign. Ironically, this tendency has created one of the kingdom's most enduring threats. The monarch of Ionara has, over the course of centuries, exiled hundreds of individuals from the sanctuary of its cities. In many cases, these individuals perish quickly when robbed of the life-saving power of the hearthstone. In others, the exiles are able to secure transport south to the mainland where they are able to make their way in a more hospitable world. In some cases, however, the exiles survived and managed to eke out an existence in the frozen wilds of the ice plains. These individuals have in many cases banded together with others, usually criminals and various other ne'er do wells, to create groups of nomadic raiders known as snowmads. For much of Ionara's history, the snowmads have been as much a threat to one another as to the well-defended settlements, but that too has changed.

Approximately twenty years ago, a dwarf named Berig served in the Ice Fleet. For reasons that remain undisclosed, he was stripped of his rank and exiled. Unfortunately for Ionara, Berig was among the most



resourceful of his kingdom's officers, and he commanded great loyalty among his men. Many followed him and, with their help, the dwarf managed to smuggle several hearthstones from the city as well. He and his group, known throughout Ionara as Berig's Marauders, have sworn to put all of Ionara to the torch, and they have spent more than two decades in earnest effort toward achieving that goal. In addition to the sleighs and sleds that the Marauders use to traverse the ice between their hidden stronghold of caves and tunnels and the cities they prey upon, they also control a number of small ships, mostly constructed by Berig himself. It is commonly believed in Ionara that Berig is corrupted, but it is not known whether or not this is merely a way of further painting the exile as a villain by the royal family.

Since the Darkfall, Berig's Marauders are no longer the only significant threat to Ionara's wellbeing. Another group of snowmads called the Leopard Clan has begun attacking any caravan or group small enough to be vulnerable. Inevitably, these attacks result in great loss of life and considerable collateral damage for the Ionarans. It seems that the Leopard Clan revels in destruction for its own sake, taking whatever it can and gleefully destroying the rest. The clan is led by a ferran who calls himself Gnasher, an individual who, by the few surviving accounts, is quite obviously corrupted.

Other than the increased threat of snowmads as a result of corruption, the Darkfall did not impact the people of Ionara as severely as it did others. The natural boundaries of the region, combined with the defenses the cities have always had against both natural predators and snowmads, ensured that the only nocturnal threat that presented itself was in the form of those predators who manifested inside the city walls. Many lives were lost, but the damage to the city and its defenses was fortunately kept to a minimum.

The present ruler of Ionara is Kryanix, also known as the Ice Queen. A direct descendant of Ionarus, Kryanix has ruled for nearly three centuries, and in that time has developed a well-deserved reputation for being as cold and as unfeeling as the ice that makes up her realm. During her childhood, Kryanix's younger sister was lost in a terrible accident that swept the toddler away in the river beneath the city. The queen's detractors enjoy speculating that, even as a child, she killed her sister, but the truth is that she was nowhere near the incident when it occurred. Instead, her parents' grief over their loss caused them to isolate Kryanix more and more, ostensibly for her protection. Her parents' overreaction only caused their daughter to develop emotional distance from others, which has characterized her rule. The Ice Queen was married once, and bore her husband two sons, but her consort was killed more than a century ago in a snowmad attack, and she has never felt the need to remarry.

Lands

Although afforded status as a nation, Ionara is truthfully more of a network of city-states than anything else. Outside of the cities, there is very little in the way of civilization, even when compared to the largely abandoned rural regions of mainland Aden. In terms of sheer land size, the kingdom of Ionara are one of the largest of all modern nations. In terms of population, however, it is the smallest. The truth is that the majority of the vast ice plains that make up the bulk of Ionara's lands are almost completely uninhabitable, with the harsh elements claiming the lives of the weak and the unprepared.

The city of Ionara sits atop a massive plateau that marks the southern edge of the vast plain known as the Ice Wastes. The only ways to reach it are either over the plains, which is virtually impossible for any significant force, or via an underground river known as the Tongue of the Child. The river once had a different name, but three centuries ago the preceding monarch lost one of his infant daughters in the river, and its name was changed due to the claims by many that the lost child's mournful cries can still be heard on occasion. The Tongue flows through a maze of ice caverns called the Teeth (so named for their habit of destroying the hulls of any ship that attempts to sail them). Ionaran vessels have hulls reinforced with bone or steel, and even then they can only navigate the Teeth with carefully protected maps. Those who can navigate the region find themselves in the city of Ionara.

The Ice Wastes beyond the cities are perhaps the single most deadly environment in all of Aden, with the possible exception of the most scorching regions of the Sundered Desert. The settlements of Ionara are based largely in the southernmost regions, and only work crews and caravans venture too far north. The plains that extend north beyond what maps the Ionaran cartographers have been able to create are virtually impassable, having a glasslike surface that can give way into deep crevasses with no warning. The glare of the sun on the ice plains can blind a man in a matter of hours, and the frigid wind can flay the flesh from a man's bones without warning. All those who have attempted to venture farther north have either returned in failure or never been heard from again.

Culture

Despite the reputation of Ionarans as being as cold and unfeeling as the lands they call home, the truth is that these demeanors are reserved primarily for their interactions with outsiders; among one another they are much more warm and pleasant. The family is the center of the average Ionaran's life. This is both a product of their being unable to



venture forth from their homes during the evening hours due to environment, and of the vital importance of the hearthstone to the survival of every living being who calls Ionara his home.

The hearthstone is the creation of Ionarus, founder of the kingdom, and the only way that civilization has been able to survive there. The secret of its creation is limited to the royal family and their immediate attendants, ensuring that no one can live within Ionara without the blessing of its monarch or of those whom she designates with such authority. A hearthstone emanates a gentle, pervasive warmth that somehow does not melt the ice from which many homes and buildings are constructed. Impossibly, the result is the ability to live within a home of ice without suffering from the cold. Many have attempted to discover the secrets of hearthstone creation over the years, but without success; whatever his failings may have been, Ionarus was a brilliant alchemist.

Survival has always been the principle pursuit of Ionara's citizens, and consequently, they have experienced a somewhat stunted cultural development over the course of their history. Those who have art in their souls cannot be suppressed indefinitely, however, and certain activities have endured despite the circumstances. The importance of family and evenings spent in the home have engendered a strong tradition of storytelling and song, as well as music of all sorts; some of the most sought after musical instruments in all of Aden are those crafted of Ionaran ice, which of course cannot be removed from the kingdom without dissolving. The true artistic spirit of Ionara is evident each spring during a festival known as the Week of Waters. This period, which is marginally warmer than usual, renders much of the ice soft and workable, and many Ionarans spend their time carving exquisite works of art from their surroundings. Visitors to the kingdom during this wondrous event report that it is the only time that Queen Kryanix appears truly happy. She moves among her people and seems to genuinely appreciate their work during this time. In addition to its cultural value, the Week of Waters is a vital source of income in terms of tourism, for the population of Ionara swells significantly with visitors during the festival.

Arcane magic is common throughout Aden and is slightly more prevalent in Ionara. This is due in part to the necessity of such things in surviving the harsh lands, but it is also due to the abundance of diamonds

upon which the nation's economy is dependent. Diamonds are often in demand throughout the world because of their natural ability to conduct arcane energies; they are commonly used not only in magical rituals but also as components in many magical items.

The cultural differences that have arisen in the people of Ionara over the centuries are paired with an interesting physical difference: the long-term exposure to the harsh cold climate of the Ice Wastes has resulted in the elven population of Ionara having a deep blue hue to their flesh. The so-called ice elves are the only true sub-race of Aden's elves, although some believe that the elves of the Rhanate constitute another. Ice elves have longer, sharper features than other elves and invariably have black hair, although other colors are common among mainland elves.

Major Settlements

In addition to the name of the kingdom itself, **Ionara** is also the name of its capital city, the center of its military and government, and the concentration of its vast resources and wealth. Very few foreigners ever see any portion of the kingdom outside the capital itself, and, indeed, most people do not realize that there is anything of Ionara outside the city itself. Perhaps it was named for this reason, but certainly the nobility of the nation do little to correct this misperception. In size, Ionara is nearly as large as Sea Reach, and as such, is among the largest cities in Aden. This is something of a deception, however, for while the city itself rivals Sea Reach in size, it only has a fraction of the population that larger settlement hosts. Ionara is the center of the kingdom in the sense that it is the center of trade with other nations, and on the whole Ionara imports a tremendous amount of food, primarily from Arasteen but from other sources as well. The two primary industries of Ionara are fishing and mining, but not mining in any form that is recognizable in mainland Aden. For reasons that are not fully understood, the substrata of the ice plains are rife with diamonds. Getting to them is a difficult process, which is why they remained undiscovered until the first permanent settlements were created in the region. How Ionarus deduced their existence is another mystery, but not one that has occupied any significant attention; the result has proven far more important than the impetus behind it.

Far to the east of Ionara is the next largest settlement, **Floe**. Like its larger counterpart, Floe's primary industry is fishing, and large numbers of ships sail forth daily to gather the vast quantities of seafood that is a staple of the Ionaran diet. Additionally, the region around Floe is the most fertile in terms of aniol production. Anioles are hardy, leafy plants that are more or less the only plant life that can survive in Ionara other than simple lichens that grow upon stone outcroppings. Together with seafood, anioles are the primary ingredient in all Ionaran diets, although most are supplemented with the vast quantities of grains imported from Arasteen. Anioles do not grow in such abundance anywhere else in Aden, and they can be prepared in a wide variety of ways, ensuring at least some degree of variation in an otherwise relatively bland cuisine. While the capital is virtually inaccessible unless one gains permission to enter via the Tongue of the Child, Floe is much more welcoming to outsiders. The docks there contain a massive open air market where fishermen and traders from the south can dock and trade their wares. The freezing weather tends to encourage rapid deals which the citizens of Floe exploit to their advantage when bartering with others.

Farther north, the city of **Permis** sits at the base of one of the few mountain peaks to break through the thick, frozen sheets covering the Ice Wastes. While most of the diamond harvesting coordinated from Ionara is nomadic in nature, moving from place to place as the precious stones are extracted from deep beneath the ice, Permis is the largest permanent mining settlement in the kingdom and one of the few that utilizes more traditional mining techniques. The mountains that break through the ice here are even more heavily embedded with diamonds than the rest of the kingdom, and they account for fully half of all the gems harvested in Ionara. Needless to say, the standard of living of those who live within Permis vastly outstrips the meager lifestyles most miners elsewhere in Aden enjoy. Because of the value of the city's industry, a large contingent of Serpent Riders is found here, as well as a vast legion of the Frost Guard. The arrangement is mutually

beneficial, however, as the area around Permis is home to one of the largest populations of wild snow serpents, and as a result, there is a large facility within the city's protective walls dedicated to prospective riders training their mounts.

Military

Ionara has a markedly reduced need for a large military when compared to other nations in Aden. The general attitude and paranoia of the Ice Queen, however, ensures that her kingdom does not lack for strength of arms. There is no militia to speak of, although on those rare occasions when a concerted attack against one of the nation's cities takes place, average citizens are expected to report for duty and be given any necessary equipment to assist in defending their homes. Beyond that, however, the nation depends predominantly upon the Frost Guard for its defense. The Frost Guard follows a standard military hierarchy, with squads of ten to twenty men making up companies which contain five to ten squads. The normal order of rank includes traditional corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. The overall commander is Prince Frizier, the eldest son of the Ice Queen. Frizier himself is also the field commander of the Serpent Riders, the most elite rank of the Frost Guard. The Serpent Riders are so named because members use snow serpents, some of the deadliest and most prevalent predators in the northern wastes, as mounts. Becoming a Serpent Rider is a significant undertaking and requires a prospective Serpent Rider to spend a minimum of twelve hours a day for two years training his mount. If successful, the rider is granted full membership and takes his place among his brothers. The Serpent Riders are greatly feared by the snowmads, who are their most common enemies, for the snow serpents are extremely fast, difficult to detect, and incredibly ferocious. A single snow serpent is a match for half a dozen combatants at least, and this does not take into account their riders, who are themselves fearsome warriors.

In addition to its normal military, Ionara is protected by perhaps the largest naval force in Aden, generally referred to as the Ice Fleet. This force is comprised primarily of berg-cutters, a type of fast attack vessel that makes use of an edged ram on the ship's prow to cut through ice and make a path for the merchant vessels that Ionara depends upon to ensure it imports the proper supplies to sustain its populace. The fleet also makes use of a smaller number of other ships of a unique vessel type known as berg-lobbers. These ships contain large catapults, often augmented via mechemagical devices, that can hurl huge blocks of ice at enemy ships. Berg-lobbers are typically secreted in the ranks of the merchant convoys the fleet protects, given that they are generally quite a bit slower than the berg-cutters. Prince Coldaron, the younger brother of Prince Frizier, commands the Ice Fleet. One of his most brilliant innovations, and one that has gained him much favor in his mother's court, is to train members of Ionara's ferran population, many of whom have seal ancestry, to serve as saboteurs who can board or even scuttle enemy ships without detection.

Relations with Other Nations

It would be a painful play on words to say that Ionara's relations with other nations are cold, but that is an accurate description. The Ice Queen has few allies anywhere in Aden, her long life of seclusion and relative hardship having established personal boundaries that even the most charismatic and diplomatic envoys cannot seem to overcome. Ionara maintains polite relations with its closest neighbor, Arasteen, due primarily to its dependence upon the large quantities of food imported from King Corben's kingdom. It is something of an open secret that Ionara and Urbana have an alliance of mutual benefit, and although this has strained relations with Arasteen, as of yet it has not changed the balance of power, no matter how concerning the leadership of the Radiant Order finds this alliance. There is some evidence to suggest that personal correspondence between the Ice Queen and the Hive Mother of Kyan has been ongoing for some time, but what this correspondence may entail, no one knows for certain.

THE ISLAND REPUBLICS OF MISLAND

"A curious land, filled with curious people. They say the natives have giant blood in their veins. Having seen them fight, I think giants are a bit too docile for that comparison."

— The Green Councilor of Yzeem

GOVERNMENT: Various.

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Exotic foodstuffs.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Worked metal goods.

History

Few modern nations have experienced as great a level of tumult throughout history as have the Island Republics of Misland, known to most simply as the Mislands. The Mislands are not a single nation, but rather a loose alliance of minor city-states and other small fiefdoms that have persisted over centuries of frequent internal and external strife and which are lumped together under a single name for the sake of convenience. Like the Rhanate and the High Steppes, the islands of Misland were never recognized as a formal nation prior to the Darkfall, although not for lack of trying. Instead, the majority of Aden has looked upon them as a sort of last frontier, where settlers constantly squabbled with one another over land and other resources but without any significant intervention from external nations.

Even during the earliest days of the Great War, there were those who sought escape from the conflict, and among those, some fled to the Misland region off of Aden's southwest coast. Unfortunately, the Misland region was already occupied by an indigenous people in the form of several tribes of people who called themselves the Misari. These tribesmen were of human stock but possessed slightly greater size and physical might than the newcomers, and they were rumored to have giant blood flowing in their veins. Despite their fearsome appearance and warrior culture, the Misari were accepting of the newcomers, and a tentative alliance of mutual benefit was formed. Together, the Misari and the settlers presented a stronger united front against the fearsome beasts of the islands' inland territories, and over the course of a few decades, several prosperous fishing villages sprang up on the coasts around the perimeter of the largest island, which the natives called the Dragon-Ma, or "mother dragon." Collectively, the natives referred to all of the islands as the Mislands, which was a Misari term that meant "lands of the Misari," although it was comically assumed to be a portmanteau of "my islands" by most newcomers to the region.

Roughly two centuries after the Great War began, the first true symptoms of that conflict other than the periodic influx of settlers began to affect the people of the Mislands. The piracy that had become a significant problem all along the coastline of what would become Yzeem began to encroach upon the islands as well. The conflict had driven many men to cruelty and selfishness, or even merely desperation, and had given rise to innumerable pirates and corsairs that plagued the region. The smaller towns and villages of the Mislands were considered easy pickings despite the warrior traditions of the Misari who had helped found them, and attacks from the sea became a significant problem in very short order. Individual towns attempted to mount defenses with varying degrees of success, but all in all, the situation was dire. Relations between different settlements began to sour as men and women took their frustrations out on their neighbors, and squabbles between the different towns were not uncommon. It seemed as though the entirety of the region would fall into absolute chaos before one man determined that he would not suffer the loss of all he held dear simply because of some insolent pirates. This man, Kavi Davimposa, a descen-



dant of Vanoran and Misari grandparents, vowed to end the reign of terror.

Davimposa gathered to him a small number of men and women who had embraced their Misari warrior heritage, and they made preparations against another attack. When the pirates came, they were shocked to be ambushed by a small number of incredibly deadly and devoted warriors. Almost at once, the pirates fell back to their ship, but they could not escape. Davimposa and his men killed every member of the crew and seized their ship. Using this ship, the legends say, Davimposa and his men set the seas aflame with their campaign against the pirates. In each engagement, they made a concentrated effort to capture more ships. Whenever this proved impossible, they sent everything in their path to the bottom of the seas, never to plague the Mislands again. By the time the stronger pirate forces in the region made an attempt to unite against Davmiposa, they were far too late. The Misland fleet decimated all that attempted to stop them, and in a shockingly short period of time, pirates of all sorts avoided the seas around Misland for hundreds of miles in all directions.

The end of the pirate crisis brought forth further changes in the Mislands. Before that time, the different settlements had primarily kept to themselves other than for necessary trade and certain festivals that owed to ancient Misari customs. Davimposa used his newfound fame to encourage the different settlements to forge more stable alliances. He eschewed any attempts to place him in a position of leadership, however; he firmly stated time and time again that he wished only to continue his defense of his ancestors' homeland, and that he was a poor choice for a leader of men in conditions other than warfare. While many were disappointed at his refusal to accept the burden of leadership, his words did begin to convert others to his way of thinking, and over the course of a decade, the governance of the Mislands changed significantly.

Regional customs in the Mislands varied significantly from place to place, and for this reason, it was decided that a single nation could not be hewn from its component parts. Instead, the people of the Mislands chose to create four separate, autonomous governances, each with its own customs and traditions, and a council comprised of representatives of each component to make decisions needed for the Mislands as a whole. The first decision of this council, and one made unanimously,

was to appoint Kavi Davimposa to the position of Lord Protector of Mislands and to commission funds for the upkeep and improvement of his forces. Davimposa grudgingly accepted the position and immediately began implementing his plan for the defense of the islands.

The four self-governing regions of the Mislands were determined largely by geography. The northern coast, which was home to the most significant ports of the entire island chain, became called the Free Cities of Coolwave Coast. The southern part of the primary island was divided into two large regions, one named the Dragon-Ma-Umbra and the other the rather unimaginatively named Western Misland. Finally, the second largest island in the region, off of the primary island's northwest coast, was called Misgard after the large port town already named such that was situated on the island. Relations between these four regions waxed and waned over the centuries, with frequent bouts of barely restrained hostility and long periods of tentative alliance between them in seemingly random ways.

The Darkfall did not affect the Mislands region in the same way as it did many other modern nations. In fact, it had almost the opposite effect. For several years immediately prior to the Darkfall, the four provinces were in a state of cold war with one another, with conflict between two or more of them seemingly always on the horizon. The Darkfall forced them to overlook their minor differences, however, and unite against a common foe for several years. Sadly, the sorry state of affairs in mainland Aden has caused trade to the Mislands to slow to a trickle, and as a result, shortages of common goods has become a way of life there. Over the past few years, the old hostilities have begun to resurface and, in recent months, intensify significantly.

The most significant event in recent history is the sundering of the Lord Protector's fleet. During an engagement with a large force of aquatic nocturnals, the Lord Protector was betrayed by corrupted elements within his own forces and his flagship was lost to the sea. Confusion followed, but in the aftermath, it was determined that a cabal of sorcerers from the Free Cities were the agents responsible for the Lord Protector's death. Much outrage ensued, and the fleet experienced a schism as a result. On the one hand, the sorceress Keara of the Free Cities led the counterattack and personally slew two of the corrupted traitors before driving the others away. On the other, the ship's captain, Campos, a descendant of the first Lord Protector, rallied the rest of the fleet to escape to safety, sparing countless lives and saving much-needed supplies in the process. The two together could perhaps have presented an undefeatable united front in the wake of disaster, but this was not to be. Keara decried Campos as a coward while Campos, already predisposed against spellcasters due to tragedy in his past, denounced the entirety of the arcane element within the fleet and called for them to be expelled.

In the wake of this explosive disagreement, the Lord Protector's fleet has split into two parts, with loyalty divided between the two apparent successors to the Lord Protector. The more zealous of the two, Campos, has gone so far as to rally enough Mislanders to his banner to create a fifth province, born of lands rebelling against the Free Cities and Western Misland, and has created the anti-magic fiefdom called the Sanctified Independence of Strangemount, or simply Strangemount for short. Ironically, the people of Strangemount accept meachamagic as an outgrowth of technology but denounce all other forms of magic as potentially corrupting. They have even suggested that magic may be inherently tied to the Darkfall, which is an opinion that has earned them very few allies elsewhere in Aden.

Lands

The islands of this region are notoriously temperate with a tendency for temperatures to creep upward into tropical heats in the summer and to decrease in the surprisingly cool winters. The island chain is dominated by one central island, the largest island in the Known Lands. There is a secondary island of significantly smaller size and a host of much smaller islands that are scattered around the coast. The primary island is characterized by the twin mountain ranges whose intersections form the natural boundaries of the self-sufficient provinces making up

the region. The northern coastline is separated from the rest of the island by the smaller of the two mountains ranges. The larger range extends from the mid-point of the smaller and extends southwest, dividing the main island into three portions.

With the exception of the coastline, the majority of the primary island is covered in hills and forestland, the latter of which grows denser and hotter the closer that one gets to the central mountains. These mountains are volcanic; they increase the ambient heat in the area, causing the surrounding terrain to become dense jungles. The mountains and jungles have historically been home to some of the deadliest wildlife found in all of Aden, and these have only become more deadly since the Darkfall took place over a decade ago. Very few make their homes in these regions, save for the descendants of a few hardy Misari tribesmen who chose to live in the mountaintops rather than integrate with the newcomers more than one thousand years ago. These same mountains are one of the only places in the Known Lands where giants can be found with any regularity; they are extremely rare in other regions and are virtually unknown in most modern nations.

The coastlines of the island chain are largely unremarkable save for the northeastern coast of the primary island, which comprises the province known as the Free Cities of Coolwave Coast. This region was one of the only portions of the island chain that was not home to any Misari tribes when settlement of the region first began. Instead, the region was dotted with massive, hundred foot tall statues of humanoid creatures that might be either primitive humans or perhaps giants; centuries of erosion have made it impossible to discern enough detail to be certain. Even more common than these mysterious statues, however, are large stone domes that dot the entire landscape. They are not natural rock formations, but their purpose and the means of their construction remains unknown. The earliest contact with the Misari tribes identified them as sacred relics of "those who came before," but who that might be, not even the eldest Misari know for certain.

The secondary island, the one that is home to Misgard, lacks the mountains and volcanic activity that has transformed the forests of the primary island into jungle. Instead, it is found to be largely hills and forestland, and it is spared the majority of the deadly fauna that exists on the main island. This has offered little reprieve from nocturnals, however, and in fact the secondary island has, if anything, a larger number of nocturnal attacks than its larger counterpart.

Apart from the two larger islands, the remainder of the Misland island chain is largely unremarkable. The islands were frequently home to small settlements or merely a number of individuals who preferred to make their home in relative seclusion. Since the Darkfall, however, most of these individuals have migrated to the larger settlements of the two main islands. For the most part, the smaller islands are home only to nocturnal-infested abandoned homes and fishing villages.

Culture

The culture of the Misland Republics is varied to such an extent that it is almost impossible to describe it as a single national entity, an appropriate situation since they do not comprise an individual nation. Regardless, there are some broad categorizations that can be made concerning the general state of affairs on the primary islands.

All four provinces of the Misland Republics borrow cultural items from the Misari tribesmen that are native to the region. As a cultural group, the Misari have forsaken many of the technological advances that have been embraced by other nations and tend to prefer traditional melee weaponry or unarmed combat. Combat is considered a sacred art, one almost ritualistic in its execution; unsurprisingly, Misari traditionalists consider the appearance of the nocturnals a stain upon the sanctity of combat between two warriors, and the destruction of the Darkfall and its minions an act necessary to restore the proper balance of the world. The Misari also favor tattoos to signify personally important milestones in life such as marriage, parenthood, or the defeat of a particularly powerful enemy. In the post Darkfall era, any surviving individual who embraces his Masari heritage is inevitably festooned with tattoos of various sorts. Masari culture also has a strong reverence for nature and

the sea. Like many other cultures in Aden, they embrace the worship of their ancestors and frequently importune their aid for all manner of endeavors. Masari shamans, analogous to thaumaturges or sorcerers in other cultures, are inevitably among the most respected members of any particular group with strong Misari ties. Of the five (originally four), provinces in the Misland Republics, Dragon-Ma-Umbra, West Misland, and Misgard are all heavily Misari-influenced cultures.

The Free Cities of Coolwave Coast are an impossibly varied group that borrows cultural traditions from literally every nation of modern Aden. Due to sheer proximity, Yzeem and Vanora have the most significant impact, but even there the abandonment of traditionally xenophobic practices by transplanted Vanorans has made them quite distinct from their kinsmen on the mainland. The Free Cities fully embrace their cosmopolitan nature and cite it as one of their great strengths. Because the region in which the cities are built is one of ancient significance to the Misari, there are very few tribesmen among their ranks and no small amount of resentment among traditionalists toward denizens of the coast. More so than the other provinces of the Misland Republics, the Free Cities embrace the arcane arts and they have a disproportionately large number of spellcasters at all times, primarily arcane, but divine as well.

The people of the region that have recently split from the other republics to form the Sanctified Independence of Strangemount have reacted to the stresses of the post-Darkfall world by becoming increasingly zealous and xenophobic. The recent schism within the Lord Protector's Fleet exacerbated the situation and made it a simple matter for the naval officer Campos to capitalize upon the existing feelings and spur the secession of the entire region. In contrast to the inhabitants of the Free Cities, the people of Strangemount are highly suspicious and distrustful of magic. They are the most technologically advanced of the five provinces and have a larger Misari population than the Free Cities, but significantly less than Misgard, Dragon-Ma-Umbra, and West Misland.

Major Settlements

There are a large number of settlements all throughout the Misland island chain, the majority of which are located on the coast of the primary or secondary island. Smaller settlements are occasionally found in the primary island's interior, but the environment there is far more hostile, and as a result settlements are fewer and much farther between.

The Dragon-Ma-Umbra is the largest of the five Mislands provinces, but its capital, **Fallwaters-Ma**, is perhaps the smallest of the island's major cities. Given that Dragon-Ma-Umbra has the greatest population of Misari, this is understandable; the Misari have no interest in living an urban lifestyle. While they prefer a more primitive lifestyle, however, the Misari are not unintelligent, and they understand the need for trade. Fallwaters-Ma, therefore, is their most significant center of commerce and a natural harbor. The province's contributions to the Lord Protector's fleet are constructed at a large but simple shipyard found on the coast as well.

Deepfind is the largest of the Free Cities of Coolwave Coast as well as its capital. Ironically, it is also the only major settlement that is not on the coast. During the province's formation, it was determined that the largely economic focus of the various ports in the region was a barrier to government and, as such, a location off of the coastline would be ideal for governmental use. The city is positioned on the shore of a particularly deep lake that is connected to the sea by river, allowing for shipments to travel to and from the other cities on the coast without difficulty.

The city of Sageos was once the center of arcane learning for the entirety of the Free Cities, so much so that the other provinces often sent students with an aptitude for magic to study there. The elitist attitude of those who oversaw the academies in question may have been partially to blame for the backlash against magic that eventually led to the formation of Strangemount. In the aftermath of this secession, the resources devoted to arcane pursuits were cannibalized to enhance the city's shipyards and factories, and the city was renamed Mechallo.

As the only settlement of any significant size within Strangemount, Mechallo serves almost as a city-state that conducts virtually all business on behalf of the new province. As a result, the city itself is also often called **Strangemount**.

The people of **Misenviwe**, capital of the West Mislands, view their neighbors in Strangemount with a combination of fear and resentment. Many denizens of the city had family members in Sageos before the secession and now find themselves sharply divided by ideological and political lines. What's worse, the open hostility between Strangemount and the Free Cities has sharply limited the amount of trade Misenviwe is able to conduct with the Coolwave Coast region. Geography also limits their contact with their neighbors in Dragon-Ma-Umbra, which means that circumstance has forced a close alliance with the West Mislands and their other neighbors to the northwest in Misgard.

Misgard is the name of the province that includes the entire secondary island of the Misland chain, as well as the city that serves as its capital. Despite the close proximity of the two islands, Misgard has remained largely apart from the other provinces for most of the republics' mutual history. In the aftermath of the Darkfall, this has proven a liability and the Misgardians have taken steps to correct their more isolationist ways. In the chaos of the past two years, the assistance of Misgard has allowed the West Mislands capital of Misenviwe to survive despite the sudden presence of a semi-hostile state, Strangemount, to the northeast. However, Misgard's new commitment to interaction with its neighbors does not permit it to choose sides, and it has continued to trade with both Strangemount and Misenviwe, much to the irritation of both parties. However, Misgard's resources are such that neither trading partner can afford to cut ties with them over a matter of principle.

Military

The various factions within Misland have never maintained a significant military, preferring instead to employ the smaller fighting units found in virtually every settlement. This is a throwback to the traditions of the Misari, who believed that each village was a force unto itself and took pride in maintaining its own sentries and warriors. In the conflicts that plagued the provinces since their creation, this is perhaps the only fact that has prevented skirmishes from growing into larger struggles. The larger of the two provinces, the Western Mislands and the Dragon-Ma-Umbra, have enough settlements within their boundaries for each to be able to field a sizeable militia comprised only of individual settlement forces. The smaller two, the Free Cities and Misgard, are unable to field such sizeable forces but have much larger naval forces, and the majority of history has seen the Misland region's Lord Protector hailing from one of these two provinces.

The Lord Protector's fleet is the only real military force possessed by the Mislands, and it has proven more than sufficient to protect the islands from all external threats for almost a thousand years. The precise structure of the fleet varies from one Lord Protector to another, but generally speaking, it favors smaller, faster vessels that use ranged attacks to cripple enemy ships before delivering boarding parties trained in the tradition of Misari warriors. In past centuries the fleet made extensive use of archers and magic-users, and while the latter remain in place, the former has been faded out in favor of light cannons and riflemen over the past few generations. Recently, of course, the fleet has been split in two, with half the fleet emphasizing arcane methodologies and based in the Free Cities, and the other half, from Strangemount, enhancing the fleet's traditional firepower with cannons, firearms, and even siege weaponry mounted on the decks.

Relations with Other Nations

The individual regions of the Mislands have never had a tremendous amount of contact with the nations of greater Aden, instead remaining embroiled within their own fluctuating states of alliance and hostility over the centuries. The Mislands' closest neighbor on the mainland is Vanora, but given the rather xenophobic nature of Vanoran society, interaction between the two has been relatively limited over the centuries. The primary trading partner of the Misland provinces is, of course,

Yzeem. The islands' proximity to the port city of Balaquim has made most of their mercantile trading efforts simple, as the merchant houses there are able to find a market for virtually anything that the islanders wish to trade.

Prior to the Darkfall, the arcanists of the Free Cities had ongoing diplomatic and scholarly contacts within Aramyst, but obviously that has ended in the aftermath of that nation's virtual destruction following the Darkfall. Curiously, a small number of the Free Cities' most powerful spellcasters disappeared at the same time, some of them from their own homes and family members. This is considered one of the greatest mysteries of the Darkfall by the islanders, and discovering the fate of these individuals is one of the most pressing goals of the remaining rulers of that region.

KYAN, HEART OF THE JUNGLE

"Insects predate our modern nations, and they shall survive long after we are gone. Kyan alone understands this."

— Nelesh, Headmaster of the Academia Entomologia

GOVERNMENT: Matriarchy.

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented, no noteworthy population variances.

MAJOR EXPORTS: None; Kyan does not conduct formal trade with other nations.

MAJOR IMPORTS: None; see above.

History

The beginnings of Kyan are tied to the events in the final days of the Great War. Enraged by the toll the wide-ranging conflict was taking on the natural world, a druid from a small tribe in the lands that currently make up Urbana attempted to rally her people to end the cycle of violence and destruction. Only a few joined her cause, but her power was such that she needed precious few others to aid her in her plan. The group retreated from the conflict to the vast Crawling Jungle, which even in those days was avoided by the majority of people due to the dangers contained within. There, the druid's magic allowed her to tame the enormous insects within the jungle, and the group carved out a meager existence beneath the canopy of the jungle. Over the course of two decades, their numbers swelled, and when rulers gathered at Rose came in an attempt to end the war, the first Queen Mother of Kyan was among them.

After the Peace of the Rose was established, Kyan largely withdrew to its own borders and has rarely interacted with the world at large since that time. Only in circumstances of extreme crisis has the line of Queen Mothers ever chosen to participate in events of worldwide concern. The geography of the nation has lent itself toward this isolationism, with few outsiders willing to enter the Crawling Jungle regardless of the circumstances. It requires a particular mindset to adapt to a life that is so completely dependent upon the involvement of giant insects in every aspect of day to day existence. As a result, Kyan has typically had one of the smallest populations of the modern nations of Aden. While this would be a tremendous disadvantage in the face of any significant conflict, it has served Kyan well in terms of providing resources for its people.

Throughout Kyan's history, the most significant threat to its existence is one that was almost certainly born of its own people. Over the centuries since the Peace of the Rose, individuals of rare power have occasionally risen to prominence, often within the royal family. These individuals have possessed incredible sorcerous abilities that have allowed them to advance the nature of Kyan's relationship with the

insects that are so pivotal to their lives. When such individuals, often called entomancers, appear, they herald in dramatic changes that often better the lives of their countrymen. Many of the unique species that exist only in the service of Kyan were created by the powerful sorcery of these individuals. One such species, unfortunately, is the ilithix.

The ilithix are a hostile race of bipedal insects that have been problematic for the people of Kyan almost since the nation's creation. Throughout most of Kyan's history, the ilithix have been little more than a nuisance, primarily as rivals for various resources. The Kyanites have a very unclear picture on the nature of the ilithix, however, and have traditionally ascribed very little intelligence to them as a race. They know that the race is ruled by a single individual, an impossibly powerful insect-like entity called the Brood Mother, and that the Brood Mother rules over all ilithix hives with absolute authority. Lesser queens exist, one per hive, but for the most part the Kyanites believe that the ilithix are a race ruled by a single potentially malevolent intelligence. Unfortunately, there is much to suggest that, in the wake of the Darkfall, the Brood Mother has become corrupted, leading the whole of the ilithix into corruption as well. This has made them significantly more hostile toward the people of Kyan and drastically more dangerous.

The period immediately following the Darkfall was a bleak one for the nation of Kyan, and one that resulted in a terrible stain upon the nation's pride and honor. Off the nation's southern coast, a small chain of islands comprised the self-governing province of Phoros. Although part of Kyan, the islands rarely required any protection from the throne and were, for the most part, independent. The culture there was dependent upon insects just as greater Kyan was, but they were of a more specialized form: Phoros possessed a high population of unique insects known as jagtera, which resembled giant preying mantises. The jagtera were beasts of burden as well as hunters, mounts, and even a source of food for the people of Phoros. Nocturnals appeared in Phoros only in very limited numbers after the Darkfall, and they were easily dealt with by the warriors who defended the islands. Shortly thereafter, however, the jagtera began to die off for unknown reasons. Nothing that was attempted by the people of Phoros had any impact on the unknown blight, and with the essential insects quickly becoming extinct, the way of life the islanders had known for generations was in danger of being completely eradicated.

Although the exact events leading up to the demise of the Phoros islands is unknown, what is known is that the rulers of the islands were desperate to find a way to mitigate the damage done to their society by the death of the jagtera. While their interventions may have been fruitless, it is also possible that they were the source of the greater disaster that followed: a rampant plague which spread throughout the islands, causing those afflicted to slowly lose their minds and mutate into monstrous creations similar in many respects to the jagtera themselves. The end result was spectacularly disastrous, resulting in the island chain being overrun by false jagtera and with very few denizens escaping with their lives. Fortunately, the plague that caused the mutations was in some way dependent upon the environment of the islands, and the few survivors did not carry the illness back to Kyan. Today, the people of Kyan do not speak of the Phoros disaster, and those who question whether the plague could have been caused by attempts to save the jagtera are met with stony silence and social exclusion.

Lands

Most consider the boundaries of the vast Crawling Jungle to be the national border of Kyan. While that assessment is not exactly true, it is quite close. Only a small portion of the jungle, that which stands on the west side of the Red River, is outside Kyan, in the lands claimed by Urbana. Kyan is not exclusively jungle, however; the nation also controls a sizeable section of the southern Wall Mountains as well as a lengthy belt of coastline and a chain of islands known as the Phoros, just off the southern coast of Aden.

The Crawling Jungle is the most well-known feature of western Aden's geography and one of the most dangerous places in the known



world. While the cold of Ionara or the heat of the Sundered Desert can kill quickly through sheer exposure, in the Crawling Jungle there are a hundred different predators and even more forms of poison and venom, any of which can kill a healthy warrior in moments. Although many mistakenly believe that the jungle takes its name from the thick vegetation that blankets the floor throughout the hundreds of thousands of square miles it covers, the truth is that it is called such because of the almost infinite variety of insects that make their home within its borders. There are other forms of wildlife found there as well, of course, but they are drastically outnumbered by the multitude of insects, many of which grow to staggering sizes found nowhere else in the world.

The southern Wall Mountains are rife with tunnels and chambers, most of which have been bored over the years by the region's enormous insects. The only two settlements Kyan possesses that could rightfully be called cities are located within the mountains and are largely subterranean. The region is also home to the ilithix, a species of extremely hostile, humanoid insects that have preyed upon the Kyanites since long before the Darkfall. Unfortunately, there is evidence to suggest that the ilithix Brood Mother, a massive, ancient creature that no mortal has ever seen, may have become corrupted by the Darkfall, for since that event, the ilithix have become far more cunning, cruel, and dangerous.

Phoros is an island chain that is more or less cut off from the world at large. There has always been some contact with the mainland in the form of their taxes and supply exchanges with Kyan, but for the most part they historically have kept to themselves and the Kyanite government was content to allow them to do so. For unknown reasons, the islands experienced much less turmoil than did their neighbors immediately following the Darkfall, and they quickly moved to separate themselves from the remainder of Aden. After the Darkfall, however, the native population of jagtera, the predominant insect species there, died off. This was followed by a mutagenic plague that decimated nine-tenths of the island's native population as well. Now, Phoros is virtually uninhabited and overrun by aggressive, mutated insects that were once the islands' citizens. Because of the idyllic climate, fertile soil, and rich fishing, the people of Kyan are interested in reclaiming the islands, but as of yet no concentrated effort has been made to do so, as the conflict with Urbana has been escalating for a number of years.

Culture

The way of life for citizens of Kyan revolves utterly around insects in every way. Every aspect of their life is dominated in some way by insects. The nation's military uses them for mounts and takes their weapons from the carapaces of giant beetles. The wizards and other spellcasters study every aspect of insects in order to increase the potency of their own magic as well as the combat effectiveness of the insects they command. Architects, tailors, blacksmiths and even artisans depend utterly on insects to provide them with the materials they require in order to ply their craft.

The people of Kyan are predominantly gatherers. They utilize a specially designed species of insect called basket bugs to gather edible vegetation from the jungle. These massive insects instinctively select certain plants and place them in their large thoracic cavities. Upon returning to the settlement, a gatherer withdraws half of the gathered plants for use by the denizens of the region; the remaining half is left for the basket bug to feed upon. This symbiotic relationship is the means by which the vast majority of all Kyan citizens acquire their food, although meat is provided from various other beasts in the jungle that are hunted with the assistance of the more predatory breeds of insects. Only in the nation's cities are more specialized food production means available, and the growing of crops is extremely limited anywhere in the entire nation.

While the people of Kyan have little in the way of artistic pursuits, this is not to say that they are not a creative people. Truthfully, only the most brilliantly creative nations could find a way to utilize the carapace and corpses of giant insects in so many different ways. Although it is not an art form per se, one of the most highly respected professions in Kyan is that of a caratect, an individual who crafts practical objects from the remains of dead insects. Given that the exoskeletons of these insects are incredibly resilient and can last for decades, utilizing them as material for crafting is both very difficult and extremely useful. Armor and weapons are the most common, of course, given the enormous size of Kyan's military compared to its population, but even everyday objects like furniture and clothing are likewise derived from such things.

Insect wrangling is another major and respected profession in Kyan society. These are the civilians who handle and train the insects that do the lion's share of the work in the nation's cities. Rock eaters are among the most common, particularly in the cities. These massive termite-like creatures consume virtually any material and are used to carve caves into rock to expand the size of the largely subterranean cities. Other species, such as tower beetles, are allowed to consume the remains of other insects and break down their carapace into a thick, paste-like substance that they then use to construct tower-like homes, hence the species' name. Wranglers extract these creatures from the towers and then have the structures modified by caratects in order to sell them as homes to wealthier citizens.

Arcane magic obviously has a great deal of involvement with the insect-centric way of life that Kyanites enjoy. The ability to tame the creatures was initially gained through use of powerful druidic magic, although the countless generations of insects since that time have caused the behaviors to become natural instinct rather than magically induced. Still, the study of how magic can increase the abilities of insects has been something that the people of Kyan have studied as long as the nation has existed. Seven years after the Darkfall, the Queen Mother's brother created a new institution, the Academia Entomologia, to focus on such studies. Many consider this a poor decision, as they regard such experimentation as is conducted at this academy as extremely dangerous and the sort of thing that gave rise to the accursed ilithix. The research continues, however, and has diverged into two branches. The so called insectors seek to create new species that can be of use to Kyan, while the entomancers instead seek to modify the abilities and attributes of individual creatures or swarms of creatures.

The royal line of Kyan is matriarchal in nature, which is likely based upon the nation's founder and her fascination with insects. The monarch is known as the Queen Mother, or less frequently, the Insect Queen. The

current queen is a woman named Selanna, generally heralded as one of the greatest warriors in all of Aden, as well as one of the most beautiful. Selanna chooses to lead from the front of her armies, atop either a massive black widow spider named Sister or a huge hornet called Rocbane.

Major Settlements

There are very few settlements that are part of the nation of Kyan, although there are a handful of additional ones within the nation's borders that do not owe allegiance to its queen or flag. The Queen Mother permits any settlement within Kyan's boundaries to choose whether or not they owe allegiance to the nation. Those who choose to do so are expected to pay taxes but are also afforded protection by the Swarmers. Those who choose not to offer allegiance to Kyan are permitted to continue as they have and are not expected to pay taxes. They are not considered part of Kyan, however, and are afforded no protection whatsoever; on numerous occasions, villages have been wiped out by various threats, and the Queen Mother has taken no action to assist them despite their pleas for aid.

The capitol of Kyan is **Crichton**, its largest and oldest city. Located in the Wall Mountains, Crichton is largely subterranean, with its only above-ground sections being contained within a hive-like structure that extends above the surface of the mountain. One of the most noteworthy features of the city is the extensive set of chambers set aside for Queen Selanna. Set high in the hive so that the queen can oversee the city, these chambers are rarely occupied. Selanna is well known for her fondness for battle, and she rarely remains within the city for long periods of time. Rumors persist that she is present so infrequently, that when she is present, she often loses her way in her own chambers. The queen's level of involvement with the nation's military is quite high, so it comes as no surprise that the nesting caves of the Swarmers' insects are located within Crichton as well. These caves are home to the spiders and hornets, while the caves below the city's lowest levels, where branches of the Cold River disappear into the earth, are home to the pens where the gigantic water striders are kept. The city is also home to the Academia Entomologia, a magical college founded by Queen Selanna's brother, Nelesh. The queen granted her leave to found the college with the only stipulation being that it be kept separate from the region of the city where the living quarters are kept – to ensure that any mishaps do not endanger her people.

High Hive is the only other settlement in Kyan large enough to warrant being called a city. Like Crichton, it is primarily a subterranean city with a limited amount of aboveground presence, contained within a hive. The region of the mountains where High Hive, known by its tallest peak Mount Winter, is located is extremely dangerous, not only due to nocturnals but also due to natural predators that are a threat without any supernatural power motivating them. In addition to being lairs for the minions of the Darkfall, the caves are home to trolls, rocs, rock worms, and a number of other subterranean threats. Lacking the close oversight that Crichton has as a result of the queen's residence there, High Hive has a much more relaxed atmosphere, so much so that many visitors view it as a sort of lawless frontier town despite its age. Citizens of the hive embrace this identity, and they are known for their easy-going, carefree nature even in the face of constant harassment by nocturnals. Nowhere is this nature so manifest as in the practice of "waterfalling." The city has a large waterfall at its center, complete with a water-powered lift that brings citizens from the bottom to the top with ease and comfort. "Waterfalling" is a popular sport in High Hive that involves a rope strung between the two sides of the fall, through the downpour. Contestants attempt to cross the rope, passing through the water. Only the strongest individuals can withstand the battering they sustain, and most are knocked loose to fall sixty feet into the pool at the bottom of the falls. This is the most popular recreational sport played in High Hive, although there are limited occurrences of the bloodsports found in Urbana in certain regions. These are generally shut down very quickly, as even the more relaxed authorities of High Hive will not tolerate the death of their citizens for the purposes of recreation. The

most well-known feature of High Hive is not its recreation, however, but rather an insect species unique to the region. Known as wound worms, the insects are believed to be a highly specialized subspecies of maggots, but this particular truth is not well advertised. Wound worms consume infected and diseased tissue at a high rate of speed without touching healthy tissue, allowing for the treatment of various wounds and diseases with a high degree of effectiveness. For unknown reasons, wound worms almost never survive in captivity and are found nowhere else in Aden, insuring that some of the finest healing available is found in High Hive.

Darkwood is one of the countless small villages that owe their allegiance to Kyan. Found beneath the canopy of the Crawling Jungle, Darkwood was founded beneath a clutch of trees with wide, arcing roots that grow with spaces beneath them the size of houses. Most Darkwood citizens live within these alcoves. Darkwood is notable for its marketplace, which is utterly unique in all of Aden. Darkwood is a center for hunting the various beasts that dwell within the jungle, and a great deal of meat is sold in its marketplace. However, its real claim to fame is the insect market. The hunters of Darkwood excel at capturing individual insects, of both normal size and the larger species. Entomancers from all over Kyan come to Darkwood to seek out specialized species for their experiments, and they can often contract hunters to capture certain species to suit their needs.

Military

Kyan has one of the most varied military structures in Aden, rivaling its hostile neighbors in Urbana in that regard. As with most other modern nations, the first tier of military defense for Kyan is the militia, in which the vast majority of able-bodied citizens are trained. Those who show particular aptitude are retained as permanent members, while others are released after their training is complete. However, during instances of attack by an enemy, whether Urbanan troops, nocturnal, or ilithix raiders, citizens are expected to take up arms and take their place at the side of the permanent militia members, who are known as the Home Guard. Members of the Home Guard are equipped with armor that is taken from the thickest carapaces of Kyan's insects, and their weapons are taken from their legs.

Members of the Home Guard are free to apply to join the greater Kyanite military, a vast and varied organization known collectively as the Swarmers. Those who can prove suitable strength of arms and, more importantly, the ability to make effective, tactical use of the different insect mounts Swarmers use in battle, are accepted into the organization at the rank of Petitioner. If a Petitioner serves with distinction for a period of six months, he is accepted into the organization at the rank of a full Swarmer. Perhaps unique among Aden's military organizations, the Swarmers have no rank differentiation among them other than the Petitioners, who are viewed as squires or at least members-in-training. Rank within the Swarmers is determined by personal initiative or occasional seniority, depending upon the situation.

There are three divisions within the Swarmers, each devoted to warfare in a different arena. The most numerous are those who engage their enemies on land. These individuals have the most variation among their mounts, although the most common are the giant spiders that are favored by the Queen herself. Following the spider riders are the forces that engage in aerial combat atop giant hornets. These troops, occasionally referred to as "stingers," are the nation's rapid response force and are deployed to some degree in virtually any conflict. The third and smallest group within the Swarmers is comprised of those who ride giant water striders. Historically, this group has been used to patrol the southern coast, but in recent years they have also been deployed along the Cold River to ensure the trade barges from Blackport do not overstep their boundaries. If the current hostilities between the two nations are not curtailed, it is only a matter of time before the Swarmers begin attacking the barges without provocation, which will likely result in significant loss of life on both sides.

Relations with Other Nations

Kyan's relationship with other nations can best be described as tempestuous. As the nation that comes the closest to self-sufficiency in all of Aden, Kyan has little need to interact with other countries on a diplomatic or economic basis, and both of these are kept to a relative minimum. The majority of trading that takes place with those outside Kyan's borders is conducted by private individuals and businesses, without any endorsement or condemnation from the throne.

Beyond economic considerations, the most significant relationship Kyan maintains with any other nation is with Urbana, and the relationship is one of barely contained hostility. The two nations have not declared outright war on one another, but Urbana's constant sorties into the perimeter of the Crawling Jungle in search of resources are answered by Kyan's constant attacks against border settlements such as Contrino, and both are escalating in frequency and severity. Most third parties keeping track of the conflict regard it as an inevitability that the two nations will go to war, and many wonder if Arasteen and Ionara will be drawn in as well, plunging all of western Aden into a new and deadly conflict.

THE CONCORDANCE OF LE'CIEL

"Memories within, harmony without."

— Lynn Eru Velianna, Le'Ciel Songstress

"Forged in fire, Birthed in song. By my deeds, their will shines on."

— Danna Oostmeer, Great-Grandson of Elessa, Last Child of the Exarches

GOVERNMENT: Caste-based aristocracy (with meritocratic elements).

PREDOMINANT RACES: Human, limited number of elves, dwarves, goreaux, and faerkin, virtually no known ferrans, jurak, or rapacians.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Mechamagical components, rare metals.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Non-magical manufactured goods.

History

The history of the nation commonly called Le'Ciel is intrinsically tied to the history of Aramyst, which is in many ways its parent nation. Shortly after the Peace of the Rose was established and the Great War was at last ended, the ostensible ruler of Aramyst voluntarily vacated his position in order to establish a ruling body known as the Celestial College. The members of this council were selected by the High Arcanist prior to his abdication and included among its ranks the most powerful and wisest of the many great spellcasters in Aramyst. There were a handful, however, who were excluded from membership in the Celestial College. These individuals, contemporaries who previously had little to do with one another for the most part, suddenly found themselves united by their mutual discontent over their exclusion, and over the course of a decade, their continued inability to gain access to the Celestial College filled them with a collective drive to prove their worth and gain the acknowledgement of their peers.

The spellcasters who were excluded from the Celestial College were men and women of exceptional power. Indeed, in some cases it could be easily argued that there were members of the council that were less powerful than the self-styled outcasts, although they did possess virtues that the outcasts lacked. Members of the Celestial College communicated to the outcasts, primarily through private correspondence, that the former High Arcanist had deliberately excluded them because of his concerns over their atypical beliefs and practices, and in some cases,



their overly autocratic natures. This information was not well received by the outcasts and, in their response to it, they vowed to demonstrate both their abilities and their fitness for rule. Taking their considerable personal wealth and estates with them, the outcasts departed from Aramyst and traveled northwest to the vast Brisson's Bay where they claimed residence on the large unclaimed island previously known as Brisson's Bounty. Here they established their own personal fiefdom in an attempt to gain the attention of their peers among the Celestial College.

The seven outcasts named their new home Le'Ciel, an ancient elven name for mythical paradise, and resolved to use their power to create exactly that for themselves. Without the hindrance of governance by another, they reasoned, they would be capable of creating absolute order and perfection in the mortal realm. They each pooled their considerable personal wealth, their servants, and the slaves that several of them owned (this was still practiced in some portions of Aramyst at this time, although it was a rapidly disappearing practice) to create a caste to perform the necessary labors to ensure that their endeavors would be conducted in peace. While these non-magical workers built the infrastructure of their new land, the outcasts themselves, who had taken the name Exarches, worked on their first great project: the creation of the Veil.

The Exarches possessed many positive qualities, but openness with their collective secrets was not among them. Convinced that others would attempt to replicate the fruits of their efforts, the first joint ritual the Exarches attempted was to create an enchantment that would protect all of Le'Ciel from spying and divination from outside sources. It took almost a decade of extremely trying work, but finally the Veil was completed, and the Exarches took this as a sign that their efforts were just. There was some interest in the nature of this enchantment from other quarters, most specifically from Aramyst and Vanora, but Le'Ciel chose to remain apart from these nations despite that it had been invited, had accepted, and had signed the Rose Accords. Generally speaking, it was accepted that Le'Ciel was a nation that stood apart, and that had no desire for closer relations with its neighbors. Ironically, if the Veil had not required such diligent effort or had taken less time to create, the overtures from Aramyst would doubtless have been well received; the decade the Exarches spent modifying their new home had seen

them grow distant from Aramyst, and they no longer wished to return. Le'Ciel had become their true home by this point.

Over the first few centuries of its existence, Le'Ciel experienced rapid and significant change. The Exarches remained the ultimate power in the nation, allegedly extending their lives to an astonishing degree through secret alchemical means. The remainder of the nation's population soon split into two groups. Those who demonstrated any level of arcane proficiency were elevated to positions as the Exarches servants, known as the Magisters, who were responsible for overseeing the others. The rest essentially became slaves. One of the many projects undertaken by the Exarches, who pursued incredibly fanciful arcane experiments both jointly and individually, was an attempt to increase the health and vitality of their slave caste, ensuring that these slaves could live long lives in service to the Exarches. Others included seeding the seas around the island nation with incredibly dangerous creatures that actively discouraged outsiders from approaching by sea, while the Veil protected the land from attempts to teleport or use other magic to gain entry.

The Darkfall did not affect Le'Ciel as significantly as it did some other nations, perhaps due to the influence of the Veil. While the hordes of nocturnals that plagued the other nations were present in significantly reduced numbers in Le'Ciel, mysterious circumstances surrounding the Darkfall led to the disappearance of the Exarches, who are assumed to be dead. The parallels between the Exarches and the Celestial College are a topic of frequent discussion among those who consider themselves Darkfall scholars, and many wonder if the two are not in some way related. Regardless, the disappearance of the Exarches led to a significant shift in power as the Magisters suddenly had to move into positions of true leadership. The most powerful among them became the Voices, who claim to speak for the absent Exarches, who will one day return. Fortunately, the Voices and remaining Magisters have proven to be lenient and generous masters, perhaps recognizing that their very limited numbers would place them in a terrible position if the lower caste were to revolt. A portion of the Magisters, those with the most significant arcane talent but otherwise ill-suited to leadership, have become known as the Savants, and their only task is to oversee the various arcane machinations left behind by the Exarches.

Unfortunately, whatever protective influence existed in Le'Ciel seems to have waned significantly with the disappearance of the Exarches, and in the years since the Darkfall, nocturnal attacks have gradually increased in frequency. This, combined with the fact that the former slaves of Le'Ciel have a limited understanding of how to operate and maintain the various mechemagical devices that have traditionally been used to defend their country, has made the situation there increasingly difficult, and tensions continue to rise with each passing year.

Lands

The lands of Le'Ciel are strangely idyllic, having been subjected to extensive arcane and divine manipulation over the course of more than one thousand years. The Exarches took the name of their nation very seriously and strove to create a perfect paradise that would be the envy of all nations in Aden. The motivation for this course of action varied among the Exarches; some wished to create the perfect home for themselves and their followers, while others sought only to prove to the people of Aramyst that the selection of the Celestial College had been a ridiculous farce. Regardless, the end result has been a strange, wondrous, magical nation.

There are no major mountain ranges in Le'Ciel, although there are minor peaks that separate the western coastline from the interior and there is another large cluster in the island's southeastern expanse. Most of the rest of the island is made of up forests, hills, and plains, all of which are carefully maintained by magic to ensure that the resources they provide are renewed and constantly available. There is one major river, commonly called the Passage, which connects a large lake in the island's center to the northern coastline. This lake, called the Azure Shard, is believed to have been formed in Aden's youth by a glacier that has long since melted. Whether this is true or not, the lake is home

to fresh water and is well known for its abundant fishing and its crystal clear quality.

In addition to the primary island that comprises the bulk of Le'Ciel's lands, there are four smaller islands off the northern coast, surrounded by a handful of tiny islands. These islands are all considered part of Le'Ciel but are not essential holdings and have never served any significant purpose other than fishing the seas to supplement the nation's food production. With the Darkfall and the resultant drop in population, these smaller islands have been more or less abandoned, and now they are often home to intermittent sailors, pirates, and other sea-going men and women of all sorts who need to make land and resupply.

A distinct feature of Le'Ciel's landscape is the prevalence of rail lines. After the Exarches became enamored of mechamagic, they delved into the practice of mundane railroads to more efficiently and quickly transport goods throughout their nation. Because the occurrence of nocturnal attacks within Le'Ciel was initially lower than in other countries, these railways continued to operate for some time after the Darkfall. It is only in the past few years that the attacks have increased to the extent that several major rail lines have been damaged beyond easy repair, and it has become an expensive and time-consuming process for the Magisters to attempt to maintain the rail lines in working order.

One completely unique feature to Le'Ciel, and one unknown to those outside the nation's borders, is a massive subterranean chamber beneath the capital city. This artifact, a forge of sorts, was the grand workshop of the Exarches, where they worked their most powerful and significant magic. It is known as the Birthforge, and since the disappearance of the Exarches, has been dormant. Many Le'Ciens have undertaken a pilgrimage to see the Birthforge since the Darkfall, and they regard it as a sort of holy site that is sacred to them.

Culture

The culture of Le'Ciel did not develop in a vacuum exactly, but it did develop with an almost complete absence of external influences save for those customs and traditions that were brought with the settlers when the nation was first founded. The Exarches and their servants the Magisters both felt strongly that maintaining a content and peaceful populace was of paramount importance, and insulating them from the ideas and philosophies of other nations was one of the primary ways that this could be ensured. As a result, the ways of the average citizen of Le'Ciel may appear strange, perhaps even alien, to another citizen of modern Aden.

Aptitude is the most important cultural characteristic for denizens of Le'Ciel because it determines a great deal about the rest of their lives. The vast slave population of Le'Ciel is divided into seven castes that mirror the interests and inclinations of the Exarches, and fulfill duties based upon them. Farmers and crafters of all sorts are grouped into the two largest divisions, known as the Verdant and Forge castes respectively, and the others tend to rank far beneath them in terms of size. Children who demonstrate a particular skill in one area can sometimes be changed from their division of birth, but for the most part inclusion in these groups is largely hereditary; those whose parents were farmers become farmers, and those whose parents were blacksmiths become blacksmiths.

Because the slave castes of Le'Ciel receive only meager education, their literacy rates have traditionally been lower than those of many other modern nations. Due to this, the slave castes have developed an incredibly rich and diverse oral tradition in the form of music and song; this was encouraged first by the Exarches and later, the Voices. Song pervades virtually every aspect of the daily life of a slave family, and walking through the streets of any settlement in the nation, one will find the air filled with songs that harmonize and shift with one another constantly, creating a nonstop, ever-changing chorus that a local could use to determine exactly what was going on all around him.

In recent centuries, the Exarches and Magisters of Le'Ciel developed a keen interest in the developing art of mechamagic. Although mechamagic was predated by entomancy and thaumaturgy, the Exarches had apparently considered those disciplines of magic to be

lesser branches unworthy of study. Mechamagic, however, was of much greater interest, and they soon devoted significant resources into exploring its potential. Mechamagical apparatus quickly became a common sight in most Le'Ciel settlements. Unfortunately, very few among even the Magisters are fully aware of the advanced principles of mechamagic, and following the presumed death of the Exarches, there are very few individuals left within Le'Ciel with the knowledge necessary to operate, much less repair and maintain these devices.

Major Settlements

Le'Ciel has always had a relatively small number of major settlements, since the Exarches preferred to concentrate their power into clear centers with smaller supporting villages and towns scattered in a loose network around the others. By far, the largest and most significant city is the capital, **Telis Ceron**, which is situated near the geographical center of the island, near the southeastern coast of its interior lake. Telis Ceron was where the Exarches first established themselves when they arrived on the island after departing from Aramyst, and was built upon the only hint of civilization found on the island, a nascent village created by a small population of native humans who had previously dwelt in subterranean caverns. The city grew steadily throughout the entirety of the Golden Age, becoming one of the largest urban areas in all of Western Aden. The center of the city was the vast Exarches Tower, a truly massive construct with a level devoted to the personal library and laboratory of each of the Exarches. The largest percentage of Le'Ciel's Magister caste is found within the city as well, and all prospective members are brought to the city for training and education before assuming positions within the nation's hierarchy. During the Darkfall, the Exarches Tower collapsed into itself, imploding as if it were drawn into itself, much like a whirlpool in the ocean. No trace of anyone who was within it at the time, including the Exarches, was found, and the volume of rubble that should have been created by the collapse of such a massive structure was far less than it should have been. Thus far, even the most powerful members of the Savant caste have been unable to explain what happened, but it has been likened to the immolation of the coast at Aramyst and the destruction of its capital, Regora. What they do know is that a large, pulsating corona of energy sometimes appears above the tower's ruins, illuminating even a moonless night like mid-day. This terrifies most Le'Ciens, and drives them into hiding until the phenomenon subsides.

Across the vast lake in the nation's interior, almost directly opposite the capital, the northeastern shore is home to **Traft**, the primary hub of commerce for all of Le'Ciel. Traft utilizes the river connecting the lake to the island's northern shore, allowing ships to come and go from the safety of the island's interior to move out to open sea and deliver goods all along the island's coast. On the rare occasions when the nation would require trade with other kingdoms, this was also coordinated through Traft. Since the Darkfall, the increase in trade with outsiders has gradually increased the importance of Traft until it rivals that of the capital itself. In fact, many citizens of Telis Ceron have left their homes to make new ones in Traft. The former slave caste of Le'Ciel has a large number of superstitious beliefs, and many fear that the capital is cursed following the destruction of the Exarches Tower. The Magisters, still dealing with the newfound burden of leadership, have temporarily forbidden relocation to Traft until they can determine how to deal with the situation on a more permanent basis.

There are a large number of smaller towns and villages throughout the remainder of the island, the majority of which are near to the coast. Many of the smallest villages have been abandoned in the face of the increasing incidents of nocturnal attacks within Le'Ciel's borders, thus concentrating larger populations in rapidly growing towns. One of the most noteworthy is **Beauvoir**, which was one of the few locations that did experience nocturnal activity during the Darkfall. The attack was repelled, but the town's Magisters either died in the battle or shortly thereafter, and in the chaos that has followed, they have never been replaced. As a result, Beauvoir is the only settlement in Le'Ciel that has no Magister presence and is governed entirely by members of the former slave caste. Over the course of a decade, the people there have

become increasingly self-sufficient and independent, and many have abandoned their caste of birth to embrace different pursuits. It has been a very chaotic and precarious process, but the denizens have been very careful not to give the Magisters any reason to pay attention to them. They have maintained their tithes and met all requirements placed upon them. For now, it seems that the Magisters have enough on their plate to overlook any oddities from Beauvoir, just as the people of the town prefer it.

Military

Traditionally, Le'Ciel has had virtually no military to speak of. On rare occasions when conflict reared its head, it was quickly squashed by the Magisters or, when times were truly desperate, the Exarches themselves. Occasionally the Magisters would take small groups of slaves and train them in basic protection duties to serve as guards for important members of the Magister caste, but all in all there were very few reasons for such things ever to be enacted. The exception to this was with the small but dedicated Vanguard caste, a group of warriors trained and conditioned by the Evoker Exarch to protect and defend the island from any threat, external or internal, that might present itself.

Since the disappearance of the Exarches, the security of Le'Ciel has become significantly less certain. Pirate incursions along the coast, occurrences that were utterly unthinkable before the Darkfall, have become increasingly common, and the eastern coastline has been attacked by raiders from the High Steppes on two occasions. The Magisters and former slaves have been pressed into service as defenders of Le'Ciel quickly and without a great deal of room for error. Every settlement near the coastline trains its own militia force for defense, and several larger groups from the settlements near the interior move around the island's perimeter regularly, reinforcing any towns that are under attack, generally seeking to discourage any potential enemy from testing the nation's resolve or its borders. The Vanguard are reserved for the defense of the capital, but they are not trusted by many Le'Ciens; shortly after the Darkfall, an ambitious Magister attempted to rally the Vanguard against the others of his caste to assume absolute control over the island nation. This conflict, called the Betrayer War, was brief but intense, and ended only when the traitor Magister attempted to use an artifact of the Exarches' called the Forge Shard, which exploded and killed him and over half the forces loyal to him. The remainder of the Vanguard caste surrendered and has since been stripped of much of their influence and prestige.

The largest and most significant standing force maintained in any settlement outside the capital is the city militia of Beauvoir where the former slaves who have taken control of the town's government since the Darkfall require all adult citizens to train for membership in the militia. Although the Magisters and Voices are absent from Beauvoir, there are many members of the Savant caste there, and they often taken on leadership roles despite their lack of formal training. Not all are active at one time, of course, but should a threat present itself to the town, all save for the youngest children have at least been exposed to basic weapons training in order to defend their homes. Whether the intent is to protect the town from the nocturnals or from the Magisters is somewhat unclear and is not discussed openly, even among the city's leaders.

Relations with Other Nations

For the majority of its history, Le'Ciel has been a largely self-sufficient nation that has had extremely limited contact with other nations. There are a handful of settlements on the coastline where diplomatic envoys from other nations are permitted, but they are all watched very carefully to ensure that there are no unwanted incursions into the island's interior. The closest thing to an ally that Le'Ciel has claimed over the centuries has been Ionara, another nation that appreciates privacy and that trades in diamonds, gems highly useful in many arcane rituals. Conversely, Le'Ciel's least pleasant neighbor has always been Arasteen, the Radiant Order of which has campaigned vigorously for an end to slavery within Le'Ciel's borders.

Since the Darkfall and the essential liberation of the slave caste, things have changed somewhat in Le'Ciel. The long-standing powerful enchantments enacted by the Exarches have begun to wane, dangerously imperiling the self-sufficiency of the nation. Trade has become increasingly important over the past decade, and many settlements have begun trading the always-valuable mechamagical components left behind by the Exarches in exchange for essential goods such as food and the weaponry necessary to defend themselves.

THE RHANATE, DOMAIN OF THE DUST KING

*"Call it a wasteland if it makes you feel better, foreigner.
It is far greater than your meager homeland, and it is all mine."*

— The Dust King

GOVERNMENT: Dictatorship.

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented, higher than average number of rapacians.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Semi-precious stones and gems, various raw materials.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Foodstuffs, water, manufactured goods.

History

Throughout the Golden Age and the Age of Thunder, the Rhanate simply did not exist. The Sundered Desert, which comprises the bulk of its lands, was not considered valuable enough for any nation to engage in the tremendous expense necessary to colonize and claim it. Prior to the Peace of the Rose, those who called the desert home were those who had either fled their homelands in the face of an enemy, or those who had been exiled from their tribes for some crime, real or imagined. Within a few years of the peace accord being established, it became clear to most denizens of the desert that the war was truly over, and the majority returned home. Only the most despicable, the most isolationist, and the most paranoid remained, preferring the brutal extremes of the desert to whatever they had left behind in their former lives. Understandably, the desert quickly developed a well-deserved reputation as a dangerous wasteland that should be avoided by the world's more civilized folk.

The Darkfall was a difficult time for the denizens of the Sundered Desert. For all that survival was a constant struggle, the dangers of the environment were at least well understood and identified; there were very few mysteries left that could survive in the harsh desert. The varieties of nocturnal that appeared in the desert were fewer in number than elsewhere in Aden, but their forms and their capabilities were a complete surprise to the nomads of the desert, and that simple fact cost a tremendous number of lives before the people were able to band together for mutual survival. In very short order, a large group of nomads joined together into one huge group. Pooling their resources and defensive abilities, the group continued to attract larger and larger foes with each group that joined their ranks, ensuring that their struggle to survive was never resolved. For months, this massive group, numbering first in the hundreds, then the thousands, crossed the entire desert multiple times, desperately searching for sanctuary against the attacks of their mysterious enemies. During this time, known as the Time of Wandering, a leader emerged from among the nomads. Charismatic and cunning, this individual's identity remains somewhat obscured, although many scholars believe that he was originally a minor bandit from the Mud Plains named Al-Akan. Whatever his past, Al-Akan soon recognized that his group had grown too large for his original warband, the largest and best organized among the nomads, to adequately protect and provide for. If his people were to survive, he realized, he would need to find a sanctuary for them. Since that proved impossible, the only option would be to create one.

The path to achieve Al-Akan's dream began in earnest when, during the wandering of his expanded tribe, his men came across a dead sand drake still crawling with the immature young that had been with it at the time of its death. The young drakes crawled over their dead mother, clearly confused as to why she would not wake. One of Al-Akan's closest allies, Kalib Ona, was familiar with such creatures and had used one as a mount in his youth. Ona managed to coax the young drakes away from their mother's corpse and into the group where they were fed and cared for with precious resources that the group could scarcely afford to spare. The gambit was successful, however, and in a matter of months, the quick-growing creatures were serving as flying mounts for a small number of Al-Akan's troops.

Determined to see his dream realized, Al-Akan led his enormous group to the base of the isolated mesa known as Terrotaxus's Tower, home of the ancient dragon Terrotaxus. Al-Akan alone rode one of the flying drakes to the top of the vast mesa. He was gone for nearly two days, and only Kalib Ona's insistence kept other members of his entourage from seeking him out. Finally, on the third day, Al-Akan returned, bearing the severed eye of the great dragon Terrotaxus whom he claimed to have slain in combat. Many were incredulous at such a claim, but Al-Akan's grisly trophy could not be denied. When he informed them that the dragon's lair atop the mesa included a vast oasis with a massive fountain of fresh water, all thought of disbelief was banished. The drakes carried much water back to those in desperate need, and the first steps were taken toward the construction of a fortress to stand against the nocturnals.

Construction of the fortress took more than a year, owing primarily to the scarcity of materials in the region around the mesa. Bandits claimed much of the material ultimately used to create the Black Citadel, and at the same time, the indestructible bones of Terrotaxus were used to create a protective barrier around the citadel itself as well as around the tent city that arose at the mesa's base, where many of the members of the nomad band had settled. The water ferried down from the top kept them in good spirits, and the mesa itself shielded them on one side from attackers, drastically improving their overall quality of life. When one year had passed and the Black Citadel was completed, Al-Akan the Dust King proclaimed himself to be the Rhanate, ruler of the Rhanate, a vast realm that extended from the Wall Mountains in the west to the Veldt region in the east, from the shores of Brisson's Bay in the north to the border of Yzeem in the south. In terms of sheer size, the Rhanate instantly became the largest nation in Aden. The validity of the Dust King's reign has never been formally recognized by other monarchs, but in practice, he is frequently afforded much the same level of deference one would expect for a monarch simply because it is more convenient to do so, and the other rulers of Aden can ill afford to spend time arguing over formalities.

Some would argue that in the years since the Darkfall, precious little has changed regarding the chaotic and lawless state of affairs in the Rhanate. Some particularly vigorous detractors even claim that the situation there has degraded since the ascension of the Dust King. Most agree, however grudgingly, that the situation in the Rhanate is improved, if for no one else than those who call that seared realm their home. The Outriders that the Dust King employs are extremely skilled in the defense of their people, despite the fact that they only do so when paid, and most citizens and groups have proven more than happy to pay their fees in order to ensure safety from the nocturnals. The resumption of trade throughout Aden, although desperately needed by all parties, has been hindered by the actions of the Dust King and his people. It is impossible to cross from the western reaches of Aden to the eastern portion without crossing at least part of the Sundered Desert, barring an extremely expensive and equally dangerous sea journey of equal length.

Lands

The Rhanate is best known for its most dominating geographical feature, the Sundered Desert. This vast desert, the largest of its kind in the known world, is broken into three broad areas. The northernmost band of the desert is the Badlands, the central region is the Sand Wastes, and finally the southern portion is known as the Mud Plains. None of



these regions are particularly hospitable, but they do vary significantly from one another and from the rest of the continent in significant ways.

The Badlands occupy the northwestern corner of the Sundered Desert and this region is the smallest of the three that make up the entire area. The Badlands fit the clinical definition of desert in that there is a severe lack of moisture, but the climate there is shockingly cold in the extreme north much of the year rather than displaying the searing heat most expect, although the climate does become much milder the farther south in the Badlands one travels. Although the smallest region of the desert, the Badlands is also perhaps the most densely populated, due primarily to the fact that many who wish to cross the Rhanate prefer to cling to the northern border with Brisson's Bay to ensure that water, even salt water, is in ample supply. Adding to this is the fact that the stones native to this region tend toward an incredible palette of colors, including brilliant purples and oranges that are popular in jewelry and architecture throughout Aden. The significant presence of Outriders in this region ensures that no one removes the stones without paying proper due to the Dust King. Food and water are scarce within the Badlands, but one source of both is the rasan tree. This unique flora is capable of firing spines at anything that moves nearby, presumably so its roots can drink the blood of animals that it kills. Those who are canny enough to avoid the spines and draw close, however, find the small berries that grow upon the tree a rich source of both nutrients and life-saving moisture.

The Sand Wastes area is what most citizens of Aden think of when they imagine the Sundered Desert, and it is the largest section of that region. The entire area is covered with vast, rolling dunes of fine sand that shift constantly in the wind. During the day the heat is almost unbearable, but at night the heat dissipates quickly, leaving a bitter chill that can devastate the unprepared. Moisture is virtually nonexistent in this region save for a handful of carefully guarded oases, all of which host settlements of one sort or another and which invariably host protective details of Outriders acting on behalf of the Dust King. There is precious little in the way of resources in this area. Other than the previously mentioned oases, which are highly fortified and referred to, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, as "oastresses," the only items of value are the occasional rock outcroppings that can be found in the area. These sometimes have minerals of value in them, in which case the Dust King's subjects quickly descend upon them and stake their

claims. Survival in this region is difficult at best and can be impossible depending upon the circumstances. Most natives know how to survive using the local species of cacti to gain desperately needed moisture, but even then it is merely a stopgap measure. The only way to survive the Sand Wastes region indefinitely is to avoid it.

The Mud Plains region is the final section of the Sundered Desert. Water is less of an issue here, as it can be found in numerous places where it is stored by the environment during the yearly rainy season. During this period, which lasts for a few weeks in the spring, the vast cracked plains are flooded and become shallow lakes which very shortly become impassable, thick mud plains that eventually dry out when the rains end. During that period, the land here is incredibly dangerous, and many creatures find themselves doomed as they sink into the mud, never to be seen again until the flats dry out in the heat and their bones are exposed to the world once more. There is little of value in the Mud Plains, although there are a handful of rugged entrepreneurs who make a living harvesting salt from the various salt flats in the area and selling it in bazaars for its preservative qualities.

If there is one thing that is unique about the lands of the Rhanate, one feature that steals the thunder of the vast wasteland that comprises the Sundered Desert, then it is the Skar. The Skar is an almost impossibly vast chasm in the southeastern region of the Rhanate, the largest and deepest wound the surface of the world has ever known. Its origins are completely unknown, as it has existed for as far back as any race aware of it has recorded histories. Unlike other known canyons and chasms, there is no immediately clear cause for the Skar's existence; no river appears to have carved it over the course of millennia, nor are there other telltale signs of an earthquake or anything else known to create such phenomenon. The Skar is hundreds of miles long and, at its widest point, one cannot see the opposite edge without some sort of visual augmentation. Its full depths have never been accurately mapped, but most agree that it averages roughly a mile deep in most places, extending to two or three times that depth in the most dangerous sections. There are numerous small communities that live within the Skar, typically no more than a few dozen individuals in each one. These residents, who call themselves Skarrians and who reject the rulership of the Dust King, keep to themselves and have very strange customs. Outsiders are virtually unknown to most and are never trusted. The degree of hostility with which they respond to such unwelcome visitors tends to vary wildly. One particular denizen that the entire world knows of is the dragon Vesuvix who allegedly dwells in the Skar's deepest recesses. As he is easily the most reclusive of Aden's few dragons, there have been no reported sightings of Vesuvix in several centuries, and some have begun to wonder if, like Terrotaxus, the creature has come to an unknown end.

Culture

Life in the Rhanate is incredibly difficult under the best circumstances, and the customs of those who live there reflect this. The people of the Rhanate believe that only the fittest survive, both in the case of the environment and the chaos that has ensued in the wake of the Darkfall, and their pessimistic attitude has given rise to the prevailing philosophy referred to as the Right of the Strong. This belief states that those who are strong enough to succeed are inherently correct as proven by virtue of their strength. There are a great many people within the Rhanate that despise the Dust King but who grudgingly recognize his rule because he is strong enough to have maintained it for more than a decade. A more common example would be the notion of theft; if someone is strong enough to take something from another and is strong enough to keep it, then no one but the offended party regards it as theft in the first place. The only real exception to this is death: the people of the Rhanate hold murderers in extremely low regard, perhaps because surviving is such a difficult task to begin with. The truly strong *can* take the life of another but *choose* not to do so, demonstrating their superiority in every regard. This has given rise to the tradition of counting coup, when one has the opportunity to kill another but chooses not to. The party who is defeated in a counting coup situation is honor-bound never to again trouble the one who counted coup against them. Even among the most despicable

of the Rhanate's bandits, this policy is strangely effective, and anyone who is able to defeat the leader of a particular band of outlaws can at least depend upon that particular band not troubling them ever again. Unfortunately, there is an ample supply of bandits to ensure that others are perfectly willing to do so.

Outsiders are often shocked to discover just how intelligent most denizens of the Rhanate are, perhaps expecting their lives to be so filled with the struggle to survive that learning has no place within it. Much to the contrary, however, the people of the Rhanate devour news and information from the rest of the world. Although they may choose to remain within the Sundered Desert, the people of the region treat the study of other nations and cultures as something of a national pastime. It is believed that this began as a means for bandits to be educated as to the nature of their prey from other nations, but whether or not that is true is impossible to say for certain. What is certain is that were it not for the difficulties inherent in their day to day survival as well as those imposed by the Darkfall, the Rhanate might well be a center of learning and culture much like their neighbors in Yzeem to the south.

Major Settlements

There are a surprising number of settlements located within the Rhanate. When confronted with a list of them, many outsiders are astonished that so many could thrive in such an inhospitable environment. What escapes them, however, is the fact that the Rhanate is so vast in terms of sheer size that there are bound to be numerous suitable locations for settlements, and each one that is discovered quickly becomes the site of such a place. However, the number of settlements per area in the Sundered Desert remains a fraction of what can be found elsewhere in Aden.

Nowhere else except in the Rhanate would the **Black Citadel** and **Rhanland** be considered two separate settlements, for in truth they are a single city, the largest within the nation's borders. The Black Citadel and its attendant barracks, training grounds, guest quarters, and various other outlying buildings sit atop the mesa known as Terrotaxus's Tower where the great dragon Terrotaxus was allegedly defeated by the Dust King. The term Rhanland, on the other hand, is applied to the vast sprawl of buildings that have been constructed at the base of the mesa over the past decade. Many suspect that the two are only referred to as separate settlements to make it a simpler matter for the Outriders to charge for their services. As the ostensible capital of the Rhanate, Rhanland is a vast hub of commerce, albeit not in a form many other nations would recognize. On a daily basis, an unpredictable maze of stalls sells everything from bauble jewelry to salvaged mechemagical devices. The range of items available for sale in the Rhanland Bazaar is nearly infinite, and there are many who travel vast distances simply to spend time searching for items in the bazaar that they have been unable to locate anywhere else in Aden. Despite Rhanland's proximity to the Black Citadel, as the largest city in the Rhanate it warrants its own governor. The man picked for that job is one of the Dust King's oldest allies, who now bears the title of Rhan. Rhan Stetch is an elf with prodigious talent in earth magic and who is rumored to be engaged in a years-long project to discover what mysteries may be hidden within the mesa, concealed there by the dragon Terrotaxus before its enigmatic death.

Although not the largest city, **Trubbs** is perhaps the busiest. Its location within the Badlands ensures that it sees a great deal of traffic as those from western Aden attempt to skirt along the edge of Brisson's Bay to reach the countries in the east. The city has a terrible reputation as a home to bandits and criminals of all sorts, and while the city's governor assures others that this is an unfounded claim, she is only practicing her exceptional talent for deception. Rhan Jyra Trestan, a human woman of great beauty, is an incredibly skilled manipulator and liar and puts her talents to great use for her Dust King. Rumors abound that she is a member of a mysterious cult of assassins known as the Crimson Sisterhood, a group whose name appears in legends dating back centuries, but many suspect this is just another deception she has perpetuated in order to ensure her reign is undisturbed. Despite the unofficial industry of Trubbs, which is mayhem, there is a great deal of mining that takes place in the region. The precious and semi-precious

stones that are valued by the wealthy in courts all across Aden are gathered here, and the people of Trubbs are hard-working, weary men and women whose eyes speak of a lifetime fighting for every penny they earn. Most are perfectly content with Trestan's rule, perhaps because of her initiative in mimicking the nation of Kyan by magically taming some of the deadly cliff spiders that prey upon the region and using them as mounts for her Outriders to protect the miners as they work.

The last true city of the Rhanate is **Surrey**, which is ruled over by the Dust King's oldest and most trusted friend, Rhan Khalib Ona. It was Ona whose mastery of the flying sand drakes allowed his friend Al-Akan to access the top of Terrotaxus's Tower and become the Dust King in deed as well as in name. For that deed, it seems, Ona has been rewarded with a city to call his own and, unlike the other Rhans, he has virtually no oversight from the Dust King. Ona is a mysterious, sometimes cruel man, a half-elf with severe features and no close advisors of his own. His city is nestled amid the Mother Mountains which offer some degree of protection from the elements, and a significant number of his Outriders are equipped with flying mounts, which is a tremendously effective deterrent against nocturnal attack. The result of this is that the city, which lacks any significant industry of its own, is also host to a massive tent city just outside its borders as people flock to the area in hopes of benefiting from the protection it offers. Although Surrey itself is not the largest of the Rhanate's cities in terms of size, it does boast the largest population.

Military

The Rhanate's military is completely unique in that it is a service offered to its citizens for a price. The Dust King's soldiers are known as Outriders and are an entirely mounted armed force. Most favor the shaggy ponies native to the Badlands, but many also choose the hardy and fast-moving lightning lizards from the Sand Wastes; both of these creatures are extremely adaptable and can be found in service throughout the Rhanate. Outriders follow a basic rank system that is designated by the color of the veils they all wear as protection from the elements. Basic soldiers are Nomads, who wear turquoise and are led by Wanderers, who wear green. Wanderers lead bands of ten to twenty Nomads and are usually in charge of the defense of a settlement or oasis. Multiple bands can be commanded by a captain known as an Amar and bearing a yellow veil. Amars collect tithes and fees which they submit to Rowans, or Tithe-Masters, who bear orange veils. Rowans report directly to the Rhans or to the Dust King himself.

The aspect of the military that is different in the Rhanate is the fee that they charge for their services. They are awarded fees based upon the nature of the services. The capture of a thief, for instance, warrants a fee based upon the value of the items stolen. The capture of a murderer incurs a fee based upon the value of the estate of the deceased. Escorting a caravan warrants a percentage of the sales, and so on. This ensures that Outriders are among the wealthiest of the Rhanate's subjects, but of course a portion of every fee is returned to the Rhans and the Dust King himself, all of whom enjoy lifestyles for which the term opulent is simply inadequate.

Relations with Other Nations

The people of the Rhanate are ruthlessly opportunistic, and none more so than their Dust King. As a result, formal relations with other nations are somewhat strained even during the best of times. Vanora and Yzeem to the south are cool toward the people of the Rhanate, owing to the occasional forays of bandits across their borders, but they are willing to trade with them as necessary. Carraway is almost entirely hostile, given the twin threats it faces from the Rhanate and their allies in the High Steppes, one of the few nations to have formal agreements with the Dust King's minions in the northern reaches of the Sand Wastes. The refugees of Aramyst have nothing but fear and hatred for the bandits who cross their borders and pillage the ruins of their wasted homeland.

Western Aden is somewhat more amenable to the Rhanate, at least partially. Kyan and Ionara have very little to do with the Dust King, and

at least bear him no ill will. The Iron Tyrant of Urbana has an ongoing feud with the Dust King over the exorbitant taxes the latter places upon the Thunder Trains as they pass through the Rhanland. This has caused great tension between the two nations. In spite of his many questionable practices, however, the Dust King holds the benevolent King Corben of Arasteen in very high regard, and has been known to reduce or even waive fees for those traveling through the desert on official business for that nation.

URBANA, REALM OF THE IRON TYRANT

"If the only way to escape the Darkfall is to transform the world into a nightmare like Urbana, then perhaps it isn't worth saving."

— Spyre, Elven Thief

GOVERNMENT: Military Dictatorship.

PREDOMINANT RACES: Higher than average population of dwarves and goreaux.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Foodstuffs, timber.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Low-grade ore, manufactured goods.

History

Urbana has very little history to speak of, having been born in the terror-filled days immediately following the Darkfall. It was born of blood and desperation, of ambition and determination, and in the throes of its birth, it consumed a once noble land called Columbey.

Columbey was not the first modern nation born in Aden, but it was the first to truly establish security within its borders. It was perhaps for this reason that Columbey was chosen as the site for the historic accords at Rose, the small town where the Peace of the Rose was born and the Golden Age was ushered in. The prestige associated with this was something that the nobility of Columbey used to gain much standing with other nations, and they very discreetly exploited the desire for many scholars and historians to study at Rose to ensure their nation was regarded as something of a utopia for those interested in scholarly pursuits. While Aramyst was developing a reputation in the east for magical study, Columbey was instead a haven for those interested in pursuing the arts. The nobles of the land established schools, academies, and museums, which only further enhanced their wealth. It was in this that the long-term seeds of Columbey's decay were sewn.

Throughout the entirety of its history, the divide between the common folk of Columbey and the noble class grew increasingly wider. The commoners were never poorly treated, nor did they lack for basic comforts, but the excesses of the nobility, and in particular the royal line, were viewed as wasteful and hedonistic. Resentment grew over the course of centuries until, in the years immediately prior to the Darkfall, the distance between peasant and noble was such that governments of other nations privately worried that a revolution might be in the works. Truthfully, there were groups considering that course of action, but they were never afforded the chance; the Darkfall drastically reordered the priorities of every living being in Aden who was fortunate enough to survive it.

The royal family of Columbey survived the Darkfall, due in no small part to the extensive protection the noble class enjoyed in the face of potential assassination. It seemed as though the cataclysm awoke some small degree of greatness in them as well, for King Warrus immediately set to defending his surviving settlements from the worst ravages of the nocturnals. He recalled all those who had ever served him, bringing in many mercenaries from throughout the continent, to serve at his side. It was one of these mercenary captains, a man called Marlek, that fought alongside the king and took up his crown when a nocturnal attack felled



the monarch with a fatal blow. Calling himself Lord Urbane, the mercenary quickly took control of the capital city of Tarello, renaming it and the nation as a whole to suit his needs. Urbana was born.

In the ten years since the Darkfall, Lord Urbane has guided his new nation on a sinister path that has proven terribly effective. The Iron Tyrant, as Urbane is often called, believes with incredible conviction that mechemagic is the tool that will allow the nocturnals to be defeated once and for all and for the force behind the Darkfall, whatever that may be, to be ultimately defeated. With this singular purpose in mind, he has ordered his land stripped of every imaginable resource of any value whatsoever and has funneled every possible commodity into the development of new weapons for the purpose of destroying his enemies. The people of Urbana exist on the brink of starvation in many cases, but they are generally safe from nocturnals. Whether they are safe from their own government is another matter entirely.

In his mad quest for absolute dominance, the Iron Tyrant has embraced ideas that many have long thought impossible. The notion of large scale mechemagical ground transport, for instance, had been abandoned by all but the most non-traditional mechemages. Two years after the Darkfall, however, just when many villages and even entire nations were on the brink of absolute disaster due to their inability to conduct trade and secure those commodities they required, Lord Urbane unveiled his first Thunder Train. These massive armored transports, vast on a scale never before seen in Aden, allowed trade to be conducted between designated outposts that the Iron Tyrant demanded be constructed in those locations he deemed worthy of the Train's presence. The Train proved enormously successful, primarily for Urbana but also for those who needed a means to trade with others as well. Despite the distaste the governments of other nations had for lining the pockets of a man who was clearly a threat to them, no one could afford to turn a Thunder Train away. Four of the Trains were ultimately created, although rumors abound in recent years, since the Thunder Trail has been expanded to include Carraway and the High Steppes, that Lord Urbane is constructing additional Trains.

All of Urbane's excesses have not proven so beneficial. Some years after the Darkfall, one of the poorer regions of Mekanus was heavily infested by nocturnals. Annoyed by the constant drain on his military's

resources in trying to keep order in the region, Lord Urbane capriciously ordered that portion of the city be walled off and abandoned. Those who dwelled within were given little notice, and roughly half of them were unable to evacuate in time. They found themselves walled up inside with no protection and little in the way of supplies. The military makes regular supply drops inside the wall but will not allow anyone to leave. The situation has become significantly worse since a sorcerous mishap created a massive steam golem with self-awareness. The golem, calling itself Terrablix the Autonomous, gave itself to the Darkfall and entered the so-called Lost Ghetto, rapidly becoming the ruler of that tiny realm.

Another example of the Iron Tyrant's brutality bringing suffering to his people indirectly would be the incident called the Rat War. Since the time before the Darkfall, the sewers beneath Mekanus were home to a large number of ratlings, sentient scavengers that lived off of those who dwelled above them. The population of ratlings swelled in the wake of the cataclysm, and their thievery became a significant annoyance. Never one to suffer such things, Urbane ordered a solution prepared, and it was provided in the form of a foul alchemical mixture called arkana. Arkana was administered to the sewers in large doses, but it had not been thoroughly tested, and so its side effects were not anticipated. Many ratlings were killed, but those who survived were changed by the poison, mutated, and gained numerous physical or even arcane abilities as a result. Not only that, but the ratlings also gained a seething hatred of all beings from the surface, ensuring that what was once an annoyance would become something vastly more dangerous due to Lord Urbane's intolerance.

Lands

In the past ten years, Lord Urbane has visited a century's worth of pillaging upon his new kingdom, reducing what was once a beautiful, productive land into a polluted, grey wasteland. Once, Columbey was much like Arasteen to the north, only milder in climate; plains, rolling hills, and woodlands covered much of its area. Now, what has not been lost to the teeming hordes of nocturnals has instead been stripped bare of anything resembling value, leaving desolate, arid lands in the wake. Every scrap of timber or mineral resource has been taken, and the lands that remain have been overfarmed for more than a decade, leaving the soil barren and lifeless.

One of the most distinguishing features of the Urbanan lands is the ranged called the Charred Peaks, which are situated directly in the nation's center. The Charred Peaks are among the tallest mountains in Aden, taller even than the Wall Mountains and rivaled only by the Fangs in Arasteen. The mountains are of tremendous value to Urbana because of the multiple veins of high-grade manite that are found within them. The mines within the mountains are heavily guarded by the Shadow Army as well as the Watchers of the Eye, two of the branches of Urbana's military.

Excluding the mostly non-functional port at Mekanus, there are two principle waterways in Urbana: the Cold River and the Red River. The former extends from northern Arasteen through Urbana, into Kyan and ultimately all the way to the Green Sea near the settlement of Sludj. Because the Cold River comprises the eastern border of Kyan, its use by Blackport-based ships is somewhat controversial but as of yet has not resulted in any significant skirmishes between the two countries despite their ongoing hostilities on other fronts. The Red River, on the other hand, carries material from the Charred Peaks south to the Green Sea. From there it can either be transported by water to other portions of Urbana (which is marginally less dangerous than overland routes) or to distant ports of call for the purposes of trade.

Culture

The people of Columbey, or at least the nobility, once enjoyed a rich and engaging culture that placed great emphasis on scholarly pursuits and the arts. All of that is now gone, swept away in the face of Lord Urbane's single-minded determination – some might say paranoia. All that remains is a people divided into two broad categories: those who delight in power and those who are oppressed by it.

Lord Urbane earnestly believes that the answer to defeating the Darkfall is to be as ruthless and as brutal as the agents of that calamitous power. This philosophy, which has been roundly denounced in every other civilized nation, has been embraced by the downtrodden people of Urbana. The result is that the various military branches of the nation are filled with violent, perhaps even sociopathic, individuals who are just as likely to visit suffering upon their fellow citizens as upon their enemies if deprived of another foe for long enough. Those who attain power, whether military or political in nature (although the distinction between the two in Urbana is tenuous at best), lord it over others in a morbid celebration of their own survival and success.

The common people of Urbana have accepted that they must suffer in order to be safe from the horrors that have been unleashed on the world. Over the course of a decade, they have been utterly broken, so much so that there is nothing resembling a resistance to Lord Urbane's rule, which one might normally expect to find. The people have accepted their lot in life and eke out a meager existence. Anything that breaks the monotony is welcome, which is the unfortunate reason that bloodsports have become so popular in Urbana.

Bloodsports are by far the most popular diversion available to the people of Urbana. They are both an opportunity for a small number of athletes to improve their lot in life and a chance to break the tedium of daily existence for those who watch them. New ones are created regularly as old ones lose their appeal. Some of the most popular ones include: splat, in which teams play capture the flag from high catwalks, with participants frequently falling to their deaths; death maze, which pits participants against a deadly, trap-filled labyrinth containing, among other things, captured nocturnals; and rayana, a sort of jousting competition with giant stingrays captured from the polluted Mekanus harbor.

Fortunately, despite all appearances to the contrary, hope has not been completely extinguished within Urbana. One need look only to the Day of Invention for proof of that. At the beginning of each summer, there is a day devoted to individual citizens showcasing their own mechamagical inventions to their neighbors. This is celebrated in every settlement in the nation, and agents of the throne are often on hand to observe and take note of anything that could be employed as a weapon in the armies of Lord Urbane. Despite that the government has an ulterior motive for the celebration, the people seem to take great

joy in creating works of art and labor-saving devices to share with their neighbors, indicating perhaps that the people of Urbana might one day live normal lives once again.

Major Settlements

The capital city of Urbana, and of Columbey before it, is now called **Mekanus**. Unquestionably the largest city in all of Aden, Mekanus is home to the majority of Urbana's refineries and factories, and for that reason the sky above it is thick with smoke and pollution, casting it in a permanent twilight pall. Once a bustling port city, the harbor at Mekanus is used only lightly compared to the pre-Darkfall years. The city is bisected by the Toxious River, a waterway whose previous name is no longer recalled by the beaten-down denizens of the city. The city of Mekanus is heavily industrialized, populated with dozens of manite refineries and countless factories, smithies, and alchemical laboratories. The sea has become poisonous from excessive waste dumping (though some enterprising wizards have recently cleansed select areas of the ocean and revived some of old Columbey's fishing trade). The surrounding lands are bleak and infertile. The sky carries a sickly grey hue at all times from industrial pollution. All of this, Mekanus' engineers would be quick to point out, is a necessary evil. With the ever-present danger of the nocturnals threatening to wipe out Urbana, Mekanus has become a necessary production center for much needed mechamagical weaponry. Because the surrounding lands are either incapable of being farmed or have been abandoned due to nocturnal predation, Mekanus has been forced to trade its technology with other nations in return for necessary food and supplies, increasing its reliance on manufacturing and thus exacerbating the problem.

The entire city is extremely fortified - as much a massive fortress as it is a metropolis. Due to the general exodus of the populace from the surrounding lands, it is also intensely overpopulated. In an effort to impose order in the chaotic capital, the city has imposed a draconic social order, rigidly dividing the city into twelve districts of wildly different social standing and importance. The most important of these districts is Honor's Foundry, home to Urbana's nobility and much of its military. This section of the city is the safest of the districts, regularly patrolled by well-armed members of Urbana's military. As one moves further from the center of the city, these patrols become rarer, with the



outlying districts receiving little more than a token level of protection from volunteer militia. Due to Urbane's past history as a mercenary, the city of Mekanus holds an irresistible allure for adventurers of every stripe, all seeking their fortunes in the city where one of their own became a king. Many residents of Mekanus have sought to deal with the twin problems of rampant crime and armed drifters by turning the two against one another. Posting bounties for local crimes is a common practice in the poorer districts and can be quite a lucrative source of income for enterprising adventurers.

After Mekanus, the next largest settlement in Urbana is **Blackport**, ruled over by one of Lord Urbane's most trusted subordinates, Baroness Lucretia. Although Blackport is a river port (as compared to Mekanus' sea port), it sees vastly more trade and traffic than the capital, due primarily to the wretched state of the harbor at Mekanus. Blackport's call to fame is the number of large barges that are used to ship materials all along the coast and to other countries. The shipyards in the city produce steam-powered tugs that are protected by the same sort of siege weaponry one might find on a Thunder Train, and the creation of those behemoths has inspired an entirely new class of vessel called the Annihilators. These massive, metal-hulled ships bristle with weapons and are primarily wind-powered, rendering them quite slow. When the occasion demands, however, the same enchantments that power the steam engines of the city's smaller craft can be activated, giving an Annihilator a sudden surge of speed that has spelled the doom of many Yzeem corsairs.

If Mekanus and Blackport are two points of a triangle, then the third point is one of the most unpleasant places in Aden, the city of **Smult**. Nestled high among the Charred Peaks in central Urbana, Smult serves as the center of Urbana's mining operations, and it is the site of the richest and most productive veins of manite known to exist anywhere in the world. Unlike those who must endure the intensity of Lord Urbane or the cruelty of Baroness Lucretia, the citizens of Smult are largely spared the excesses of Baron Volkanis, for he spends little time there. Smult lacks any significant waterway other than the Red River, which can be found on the southern plains far below the peaks. While both Blackport and Mekanus use waterways to carry away their foul pollution, the people of Smult lack this convenience and instead simply dump waste and pollutants down the mountain, ensuring that the lowlands surrounding the Charred Peaks are among the filthiest and disgusting places found within the nation's borders. The Baron of Smult fancies himself something of a sporting gentleman, although most would disagree with that assessment, and as such has created his own elite guard to ride alongside him in battle. The Salamanders, as this unit is called, are equipped much like the heavy infantry of the Shadow Army, save that their armor bears a brilliant crimson hue and that they are a cavalry detachment. The Salamanders, most of whom share the fiery temper of their leader, are known for their signature maneuvers, all of which involve the immolation of their enemies or, failing that, anything that has drawn their ire.

Military

The military of Urbana is much more developed than in most other nations, and consists of four separate groups, each of which can either operate completely independently of the others or can cooperate as necessary. The first group, which is also the least equipped and the most expendable, is the militia. It is much like the militias maintained in other nations in that all able-bodied citizens are expected to participate. However, there are many exempted from the rule, such as those who are involved in the mining or refinement of manite. Since this includes approximately half the people of Urbana, the militia is much smaller than one might expect. Militia members are typically equipped with whatever they can provide, or with the castoffs of the other military branches. The other branches also consider the militia little more than cannon fodder.

By far, the largest branch of Urbana's military is the one known as the Shadow Army. This force is highly trained, well equipped, and utterly loyal to Lord Urbane. Members of the Shadow Army are

afforded significant authority and prestige compared to the common folk, and they have been responsible for some of the most terrible offenses committed against them. Accusations of theft, arson, and pillaging are not uncommon, but the officers of the Shadow Army feel it is best to permit their men to vent their frustrations when battle is not readily available. For their part, the people of Urbana have long been accustomed to the excesses of those higher in station since the days of Columbey, and seem to accept this tyranny as the price of their safety.

Smaller by far than the Shadow Army, but even more trained and better equipped, is the Iron Guard. These soldiers are the ones tasked with the operation and defense of the Thunder Trains. Arrogant and often brutish, the Iron Guards are nevertheless widely respected for their skills; given the frequency with which the Thunder Trains are attacked by nocturnals, mere survival alone is something of an achievement by a member of the Iron Guard. In addition to their normal military training, many Iron Guards receive rudimentary instruction in the maintenance of various parts of the Thunder Trains and extensive training in the use of the ballista and storm cannons that serve as the Trains' primary defenses.

The final branch of the Urbanan military is part of the military only in that its authority is commensurate with that of the other branches. The Watchers of the Eye are an order of priests and wizards tasked with rooting out corruption wherever it might hide among the people of Urbana. The order was created when a personal advisor of Lord Urbane and a powerful spellcaster, Gerrick Malanch, discovered a group of shape-shifters in the village of Rose working to undermine Urbana. After dispatching the enemies, Malanch expressed his concern to Lord Urbane who commissioned him to ensure that the incident would not be repeated. It is possible that the Eye began with good or at least neutral intentions, but it has quickly become the most corrupt organization known to exist in western Aden. The power possessed by the members of the Eye appears almost inherently corrupting, and they often turn against anyone they perceive as a threat to their own personal agenda or the agenda of their superiors. The members of the Eye appear to have a particular animosity toward the Radiant Order of Arasteen, and conflicts between members of the two groups are an almost foregone conclusion whenever they meet.

Relations with Other Nations

It is the tendency of Lord Urbane to group others into one of two broad categories: those who may prove useful and those who stand in his way. This philosophy writ large is the essence of Urbana's attitude toward other nations as well. It would be disingenuous to claim any nation is truly an ally of Urbana's; a more accurate statement might be that there are nations whose cooperation benefits Urbana, and so Lord Urbane ensures that their cooperation is acquired through whatever price he is willing to pay, be it trade concessions or some other valued commodity. Ionara is chief among those nations that Urbana considers useful, and it is said that the Ice Queen of that realm is among the only beings in Aden that Lord Urbane truly respects. Other than that, however, the only notable association with an outside nation is with the High Steppes, the leader of which, Kazan Tovar, is a great admirer of Lord Urbane and tends to support his endeavors whenever it matters that he do so. Of the other eastern nations, Lord Urbane is neutral toward Carraway and Vanora, the latter only because of the potential alliance with the Dragon Emperor of that realm. He considers the ruins of Aramyst beneath his notice, and the hatred that the Dust King of the Rhanate has for the Iron Tyrant is heartily reciprocated.

In western Aden, Urbana has no true friends. Relations with Kyan to the south are always strained at best, and violence is not uncommon along the border. If it were not a detriment to Kyan and an annoyance to Urbana, a full-fledged war could conceivably have already broken out. It is no secret that Urbane and King Corben of Arasteen to the north despise one another utterly but, for now, the two nations remain formally neutral, dependent as they are on one another; Urbana desperately needs the food that Arasteen gladly trades for manufactured goods.

VANORA, EMPIRE OF THE BEASTS

*"The Darkfall has brought other nations to ruin,
but Vanora remains strong. The Ten Beasts guide our path,
and with their guidance we will defeat this plague of darkness."*

— Emperor Dyok the Younger

GOVERNMENT: Benevolent Monarchy (Emperor).

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented; higher than average population of elves and ferrans.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Foodstuffs, metal melee weaponry and armor.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Manufactured goods, mechemagical supplies.

History

The foundation of Vanora predates the Peace of the Rose, although not by a tremendous length of time. Although the Vanorans hold tradition and history in very high regard, the tremendous loss of life and lore following the Darkfall has left even them in some degree of disarray when it comes to a complete comprehension of the past; sadly, scholars and their like are not ideally suited to survival in a post-Darkfall world, and as a result, a great deal of ignorance and misunderstanding has grown in the wake of that cataclysm. Regardless, it is generally understood that Vanora first came to exist roughly a century before the Peace of the Rose when an elven warlord of particular wisdom and foresight managed to unite the warring tribes of the region by creating a philosophy known as the Way of the Ten Beasts, a philosophy that is still the center of culture in Vanora more than one thousand years later. It is believed by some that it was this elf, who became the first Emperor of Vanora, who organized and was the driving force behind the Peace of the Rose as well, but there is some debate on this issue.

Early on in its history, the people of Vanora chose to live lives largely cut off from outside influences. Many have attributed this to arrogance or xenophobia over the years, but the Vanorans simply prefer to commit to a life lived well, rather than lives lived pursuing the interests of the external world. Most of Vanora's history has been taken up with endeavors and interests within its own borders, with only limited contact with other nations. This has limited the nation's cultural development in some regards; for example, neither firearms nor mechemagic had any significant presence within Vanora until after the Darkfall when the progressive Emperor Dyok the Younger took the throne. Indeed, some could say that Vanora as a whole has been transformed by the leadership of its present Emperor and his interest in the trappings of modern Aden.

The first Emperor Dyok held power for more than a century before the Darkfall took place. He was widely regarded as a just but distant ruler, and interacted with the common people only through his principal subordinates. One of his primary vassals in this regard was his son, generally known as Dyok the Younger, who was extremely active in the military as a leader of the Sons of the Dragon. Within days of the Darkfall, a particularly tenacious nocturnal assault upon Tanto breached the Palace of the Dragon, and the Emperor fell victim to a life-draining nocturnal. His son fought his way to the palace and then to his father, but he was moments too late to stop the attack. He plunged his blade into the nocturnal's heart and avenged his father, though. Since then, his father remains in a comatose state somewhere within the palace. Some have hinted that Emperor Dyok the Younger may be keeping his father incapacitated to maintain his own rule, but those who have witnessed the Emperor's ferocious vengeance in fighting the nocturnals do not subscribe to this theory, and those who know him well know that he would vastly prefer his former life as a military officer rather than having to deal with the minutiae of administering an entire kingdom.

One year ago, the sense of security and insulation that Vanora has traditionally enjoyed was shattered in a failed coup of sorts against the

Emperor. The exact circumstances remain something of a mystery, but a small number of men in all-obscuring armor and masks attempted to attack the Emperor in his quarters, but the martial prowess of Dyok was sufficient to protect him until his men could defeat the rest of the assailants and join their lord. All the would-be assassins except for four were killed. Among those who escaped was the leader of the group, a man (or perhaps a woman – the armor made it impossible to tell) called Shogun. All the slain assassins were discovered to be members of the Sons of the Dragon, a group that had until that point never known a traitor or turncoat among its ranks. The discarded armor of those that escaped left no clues whatsoever, but the natural assumption is that they, too, were members of the Sons. This has caused considerable outrage and consternation among many of the Emperor's higher-ranking vassals, and only the stern command of Dyok has prevented a witch-hunt from ravaging the ranks of his military. For his part, Dyok believes that the men who attempted to kill him were acting under duress, either a powerful enchantment or perhaps even some sort of supernatural ability possessed by a member of the corrupted. He has thus far refused to believe that a conspiracy exists within his Sons without further evidence being provided, evidence that thus far has not been found.

Lands

The lands of Vanora are among the most beautiful in all of Aden, which is doubtless why the first Emperor chose it as the location to begin building his dynasty. The majority of land occupying Vanora is made up of temperate woodland. The climate is quite warm with mild





winters that usually see only a handful of snows each season. These woodlands occasionally give way to dense forest, such as the notorious Dead Forest in Vanora's westernmost reaches. The dense forests are the only known location in Aden that the goysan tree grows. These dark wooded trees are well known throughout the continent for their exquisite beauty, but they are so delicate to work with that magic is required to ensure they do not crack, and thus their lumber is unsuitable for large-scale work and building projects; Vanora imports the majority of its utility-grade lumber from Carraway.

Although all land in Vanora is arable, by far the most fertile and productive are the lands found in the valley around the Sleeping River where it winds south from Great Moss Lake in Aramyst to the Ocean of Serenity in the south at the capital city of Tanto. The great majority of settlements in Vanora are found along this valley, and most lack any significant noteworthy qualities, devoted entirely as they are to farming the land and protecting those who dwell within them. An assignment to protect one of these settlements is considered an honorable post by the Sons of the Dragon, but also an ultimately unexciting one.

There are numerous mountains found in Vanora, although none are part of a range. The mountains are snow-capped throughout most of the year, and create a beautiful backdrop that, before the Darkfall, was a tremendous attraction for artists of all sorts. Nestled among these mountains are the largest number of active volcanoes found anywhere in Aden. One of the ancient dragons, Shosa, is rumored to dwell within one of these volcanoes, and that is reason enough for most Vanorans to avoid them – out of some combination of respect and fear.

Culture

Without question, the most significant aspect of Vanoran culture is the pervasive philosophy known as the Way of the Ten Beasts. This philosophy was established by the first Emperor and is adhered to by virtually every native of the country, extending even to a large number of Vanorans who make their home outside the nation's borders. The precise origins of the philosophy are somewhat unclear, as it predates the Peace of the Rose by some time. It is believed that the philosophy was created by the first Emperor as a way of unifying the various tribes

in the region that now comprises Vanora. These tribes had an animistic view of the world, with each tribe identifying with a totemic animal of some sort. By establishing that all the totem beasts existed together equally, the first Emperor was able to dispel their hostilities toward one another and unite the tribes under a single banner, the banner of the dragon, the perfect combination of the beasts.

Although the first few generations of Vanorans followed the Way of Ten Beasts based upon heredity, the Emperor's subtle encouragement quickly ensured that each individual member of the populace selected the totem he venerated the most, based upon personal preference and tendencies. The extension of the Vanoran calendar, with months named for the beasts, to the whole of Aden did a great deal to diversify the philosophy among most Vanorans, which in turn eliminated any lingering tribal loyalties that might have posed a long term threat to the reign of the first Dragon Emperor. Each of the Ten Beasts signifies a different aspect of personality and culture:

The Serpent and its venomous bite represent those who achieve victory not through force of arms but rather through deadly tactics. Even the weak can be deadly when pressed, and the use of wits and even treachery can even the field against martial shortcomings. Commoners without significant martial prowess often emulate the Serpent.

The Eagle is another totem popular with the common folk, for it represents both ferocity and wisdom. If Eagle is presented a foe, it fights fiercely, but if it cannot achieve victory, it takes flight to live to fight again another day. This sensibility appeals to the practical common people of Vanora.

The Fox is cunning and clever when lacking strength and ferocity. Fox defeats his foes through trickery and deceit, knowing that he is not strong enough to overcome them with sheer force. Indeed, Fox only resorts to violence when all other courses have failed, and for this reason he is popular both with the common folk as well as with rogues of all stripes.

The Wolf is both a warrior and a pack animal, and represents those who work with others. It is a common emblem to find on officers of the militia, those who fight together to defend Vanora but who have not yet earned the right to bear the emblem of the Dragon. Young adventurers also often choose Wolf to represent their endeavors and attempts to gain glory and wealth.

The Ursax is a creature unique to Aden, most similar to a bear but reptilian rather than mammalian. The sheer power of Ursax appeals most strongly to warriors, although those who aspire to greatness, particularly young children, often choose it as a symbol as well. Those warriors who adopt the Ursax as their totem keep their blades as sharp as their namesake's claws, and armor themselves to resist the most grievous of injuries, just as Ursax's scales protect it.

The Shark is a totem of warriors, like Wolf and Ursax. Unlike the others, Shark represents absolute ferocity and unbridled aggression in the face of an enemy. The savage, unrelenting fighting style of warriors who embrace the path of Shark is often ill-suited to fighting alongside others but is perfect for hunting nocturnals.

The Basilisk is a rare creature most often found in the foothills of the Vanoran mountains. Its poorly understood supernatural power, the ability to turn others to stone, ensured that the ancient Vanorans adopted it as a totem of power. Spellcasters often revere Basilisk if they believe that they command unique and powerful abilities that will bring them glory.

The Drake is a distant cousin of the great Dragon and is possessed of tremendous power, both physical and arcane. The Drake is most often venerated by wizards, sorcerers, and others who seek to command the power of the universe itself. Ironically, few warriors embrace the Drake's path, for to do so seems to accept mediocrity compared to the power of the Dragon.

The Leviathan is another creature native to Aden, and one that haunts the Serene Ocean in the south. Massive creatures, leviathans are generally peaceful, but their mournful songs put all who hear them to sleep, something that can spell doom for sailors who succumb to their terrible melodies. Few can claim any understanding of this magic or its func-

tion, but wizards respect the inescapable power of its abilities, and many adopt Leviathan as their totem in hopes of gaining similar power.

The Dragon is the flawless combination of all beasts, and the personal symbol of the Emperor. Only the Emperor and those who serve him directly, the militant order of the Sons of the Dragon, may bear this symbol. This does not mean that others do not empathize with the Dragon, of course, as all citizens of Vanora aspire to its perfection and martial superiority.

Major Settlements

As with much else in Aden, only a handful of proper settlements have survived in the decade since the Darkfall. Once there were countless small villages and lone farms that dotted the wilderness, but the majority of those have fallen and virtually all trace of them has been erased by the violent assaults of the nocturnals. Those that remain have grown larger and stronger, however, and as a result Vanora seems to outsiders to have remained largely unscathed despite the reality of the situation.

According to legend, the site of the capital city **Tanto** derives its name from when the first Emperor of Vanora plunged the blade of his dagger into the earth to mark the site where his city would be built. (Tanto is the old Vanoran term for knife.) Tanto has a reputation as the tallest city in Aden, and it is a well-deserved reputation. The strange architecture of Vanora has buildings built atop one another, with a strange series of concave ledges and catwalks connecting towers and spires throughout the city. Tanto is both the seat of the Emperor's power and the base for the Sons of the Dragon, so it is perhaps one of the most well-defended cities in the entirety of Aden. The Emperor and his military both make their home within the Palace of the Dragon, the largest structure within Tanto. In addition to its administrative and military purposes, Tanto is also home to the near legendary blacksmiths who forge the finest non-magical blades in Aden. The Vanoran method of folding steel has been a closely guarded secret for almost a thousand years, and the only place that one can be trained in the art is within Tanto. Every citizen of Tanto takes great pride in the reputation that Vanoran steel has, and blacksmiths are treated somewhat like celebrities within the city. Since the Darkfall, Tanto has also become a center for Vanoran mechamagic, something that is totally at odds with the nation's sensibilities before the cataclysm. The elder Emperor Dyok was disdainful toward mechamagic, but his son has always been fascinated by it, and within a few years of assuming the throne, he converted the Fox temple within his palace to a school for mechamagic. The product of this investment on the Emperor's part has been the production of mechamagical dragon-like fighting machines called the iron drakes. These semi-intelligent automatons are nearly unique in Aden due to the secret method by which the Vanorans instill them with limited intelligence. The iron drakes have been so successful that iron versions of many other totem animals have been designed as well, but as of yet there has been no iron dragon, much though the Emperor desires otherwise.

After Tanto, the most influential settlement within Vanora is unquestionably the city of **Shan'Ti**, which is the center of most of the nation's trade with other nations. Because of its nature as a port city, however, the majority of Shan'Ti trading houses conduct their business in the city of Balaquim in neighboring Yzeem, which is perhaps the single largest trading hub in Aden. A small number of trading houses do trade to the north with the ruins of Aramsyt and even distant Carraway and the High Steppes, but while these houses are based in Shan'Ti, they maintain holdings in Vanora's northern reaches where most of their caravans are maintained. Shan'Ti is governed by one of the Emperor's two hand-chosen governors. These individuals bear the title Dairini, which in the old Vanoran language means "eyes of the Dragon," signifying that they are of great importance to the Emperor, also known as the Silver Dragon. The Dairini of Shan'Ti is a tigress ferran called Miwauk. Rumors abound that she and the Emperor are lovers, rumors that neither have ever bothered to address. In addition to its shipping interests, Shan'Ti is the center of Vanora's massive fishing industry, and as a result, hosts a sizeable shipwright industry as well. Finally, the Ancient and Intrepid Cartographer's Society is based within the city.

The society is truly ancient, predating the Golden Age, although it has fallen largely into obscurity since the mapping of Aden was completed centuries ago. In the wake of the Darkfall and the loss of knowledge that accompanied it, however, the society is enjoying a significant revival.

The third largest and most important city in Vanora is **Yalek**, which is the northernmost settlement of significance in the nation. The city suffered vastly more than Tanto or Shan'Ti when the Darkfall took place, and both damage and loss of life were significant. Fortunately for the people of the city, Yalek has always been home to a large populace of juraks, who fought with their people's legendary ferocity for the safety of their homes and neighbors. The Dairini of Yalek is a jurak named Rage, a hero of the Darkfall who lost her twin sister in the fight to keep the nocturnals out of the city during those first dark days. Yalek borders on one of Vanora's great forests, and is home to the magically-skilled artisans who are able to successfully craft the delicate, beautiful wood of the goysan trees. The city is also noteworthy because of one of its denizens, an elf follower of Fox named Wy, who created the first true rifles in Aden. Wy's shop, Flame & Thunder, is the only place that private individuals can purchase his muskets, which are often called rifles or long-guns by firearm aficionados throughout the land.

Beyond the three major cities, there are dozens of smaller villages throughout Vanora, but only one other true city. **Shang** boasts the thickest and sturdiest walls of any settlement in Vanora, and perhaps in Aden as a whole. This is because the city is located within a large forest known as the Dead Forest, an area that suffers an undead blight much like the northeastern portions of Aden. Nothing stays dead within the Dead Forest, and attacks from undead forces are a near constant situation in Shang. The people of the city are notoriously resilient, however, and fight against the undead with a fervor rarely seen outside of Carraway. Many wonder why the people of Shang remain when there is no particular resource within the forest to warrant the constant risk of undead assault. Many within the city believe that if they can demonstrate that their home is secure enough, its location can become home to a Thunder Station, one of the sanctioned stops for Urbana's Thunder Trains. If this becomes a reality, it would dramatically alter the dynamics of trade, both within Vanora and between Vanora and other nations. And of course, it would tremendously benefit the people of Shang in the process.

Military

The military organization of Vanora falls into two broad categories: the militia and the Sons of the Dragon. The former is much in keeping with those found in virtually every other nation since the advent of the Darkfall, and includes virtually every able-bodied adult capable of wielding a weapon. Every standing settlement within the boundaries of Vanora requires its capable citizens to serve regular shifts with the city guard, ensuring the safety of the city as well as keeping skills sharp in the event of an attack, which naturally is a very real and regularly occurring threat. The philosophy of Vanora holds the martial tradition in very high regard, so most are quite eager to participate in their regular training, and there is never any shortage of volunteers to join the ranks of the city guard during the event of an actual attack. Of all who serve within the militia, the finest are chosen to serve as officers, positions of full-time duty. Officers in the militia answer directly to the Sons of the Dragon who are charged with the defense of a particular settlement.

The Sons of the Dragon is the elite fighting force of Vanora, serving as the front line defenders in any conflict. Members of the Sons of the Dragon are the only citizens of Vanora permitted to call themselves samurai, and while membership in the order is passed down through heredity, those who find themselves unwilling or unable to serve are discharged from service, and it is not uncommon for others to be recruited from outside the ranks of the samurai in order to ensure that the order is not wanting for members. Sons of the Dragon are dispatched to individual settlements based upon the size of the settlement in question.

The Sons are ranked according to a scheme of colors that is, according to legend, the same sequence of colors that are found upon the tail of the great dragon Shosa, rumored to dwell within one of Vanora's great

volcanoes. Comprising the first rank are the Yellow Dragons, who are essentially squires and who are promoted to the second rank of Green Dragon after a single year of service. Green Dragons can, over time, be promoted to the ranks of a White or Blue Dragons, the first line officers. White Dragons command squadrons of ten Sons while Blue Dragons command units known as Teeth, each of which includes ten squads, or a total of one hundred Sons. Red Dragons control a Claw, or ten Teeth. Black Dragons, who are called into the field only rarely, command two Claws, large units known as Battles. Gold Dragons, of which there are never more than a half dozen at most and usually less than that, are the generals who directly serve the Emperor and who oversee the military deployment of the entire Sons order. The Silver Dragon is the Emperor himself

Relations with Other Nations

Historically speaking, Vanora has been very reserved in its dealings with outsiders, preferring to keep to its own affairs as much as possible. It is a popular misconception among outsiders that the Vanorans are an arrogant or xenophobic people, and that their relative isolation is a result of their disdain for others. While there are certainly some groups within the country for whom this is true, the majority of Vanorans bear no ill will toward any outsiders, but instead simply prefer to keep to their own affairs because that is all they truly know.

Prior to the Darkfall, the Vanorans had a long-standing treaty with the nation of Arasteen, owing to that country's repeated attempts to intervene in Vanora's repeated diplomatic difficulties with Kyan. That relationship continues, as Emperor Dyok the Younger is a friend of King Corben of Arasteen, but the Emperor's fascination with mechamagic has caused him to establish correspondence with Lord Urbane as well, something that troubles the king of Arasteen to no end. Other than this, however, there are no particular alliances with Vanora. The bandits from the Rhanate are an ongoing concern, and one that has caused at least one threat to be issued from the Emperor to the Dust King of the Sundered Desert. It is also the charity of the Emperor that has allowed the refugees of Aramyst to survive as long as they have, with the trading houses of Vanora earning the Emperor's favor by trading with the people of Refuge and other cities at extremely reasonable rates.

YZEEM, THE PROMISE OF HOSPITALITY

"In Balaquim, one can almost forget the Darkfall. Almost."

— Unnamed visitor to Balaquim

GOVERNMENT: Anonymous Council.

PREDOMINANT RACES: All races represented.

MAJOR EXPORTS: Foodstuffs, ships and ship components.

MAJOR IMPORTS: Manufactured goods, metal, ore.

History

During the era of the Great War, the region that presently comprises Yzeem was made up of a number of smaller principalities, occasionally allied, but just as often at war with one another. An ancient historical account discovered in one of Midvale's numerous libraries, the veracity of which cannot be confirmed, claims that the first Emperor of Vanora came to the region and spoke to the seven rulers of the various principalities in the area, urging them to join him at the peace accord he was attempting to organize at the town of Rose in western Aden. According to the account, the Emperor spent more than a year in the region, convincing the others to join him, and he was ultimately successful. The seven rulers joined the conference that produced the legendary Peace of the Rose, but among themselves were unable to determine

how authority should be adjudicated, given that none were willing to abdicate authority to the others. Again, it was the Emperor Dyok of Vanora who suggested the creation of a Council of Seven, so that none of the men would be forced to surrender his position. The different principalities were unified in an agreement reached concurrently with the Peace of the Rose, and the nation of Yzeem, governed by the Council of Seven, was created.

Since its inception, the Council of Seven has worked for mutual benefit in a manner that surprises many historians, given that the potential for internal conflict between its members was significant. Truthfully, there was a period of about a decade immediately following the formation of the country when conflicts did occur, but they were always mitigated by other members of the Council, and after twenty years or so, fully half the Council had been replaced by younger members, creating a precedent for peaceful resolution that persists into the modern era. One of the chief means by which this peaceful arrangement was reached was through the division of labor. The areas of administration, army, navy, diplomacy, trade, law enforcement, and taxation were all assigned to individual Councilors, although the duties change periodically from one position to another to suit the strengths of each new Council of Seven as members constantly change.

Although internal strife among the Councilors has not been a problem for Yzeem, that is not to say the nation's history has been without conflict. Even during the first days of the nation's existence, pirates were a problem along the southern coast. These groups were disorganized and often competed against one another. The Council of Seven sought to capitalize upon this and ordered the construction of a new city, Rook's Roost, far to the west of the capital, Balaquim. With these two ports, the Council believed that they could better police the coast and end the threat of piracy once and for all. Unfortunately, the plan backfired rather spectacularly, and Rook's Roost not only gave the pirates reason to band together, but also gave them a headquarters when they seized control of it from its rightful government. The shaky alliance of pirates then turned their attention to the greater threat, the Council of Seven. Through assassination, bribery, intimidation and even the kidnapping of family members, the pirates slowly subverted the authority of the Councilors until they were little more than puppets.

The stranglehold of the pirate kings was only recently broken, and all due to an incident approximately two centuries prior to the Darkfall. A new member of the Council, appointed shortly before the death of his predecessor, appeared in the council chambers wearing an all-concealing green robe and veil. Refusing to identify himself other than as the Green Councilor, this individual claimed that he would avoid the intimidation and extortion of the past by concealing his identity, ensuring that he could not be approached by criminals outside the chamber. The Green Councilor urged his comrades to abdicate their positions and select new members in confidence or even at random, ensuring that a new Council could take command without the influence of the pirates. Several did so immediately, grateful for an end to their lives of servitude. Others were unable to do so due to threats to their families from their overseers, and it took some years for the last of the pirates' proxies to be ousted from the Council of Seven. In time, it was accomplished, however, and for the first time in centuries, Yzeem was once more governed by those who held its citizens rather than its criminals as their responsibility.

Ironically, it is likely that the years of harassment by pirate forces saved the lives of countless Yzeem denizens during the Darkfall. The settlements along the coast and within the Valley of Life were already painfully familiar with the process of being assaulted by a hostile force of marauders; consequently, loss of life in these regions was much lower than average. Numerous smaller settlements on the outskirts of the fertile valley region were lost, of course, as well as a significant number of vessels at sea, both pirate and legitimate, and an unknown number of nomad groups in the eastern plains. In the grand scheme of things, however, the most essential portions of Yzeem were mercifully spared the worst excesses of the Darkfall, and as a result Yzeem has emerged from that cataclysm in a much stronger position than most other nations.

Lands

Yzeem is a largely barren region with a number of different land types, most of which are generally considered inhospitable or at least extremely inconvenient for a civilized life. The result is a populace that is concentrated in a few specific areas, with very little in the way of civilization in the outlands that separate these regions.

The most notable region of Yzeem, and the one with the largest concentration of its populace, is the area known as the Valley of Life. This area is so named for two reasons. First, it is the valley naturally formed by the Life River, one of the widest rivers in all of Aden. Second, and more importantly, the waters from the river render the lands within a few miles of it in either direction the most fertile and abundant farmlands in Yzeem. Despite the small area of this farmland, it produces a variety of different crops that are more than adequate to provide for the entire nation and even to produce a significant surplus that has aided the nation in its trade endeavors with other countries. Although there are numerous holdings found in this area, including significant military outposts and a number of prominent learning academies devoted to various disciplines, the obvious emphasis is on agriculture in all its forms; other holdings tend to exist on the outskirts of the fertile area.

The area of Yzeem west of the Valley of Life does not suffer from the temperature excesses of the Sundered Desert to the north, but the arid winds blow south between the Wall Mountains and the Mother Mountains, keeping the entire area extremely dry and largely barren. Even the nomads of the east do not frequent this region, and it is largely empty except for a few small settlements where the locals keep to themselves and fight tooth and nail every day to survive. There is very little in the way of natural local wildlife in this region, so most of the creatures encountered here are nocturnals, and are a particularly dangerous sort, even for their kind. The edge of Yzeem is marked with the Spike Fens, a massive swampland that forms a natural boundary between the nation and Kyan, and which is a capstone of sorts to the Wall Mountains. Moisture there is as plentiful as it is scarce in the rest of the region, but the majority of it is unsuitable for consumption. The settlement Sludj is found within the Fens, but it is not considered part of Yzeem.

The easternmost region of Yzeem is directly south of the Skar, and is similar in many respects to the Mud Plains farther north in the Rhanate. This region is spared the annual rainy season, however, leaving a mostly dry and cracked plain of hard, tightly packed soil in which virtually nothing will grow. A small handful of oases are the only respite from the conditions between the Skar and the coastline to the south.

Culture

The nation of Yzeem is comprised of three distinct cultural groups, all with different lifestyles and customs. The rogues and scoundrels that comprise the pirates and corsairs of Rook's Roost and the length of Yzeem's coastline are vastly different from the hardy farmers who live along the Valley of Life, and who in turn are completely different from the reclusive nomads that populate the desolate plains of the country's eastern reaches. The one common cultural bond that can be said to be a constant throughout Yzeem, however, is the Promise of Hospitality. This simple and unwritten philosophy, which heralds from the earliest days of Yzeem's civilization, states that no citizen of Yzeem may harm someone in his or her care. Guests or even those who happen across the path of a citizen of Yzeem should be cared for unless they demonstrate that they do not desire or do not appreciate the first party's assistance, at which point they are on their own. There are no laws enforcing this philosophy, but the majority of Yzeem's denizens will shun even a close family member if they discover that he has broken the Promise. In a world after the Darkfall, when people depend so much upon one another for survival, the threat of this fate is enough to ensure that the Promise of Hospitality lives on.

The largest cultural group in Yzeem is comprised of the farmers that dwell within the Valley of Life as well as those who exist alongside them, from the northernmost point of Midvale all the way south to Balaquim. These individuals are a hardy people, and comprise more



than three quarters of the entirety of Yzeem's population. Their lives are difficult and filled with hard labor, but prior to the Darkfall, the culture of Yzeem was one that rejected the notion of a monotonous existence. For this reason, the people in the region have long held learning and the arts in high regard, and after a long day of work in the fields, they enjoy reading and discussing various topics with family and friends in the evening. The result is a population that is among the best educated in all of Aden, which has only contributed to the vastly successful agricultural pursuits undertaken by this group.

The second cultural group of Yzeem is comprised of the various outcasts, exiles, criminals, and other ne'er do wells that make up the pirate nations of Rook's Roost in the western portion of the country's lands. These individuals are roundly despised by other citizens of Yzeem, and many have bounties on their heads for crimes committed not only against Yzeem itself, but against its trading partners as well. The rooks, as these individuals are known, are generally ruthless, greedy, merciless individuals who look out only for themselves and perhaps a few close friends or crewmates, considering everyone else utterly expendable. Ironically, the Promise of Hospitality is still present within this group, although it is interpreted in incredibly twisted, convoluted ways to ensure that it does not impede the base desires of those who profess to observe it.

The final and smallest cultural group in Yzeem is the nomads who dwell within the borderline-inhospitable plains in the eastern reaches of the nation, directly south of the Skar. Most of these individuals choose this lifestyle because they are fleeing from something else, or because they simply have never known any other kind of existence. They are a xenophobic, secular people who distrust outsiders and even their own countrymen immensely, but for whom the Promise of Hospitality is almost a holy scripture; many of them are only alive because someone at some point offered them the succor that the Promise demands.

Major Settlements

Yzeem is home to relatively few settlements. There were a smaller than average number prior to the Darkfall, owing to the difficulties inherent in the land itself, and the number grew even smaller once the

hordes of ravenous nocturnals emerged from every conceivable shadow cast by the obstructed sun on that terrible day more than a decade ago. Those that remain, however, have remained among the most secure and profitable in central Aden, eclipsing even the brutal security of the Rhanate's large cities.

The capital of Yzeem is **Balaquim**, the largest and busiest port in all of Aden and by some accounts the only real rival to Mekanus in terms of sheer size. Ships depart daily, even hourly during the harvest season, for the ports of Mekanus, Sea Reach, Ionara, Tanto, Shang Ti, Synthica, and a vast number of smaller ports all along the entirety of Aden's coastline. Known as the Gem of the South, Balaquim is home to numerous private trading houses as well as nationalized trading groups that work directly for the Council of Seven. With the exception of the Rhanate and the High Steppes, all other nations of Aden maintain embassies within the city, which serve as both their center of diplomacy and, much more importantly, trade. The city itself is something of a dichotomy; the streets and residential areas are clean and orderly, while the sections set aside for public trade are a chaotic maze of street vendors and storefronts. Trades for cargoes of a size commensurate with a city or nation tend to be conducted behind closed doors in various places throughout the city, their only indication to the common man is the endless procession of heavily laden carts traveling to and from the port, which in and of itself is a level of chaos the likes of which few civilized souls ever experience. The need for berths for ships is so great that centuries ago the port expanded to the Tears, the islands at the southern tip of the city, and has grown to cover the majority of those as well. Although it is a significantly smaller aspect of Balaquim's function, land trade is likewise coordinated from the city. After the Darkfall, this was a deadly proposition, and caravans traveling north toward Midvale or even the occasional rare foray toward Rook's Roost were often lost. Since that time, a pair of entrepreneurs, a fox ferran named Adal and a Goreaux named Antone, has created a series of lightly armored sand racers powered by mechamagic and wind. These racers see extensive use and are quite popular among the various trading houses of Balaquim, ensuring that the two business partners have become both exceedingly wealthy and something like celebrities in the massive city.

The only other settlement in Yzeem that rightfully deserves the title of city is perhaps the most infamous criminal haven in the world, **Rook's Roost**. The city was originally conceived and constructed to serve as a secondary port to alleviate some of the burden on Balaquim. Unfortunately, that never materialized, and within a decade of the port opening, it was compromised by criminal elements that bribed or otherwise corrupted many elements of the city government. Within a generation, all pretense of legitimacy had been abandoned, and the pirate crews who called Rook's Roost their haven had literally assumed control over every aspect of its daily activities. Even this could not endure forever, however, and in time the city came to be something of a battleground, both literally and figuratively, as a number of different pirate lords who called themselves "pirate kings" struggled to gain more control over the city. A decade after the Darkfall, the most powerful of these pirate lords is a monstrous individual called Firebeard, a jurak of striking red coloration who enjoys sticking lit matches in his beard during his raids upon other ships. The city has no industry to speak of, other than the number of unscrupulous shipwrights who ply their trade to the pirate crews, and a large number of distilleries that produce vast quantities of dangerously unregulated alcohol that is sold in the taverns there.

Other than Balaquim and Rook's Roost, only a handful of settlements survived the Darkfall. The most significant of these is **Midvale**, the village that marks the northernmost boundary of Yzeem and the start of the fertile region known as the Valley of Life. Although farming settlements exist all along the valley, the largest concentration is centered at Midvale, and is home to hundreds of farming families as well as those who provide the services the farmers need to survive. In the eastern plains, **There** is also a noteworthy settlement, if for no other reason than because it is the only significant settlement in the entire eastern plains region. It is the largest oasis in the region and was

generally the site where many caravans crossing the plains chose to make their stops. The name was just a colloquialism used to describe the area, and eventually it became its formal name on maps and records of caravan travels. It remains the most significantly fortified area in the entire geographic region, and is frequently host to several tribes of the nomads that roam the region.

Military

Yzeem is a nation that faces multiple threats, both mundane and supernatural in nature, and as a result, is protected by two distinct organizations: the People's Army and the People's Navy. Both are structured similarly, using identical ranks, and, in the eyes of the average Yzeem citizens, are given equal prestige associated with members of the military. It is regarded as something of a civic duty to serve a term in the military in Yzeem, and for that reason, the entry rank of a soldier is simply called Citizen. Citizens are organized into squads of five and led by a junior officer called a Defender. Two such squads can be grouped together and instead commanded by a Patriot. A company of five squads answers to a Champion, while a neighborhood of ten squads answers to a Hero. Finally, a General commands between two to five neighborhoods. The People's Army is ultimately overseen by the Black Councilor.

The People's Navy is constructed similarly to the army, with the same titles. Squads are replaced by light ships, however, with increasing rank conferring command of larger vessels or a greater number of smaller ships. The term Neighborhood is replaced by Fleet, and General by Admiral. The People's Navy is overseen by the Blue Councilor, and it is a daunting task indeed. The pirate activity along the coastline demands much of the navy's attention, although a significant number of smaller ships also patrol along the Life River to assist in protecting the farmers of the Valley of Life from bandits and nocturnals. In the past decade, the navy has also begun to experiment with airships, mostly small blimps and dirigibles, but also with the notion of steam-powered ships like the *Dauntless* in Arasteen. In fact, smaller, less armed and armored versions of the *Dauntless* have recently been seen flying around Balaquim, as if the navy were experimenting. Although it is not known how these airships were designed, whether they developed parallel to the *Dauntless* or if a copy of the plans somehow wound up in Yzeem, it seems that the next stage of Aden's military development may well include domination of the sky as well as the land and sea.

Relations with Other Nations

Other than the Rhanate, which does not engage in large-scale trade, Yzeem is the most centrally located nation in Aden. Accordingly, trade is a major component of its national identity, and the capital of Balaquim is the largest and busiest port in Aden. Due to the nature of their ongoing trade agreements, Yzeem maintains diplomatic relationships with all other nations except for the High Steppes, which they do not regard as a nation, but merely a region without a centralized government. This position has increased the importance of Balaquim as a trade hub since the Darkfall; with the increasing tensions between nations as a result of the dire situation in which Aden finds itself, neutral ground to conduct trade and other important interactions has become increasingly valuable.

The only significant source of tension between the nation of Yzeem and its neighbors is a direct result of the heavy pirate activity along the coast. Most diplomats are capable of distinguishing between the corsairs and the legitimate government of Yzeem, but many individual captains and merchants allow heated emotions to confuse the two. To mitigate the problem somewhat, the Blue Councilor has deployed the People's Navy to serve as protection and escort for all vessels conducting legitimate business within Yzeem. Unfortunately this has stretched the navy extremely thin, and the pirates have simply moved to waters just outside those belonging to Yzeem.

PERILS OF ADEN

BESTIARY

Animated Object

The statistics of animated objects, such as those created by the meamage's construct servant, can vary wildly depending on the size of the construct. We have provided some basic statistics for these constructs so that a meamage can quickly and easily animate his surroundings.

Tiny Animated Object

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4-2, Vigor d4-2

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities

- ✧ Construct
- ✧ Low Light Vision
- ✧ Size: Tiny. -2 to be hit. -2 Toughness

Small Animated Object

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities

- ✧ Construct
- ✧ Low Light Vision
- ✧ Size: Small. -1 to be hit. -1 Toughness

Medium Animated Object

Attributes

Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- ✧ Construct
- ✧ Low Light Vision

Large Animated Object

Attributes

Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- ✧ Construct
- ✧ Low Light Vision
- ✧ Size: Large. +1 Toughness

Huge Animated Object

Attributes

Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12+5, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities

- ✧ Construct
- ✧ Low Light Vision
- ✧ Size: Huge. +2 to be hit. +4 Toughness

Gargantuan Animated Object

Attributes

Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12+12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 17

Special Abilities

- ✧ Construct
- ✧ Low Light Vision
- ✧ Size: Gargantuan. +4 to be hit. +9 to Toughness

Golems

Corpse Golem

A corpse golem is a terrifying creature, stitched together from the discarded remains of various dead creatures, or perhaps even made entirely of bones. The magic used to create a corpse golem preserves its parts from further decay, but the horrible stench never seems to go

COMMON MONSTROUS ABILITIES

- ✧ **Construct:** Constructs add +2 to their Spirit roll when attempting to recover from being Shaken. They do not suffer additional damage from called shots. They are immune to disease and poison. Construct Wild Cards do not suffer from Wound Modifiers.
- ✧ **Fear:** The creature causes Fear checks to all who see it. A creature with Fear (-2) causes all who see it to make their Fear checks at -2.
- ✧ **Infravision:** The creature can see in the infrared spectrum and detect heat. When attacking hot blooded living targets, the penalties for bad lighting are halved (round down).
- ✧ **Low Light Vision:** The creature is capable of seeing in all but the blackest darkness. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- ✧ **Undead:** Undead add +2 to their Toughness. They add +2 to their Spirit roll when attempting to recover from being Shaken. They do not suffer additional damage from called shots. They are immune to disease and poison. Undead Wild Cards do not suffer from Wound Modifiers.

Metal golem



While a low level doll golem may look like a simple, crude toy, upgraded doll golems are more likely to resemble rare heirlooms of silk or porcelain.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities

✧ Construct

✧ **Hamstring:** +2 to Agility based Trick maneuvers. If the doll golem's Trick is successful, his opponent is considered to be Prone.

✧ **Size:** Small. -2 to be hit, -2 Toughness.

✧ **Weapon:** Knife (Str+d4). Due to its small size, it cannot wield any other weapon.

Metal Golem

Crafted of raw iron or gleaming steel, a metal golem is an intimidating sight, to be sure. Some such golems resemble animated suits of heavy armor. Others are more elaborate, with obvious steam fittings and mechanical parts. One thing is certain; these are the most indomitable of all golem minions.

Upgraded metal golems are often reinforced with finer metals, such as gold, silver, mithral, or adamantine.

Attributes

Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (or higher)

Special Abilities

✧ Construct

✧ **Fists:** Str+d6

✧ **Metal Skin:** Can be fitted with different metal plates on its exoskeleton for protection.

- Iron or Steel (base): +1 Toughness

- Mithral: +3 Toughness

- Adamantine: +5 Toughness

Rock Golem

If a golem can have a personality, the rock golem could be said to be the proudest of all golems. A rock golem is essentially an animated statue, usually a work of art in its own right. The care and precision instilled into its creation shines through in its steadfast loyalty to its creator. While it does not excel in any particular area, no golem is more versatile and adaptable than a rock golem.

Upgraded rock golems are often reinforced with marble or other rare stones, and may have precious gems for eyes or in other details.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

✧ Construct

✧ **Rocky Fists:** Str+d6

✧ **Rocky Skin:** +2 to Toughness

Golemoid Horse

This majestic stallion is as much machine now as beast, steam pouring from its snout, its coat largely replaced with metal plating.

Mechamages have not been satisfied to only practice golemization on the men and women who become golemoid warriors. There was significant animal testing as the process was being perfected, and golemoid creatures continue to be created to this day. While success rates

away. Due to their horrifying appearance, corpse golems are frequently mistaken for undead. These strange automatons are not powered by negative energy, but by the same elemental magics that animate all constructs. While not evil, a corpse golem's terrifying visage certainly makes a statement – that its master is not to be trifled with. These are the most vicious and aggressive of all the golem minions, capable of inflicting extreme amounts of damage.

A mechamage can choose to upgrade a corpse golem and remove its corpse-like stench. These modified golems are more well-preserved – though even a casual glance can tell that they are not healthy creatures. Such corpse golems lose the Fear special ability along with their putrid odor.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

✧ Construct

✧ **Fear (-2):** A Corpse Golem is extremely unnerving.

✧ **Powerful Fists:** Str+d6. If the Corpse Golem scores a raise to hit with his fists, he inflicts 1d8 points of extra damage instead of 1d6.

✧ **Undead**

Doll Golem

Unnerving and peculiar, these golems are crafted from stuffed animals, wooden fetishes, humanoid dolls, or other normally small and harmless figures. These golems can sometimes be mistaken for human children, at least until they begin to move.

These golems frequently drop to all fours and scuttle along the ground at startling speeds. What they may lack in speed and size, they make up for in sheer tenacity and a willingness to drag their opponents down to their level with underhanded tactics.

CREATING GOLEMOID CREATURES

New golemoid creatures can be created by applying the following template to any living, corporeal creature:

- ✧ **Armor +2:** The golemoid mechanical parts grant it improved resilience.
- ✧ **Construct**
- ✧ **Low Light Vision**
- ✧ **Steam Reserve:** A golemoid creature has a steam reserve (6 points), which may be used to power manite implants. The Game Master may add manite implants to the creature as he thinks is appropriate.
- ✧ **True Golemoid:** Toughness +1. For the purposes of all rules regarding the Wasting, this creature counts as a “true golemoid.”

are no better with beasts than they are with people, the advantages of golemization remain the same.

Golemoid Horses are especially popular in Urbana, where many of the wealthiest citizens own a golemoid horse as a pet or mount.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d12

Skills: Notice d6, Fighting d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Edges: Alertness

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Construct**
- ✧ **Fleet-Footed:** Golemoid Horses roll a d10 for their Running die.
- ✧ **Hooves:** Str+d4
- ✧ **Low Light Vision**
- ✧ **Steam Reserve:** A golemoid horse has a steam reserve, which may be used to power any manite implants added by its owner. The golemoid horse's steam reserve is 6 points.
- ✧ **True Golemoid:** For the purposes of all rules regarding the Wasting, a golemoid horse counts as a “true golemoid.”



Golemoid horse

Ilithix guardian



Ilithix

Ilithix Drone

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6, Fighting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Claws (4):** Str+d4. Can attack with two claws with no penalties or all four with multi-action penalties.
- ✧ **Hive Sense:** An ilithix drone can automatically detect the presence and number of other ilithix within 24", and can pinpoint their location with a Notice skill check. Hive sense is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt. A large gathering of ilithix (a dozen or more) can be sensed up to 1 mile away regardless of obstructions.
- ✧ **Infravision**
- ✧ **Pheromonal Communication:** Ilithix can wordlessly communicate with other creatures capable of communicating with pheromones.

Ilithix Guardian

The queen may be the heart of an ilithix hive, but guardians are its brain. Bigger, stronger, and smarter than normal ilithix, ilithix guardians are the protectors and advisors of the queen, the generals when the hive goes to war, and the ones who study outside societies, choosing how and if to interact with them.

Guardians are also the source of royal jelly, which is a crucial component in ilithix reproduction. Consumption of the jelly allows a guardian to metamorphose into a queen, and if a hive fails catastrophically, any surviving defenders scatter to the winds in the hopes of establishing a new hive. With the majority of ilithix hives having fallen to the Darkfall, Ilithix Guardians and their swarming armies have become commonplace in the nightmares of Aden's people.

Under ordinary circumstances, ilithix are extremely passive creatures that avoid interaction with other sentient beings and only show aggression when their hives are directly threatened.

Some ilithix hives would, in fact, completely ignore intruders so long as they showed no violence toward the hive's inhabitants.

They are strict herbivores; many ilithix do not even consume plant matter directly, preferring to wait until it has been digested and regurgitated by the hive's workers.

The reclusive nature of these beings has even led some observers to doubt their sentience. Of course, this perception is flawed, deeply rooted in the arrogant idea that any creature of intelligence would naturally desire to become a part of Aden's greater brotherhood of intelligent races. The truth is simpler - the ilithix merely find the culture and behavior of Aden's other races terribly confusing. They prefer to remain in their hives and socialize only with one another.

Ilithix mature extremely quickly and learn how to communicate within the first year of their lives. Ilithix society is based on a complex caste system. In their natural state, ilithix have no sense of identity; they merely view themselves as part of the larger hive.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12+1

Skills: Notice d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (History) d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Edges: Level-headed, Combat Reflexes

Special Abilities

✧ **Claws (4):** Str+d4. Can attack with two claws with no penalties or all four with multi-action penalties.

✧ **Hive Commander:** An ilithix guardian can emit an aura of specialized pheromones which inspire the ilithix under its command to fight as highly coordinated units. Ilithix within the aura gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and weapon damage rolls, and +2 to Parry. This does not affect ilithix guardians or ilithix queens.

✧ **Hive Sense:** An ilithix guardian can automatically detect the presence and number of other ilithix within 24", and can pinpoint their location with a Notice skill check. Hive sense is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt. A large gathering of ilithix (a dozen or more) can be sensed up to 1 mile away regardless of obstructions.

✧ **Infravision**

✧ **Pheromonal Communication:** Ilithix can wordlessly communicate with other creatures capable of communicating with pheromones.

✧ **Size:** Ilithix Guardians are approximately the same size as an orc. +1 Toughness.

✧ **Stinger:** Str+d8 plus Venomous poison

Naga of Aden

Covered in glistening scales and with a serpent's tail in the place of legs, this strange warrior immediately aims an arrow at you as you approach.

The naga are a proud and xenophobic warrior race that primarily lives in warrens deep in the Fangs. While highly intelligent and skilled in both arms and sorcery, they cannot abide technology or mechemagic, seeing it as anathema to their way of life. Naga appear essentially as a combination of snake and man, with powerful humanoid torsos and with snake tails in the place of legs, all covered in scales that range from greens to browns.

Though most naga prefer to be left alone, a corrupted ferran known as "Mamba" has somehow assembled a sizable naga army which he led to raze the city of Longou before vanishing back into the Fangs. If more of the naga fall under Mamba's sway, they could become a serious threat to the safety of all Aden.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Tracking d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Nature) d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 (1)



Naga

Gear: Shortsword (Str+d6), Shortbow (Range: 12/24/48, 2d6 damage), 20 arrows, Leather armor (+1)

Special Abilities

✧ **Infravision**

Nocturnals

Bulette (Corrupted by the Darkfall)

The earth cracks and from it bursts the largest bulette you have ever seen. This is clearly no normal land shark; it's something stronger, deadlier, and far more sinister.

Attributes

Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Notice d10, Fighting d8

Pace: 8 (burrow 4); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15

Edges: Alertness, Level-Headed

Special Abilities

✧ **Fear**

✧ **Leap:** A bulette can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When a bulette runs, it can make a Fighting skill check at -2 to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it makes the Fighting skill check with a raise, it can follow up with four claw attacks (at no multi-action penalty) against foes in reach, but it cannot make a bite attack.

✧ **Low Light Vision**

✧ **Natural weapons:** Bite (Str+d8), 4 Claws (Str+d6)

✧ **Size:** Large. +2 to be hit, +6 to Toughness

CREATING NOCTURNALS

New nocturnal creatures can be created by applying the following template to any living, corporeal creature:

- ✧ **Additional Edges:** Select any 2 of the following Edges that the creature did not already possess: Alertness, Arcane Resistance, Combat Reflexes, Quick.
- ✧ **Armor +2**
- ✧ **Fear**
- ✧ **Improved Attributes:** Increase Strength by one die type, then pick another attribute to also increase by one die type.
- ✧ **Low Light Vision**

Cackler

The glistening pink-skinned monsters laugh and caper as they approach, claws dripping with the gore of recent victims.

Cacklers are humanoid nocturnals born of fear of humiliation. The pink-skinned goblin-men move in an almost prancing motion as they stalk their prey, while their terrible laughter eats away at their victims' confidence and sanity. Cackler hordes have been known to reduce an entire village's populace to gibbering madness, at which point being torn apart by the creature is practically a mercy.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Skills: Notice d6, Climbing d8, Intimidation d8, Fighting d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: Quick, Alertness

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Cackle:** A cackler's constant cackling is laced with madness and terror. When cackling, all enemies within 6" feet of the Cackler must make a Fear check, and those who fail are Shaken by the terrible laughter as long as they remain within the aura. Those who succeed are immune to this cackler's cackle for twenty-four hours.
- ✧ **Claws:** Str+d4
- ✧ **Infravision**



Cackler

Shankers



Shankers

The empty-seeming alley suddenly bursts to life, an army of hungry metal vermin rising from the detritus and rushing towards its prey.

Shankers are mechemagical nocturnals that infest the Urbanan capital of Mekanus. These insidious creatures blend into the industrial landscape, appearing as no more than common machinery or scrap metal until it is time to strike. In motion, they resemble small cats made of rusted metal, with vaguely humanoid faces and rows of jagged teeth. After slaying its prey, the swarm drains it of essential minerals, leaving behind a goopy mess that can barely be identified as a corpse.

Use the Swarm template from Savage Worlds but add the following special abilities:

- ✧ **Low Light Vision**
- ✧ **Shrapnel:** As a standard action, a shanker swarm can spray a target with jagged bits of metal from its component bodies, dealing 2d8 points of damage. The range of the spray is 3/6/12
- ✧ **Skill:** shooting d6

Wasted

Exposed wires spark and gears grind against bone as this withered corpse looks your way and snarls.

There are few fates more horrible than death by the Wasting, but becoming one of the Wasted is one of them. Perhaps one in a hundred victims of the Wasting rises as these walking dead, its manite implants somehow seizing control of the corpse they are installed in and lashing out with blind fury. No one yet has been able to determine if wasted are a side-effect of golemization itself, or if they are caused by the Darkfall manipulating fears of golemoids. Either way, wasted are a dangerous, terrifying force.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Wasted



Gear: Magmaxe, Finger Gun

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Fear**
- ✧ **Infravision**
- ✧ **Manite Implants:** Death Engine, Steamreaver Energy Cell, Integrated Scabbard, Momentum Manipulator, Chest Spikes, Finger Gun, Integrated Armor: Breastplate, Steam Breath, Manite Speed Boost
- ✧ **Steam Breath:** 2d10 points of damage in a cone template. Opponents get an Agility check to avoid damage
- ✧ **Undead**

Whisper Fiend

The terrible, irresistible whispers have lead you to a forgotten glade where this grotesque creature – like a horrible marionette made from the living wood of the forest – waits, its razor-like claws twitching in anticipation.

Nocturnals born from fear of the dark forest and nightmare fairy tales, whisper fiends lurk along wooded roads and the outskirts of settlements, luring those who stray too far from civilization's light to their gruesome ends. Looking like some sort of sinister marionettes made of living wood, whisper fiends spread terror and despair along the edges of civilization, sometimes luring entire villages into the woods, never to be seen again.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d8, Stealth d12, Fighting d8, Climbing d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7; **Charisma:** -2

Whisper Fiend



Edges: Alertness, Quick, Combat Reflexes

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Fear**
- ✧ **Low Light Vision**
- ✧ **Natural Weapons:** 2 Claws (Str+d6) plus Rend (see below)
- ✧ **Rend:** If a Whisper Fiend scores a raise when attacking with both claws, the extra damage is 1d8 per claw, not 1d6
- ✧ **Whispers:** The area within 16" of a Whisper Fiend is filled with sinister whispers, beckoning creatures to their doom. Any non-fey creature in the area must make a Spirit check it is in the area. A creature who fails this check will save can take no actions except a single move action to approach the Whisper Fiend each round it remains within the area. A creature under the effect of whispers that is adjacent to the Whisper Fiend offers itself to the creature and is considered helpless.

Slurgithian

This strange creature – half eel, half man – rises from the water, eyeing you quizzically.

Slurgithians are a primitive race of amphibious humanoids that live primarily in the great lake called Tirrian's Eye. Roughly mansized, slurgithians tend toward leaner physiques and have slick skin and eel-like heads, as well as rows of sharp teeth and digits that end in deadly claws. As vicious as they appear, slurgithians are a relatively peaceful race, having only come into conflict with other sentient races when defending their territory. They live a fairly primitive pre-industrial lifestyle and have been largely left alone by the rest of the world – including, curiously, the Darkfall.



Slurghithian

It's unclear if slurghithians have something that keeps agents of the Darkfall at bay or if the malevolent force simply sees them as beneath its notice.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Casting d6, Knowledge (Nature) d6, Notice d6, Survival d8, Swimming d8, Fighting d6

Pace: 6 (Swim: 6); **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Short spear (Str+d6; Range 3/6/12 when thrown)

Edges: Frenzy

Special Abilities

✧ **Infravision**

✧ **Natural Weapons:** Bite (Str+d4), 2 Claws (Str+d4)

✧ **Spells** (15PP): bolt (Cold Trapping), entangle, obscure

Snow Serpent

At first you think an avalanche may be coming, the way the snow is rippling – and then the great hairy thing bursts from the tundra, bearing down on you with rows of glistening shark-like teeth.

The Snow Serpent is a giant white-furred, millipede-like predator native to the Ice Wastes. Nobody's precisely sure how a warm-blooded insectoid creature came into being and the civilian population of Ionara is generally far too busy avoiding the creatures to care. In the wild, snow serpents spend much of their time underground, emerging onto the surface only to hunt prey. As vicious as the creatures are, the Ionaran Frost Guard has somehow managed to domesticate them, and the Frost Guard's famed Serpent Riders are known and feared far and wide.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d6, Fighting d8

Pace: 8 (Burrow 4); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Edges: Quick

Special Abilities

✧ **Low Light Vision**

✧ **Size:** Large: +2 to be hit, +2 Toughness

Ursax

This brightly colored bear practically shimmers with raw elemental energies.

Ursax, an enchanted species of bear mixed with an unknown reptile, were created by the experiments of some long-forgotten and likely insane mage.

For whatever reason, this mage gave ursax a magical adaptive reflex that takes in the elemental nature of an area and changes the ursax to match it. Once adapted to an environment, the ursax is suffused with the local elemental energies and its fur turns a new, usually shockingly bright color. Though the best known ursax are the icy blue of the Ice Wastes (adapted to elemental cold) and the fiery red of Vanora's volcanic mountains (adapted to elemental fire), their adaptive nature allows ursax to survive in almost any environment. Those in extremely humid environments such as jungles and swamps turn leafy green and



Snow serpent



adapt to elemental acid, while those in open-air or arid environments like plains and deserts turn a bright yellow-white and adapt to elemental electricity. Ursax kept in captivity in urban areas will turn a sad grey and become listless. This can be prevented with precise – and expensive – geomancy, making the caged ursax a pet only for the extremely wealthy. Like their bear ancestors, ursax prefer a steady diet of fish, but they are highly omnivorous and will eat just about anything if they get hungry enough.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12+1

Skills: Notice d6, Fighting d8, Survival d6, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Breath weapon:** Cone template. 2d10 points of damage. Opponents get an Agility check to avoid damage. See Elemental Adaptation for the specific type of breath weapon the ursax uses. Usable every 1d4 rounds.
- ✧ **Elemental Adaptation:** Choose acid, cold, fire, or electric. The ursax's breath weapon and elemental attacks deal that type of damage, and it is immune to that type of damage. If an ursax moves to a new environment, it adapts to the new environment after twenty-four hours and may choose a new energy type.
- ✧ **Low Light vision**
- ✧ **Natural Weapons:** Bite (Str+1d6), 2 Claws (Str+1d6). Both natural weapons also deal special magical damage (See above Elemental adaptation)
- ✧ **Size:** Large, +2 to be hit, +3 Toughness

Vermins

Verminous Scouts

A scout is a single, insect-sized vermin. Unlike other verminous servants, scouts possess an Intelligence score of d4, and thus can understand and perform complex commands. Scouts can understand (but not speak) all languages known by their entomancer.

Verminous servants possess d8 in Stealth and due to their extremely small size, scouts can use the Stealth skill with even minimal amounts of cover or concealment. Scouts normally inflict no damage with an attack (though some can inflict poison or other effects with a successful attack roll). A scout can communicate telepathically with its master as long as it is within one mile. As very small creatures, scouts gain -4 to be hit and -4 to their Toughness (minimum 1). Scouts take half damage from all falls and treat any falls as if the fall were 50 feet shorter.

Verminous Steeds

A steed is always a Large insect. Its carapace is molded so that the entomancer can sit upon it as if it were a military saddle. A steed counts as a combat-trained mount as long as it is ridden by its entomancer. The steed will attempt to unseat any other rider trying to mount it.

Attributes

Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8 (Fly 8); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Bite:** Str+d4.
- ✧ **Carapace:** +1 Armor
- ✧ **Size:** Large. +2 to be hit. +4 Toughness.
- ✧ **Wall Walker:** Can walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 8.

Verminous Swarms

See *Savage Worlds*. There are no changes to their abilities unless changed by their controlling entomancer with their powers.

THE NATURE OF THE DARKFALL

The Darkfall is the single most important event in the recorded history of Aden, and yet it remains one of the least understood. The sheer power that would be required for such an occurrence to be orchestrated is beyond not only the greatest of mortal spellcasters, but even the most influential organizations in the known world; even the Celestial College of Aramyst has never demonstrated anything approaching the inconceivable level of arcane power required to cause such an event. Most citizens of Aden generally accept the idea that the Darkfall could not have been implemented by men, because men simply lack the power to accomplish such a feat. The idea that it may have been caused inadvertently, a consequence of mankind seeking to control forces it did not fully understand, is a more popular and generally acceptable theory among many. Still, numerous theories abound, and some of the most common are described below.

Despite the complete lack of evidence to suggest that they were capable of anything on such a scale, many in Aden believe that the members of the Celestial College of Aramyst, widely regarded as the most powerful spellcasters in the world, were somehow responsible for the events of the Darkfall. These people point to the immolation of Aramyst's coastline, now known as the Burning Coast, and speculate that some new ritual, some attempt of a grander scale than ever attempted previously, destroyed their home and cursed the rest of the world to darkness. The survivors of Aramyst resent this idea tremen-

dously, and they typically respond very aggressively to those who discuss it in their presence. Nevertheless, the idea that the Celestial College may have been attempting to create a stable portal to other planes, such as the mythical nether portal alleged to exist hidden somewhere in the Wall Mountains, is the most popular theory concerning Aramyst's responsibility for the Darkfall.

Some of Aden's more traditional citizens believe that the Darkfall is somehow the result of the prevalent presence and practice of mechamagic, although they are rarely able to give voice to exactly how such a thing might have occurred. Humans and other shorter-lived races are rarely among the ranks of such claimants, but the longer-lived races, such as elves and dwarves, have outspoken individuals who claim that the Darkfall was the result of mechamagic's perversion of the natural world. Most of these individuals point to Urbana, a nation whose lands have been devastated by the unparalleled advent of mechamagic, and whose lands have among the densest population of nocturnals, as proof that their claims have merit.

There are other, less well-founded theories that have been circulated in some circles of what remains of Aden's society. Some scholars and theologians have long theorized that there were once gods that guided Aden's development but that, for whatever reason, are no longer present. Perhaps they perished as the mortal races gradually forgot them, or perhaps the mortal races forgot them because they perished, no two theories on the matter are exactly the same. Regardless, among those who subscribe to such strange theories, the idea that the Darkfall is in some way related to gods once forgotten is one that grows in popularity with each passing year.

Prominent Corrupted

The plight of Aden in the aftermath of the Darkfall has been exacerbated by those who, for whatever reason, have accepted the blessings of the mysterious powers behind that most sinister of events. Some do so for the purposes of survival, while others burn with a lust of power and prestige that cannot be quenched any other way. Regardless of the reasons for their most terrible blasphemy, those who accept the Darkfall's blessings are forever changed by it and are known as the corrupted.

Ikarius Sylth

Lacking the raw physical power of many of his fellow corrupted, the sinister Ikarius Sylth more than makes up for his shortcomings with a deadly cunning and, seemingly, the favor of his patron, the Darkfall. According to boasts made to former captives who miraculously survived their captivity, Sylth claims to have been involved in bringing about the Darkfall, although this may very well have been little more than grandstanding. Regardless, Sylth has survived numerous confrontations that have ended much more powerful corrupted, lending credence to his claims of superiority. In addition to his vast intelligence and his sorcerous abilities, which are significant, Sylth is known in certain circles as the Verminude, a name allegedly belonging to a long-dead god of vermin from a previous age. Sylth is known by this appellation because of his unique ability to override and control the minds of vermin, including rats, insects, and various other unpleasant creatures. This ability extends even to humanoids such as the ilithix drones and to the ratlings, a particular breed of rat ferrans found in Mekanus.

Sylth is strangely pale and quite tall, although not supernaturally so like others of his ilk. He is strangely calm at all times, even in the midst of battle, and has never been known to lose his composure, even in the act of performing terrible cruelties or violence. He seems to prefer to avoid open conflict altogether and is much more of a schemer than other known corrupted. It is for this reason, and for his two failed attempts to seize control of the ilithix hives in Kyan (the second of which came dangerously close to succeeding), that the Radiant Order has placed a high priority on Sylth's capture or death.

The Lord of the Pale

It is unclear if the entity known as the Lord of the Pale is in fact affiliated with the Darkfall, for it is known that he predates that calamity by a matter of centuries. The historical reports of his infrequent appearances date back even farther than the advent of the Golden Age, and each time he has appeared, disaster has followed in his wake. Rumor and legend hold that the Lord of the Pale is the embodiment of all disease and pestilence, and his mere presence is enough to cause devastating outbreaks of plague that leave thousands dead. The legends also say that the Lord of the Pale was defeated and sealed away within a mystical prison by King Tirrian, the founder of the Radiant Order.

In the centuries since Tirrian's victory, a cult has arisen that reveres the Lord of the Pale. The precise beliefs of this cult are unclear, but its rituals are prohibited in all nations. The activities of the cult have been limited but have increased dramatically since the Darkfall, and there have been multiple reported sightings of the Lord of the Pale since that time. Each report accompanies the death of some settlement or large number of people from one foul plague or another, but it is unclear whether these outbreaks accompany the rumors, or if the rumors arise as a result of the outbreaks. No one knows for certain if the alleged Lord of the Pale that has been seen is real, and if he is, if it is the true Lord of the Pale or some nocturnal wearing his form because of the fear that the entity commands over the common folk.

Mamba


There are many throughout Aden who are known to be corrupted, and all are reviled by their former kinsmen. Few, however, are loathed with such great intensity as the ferran called Mamba. One of those rare few throwbacks who displayed reptilian heritage, Mamba was a serpent-man with the head of a snake and a body covered in scales. Despite his intimidating appearance, Mamba was respected for his keen intellect and eventually rose to the position of Governor in the village of Longou in Arasteen. He was lord of the village when the Darkfall came and saw it safely through the worst of the fighting that immediately followed. Shortly thereafter, however, Mamba disappeared. At the time, it was assumed that he had fallen prey to some insidious infiltrating nocturnal. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

Some time after he disappeared, Mamba reappeared in the most unlikely of places: the warrens of the naga. The naga have no love for any other race, and the means by which Mamba gained leadership over them is unknown, but he did precisely that, presumably through some blessing of the Darkfall. Utterly corrupted, Mamba led the serpent-men against his own home of Longou and destroyed it completely, leaving it nothing more than a burned ruin. Following his crime, Mamba retreated to the Fangs mountains, taking his sizeable force of naga with him. From there, he has continued to launch periodic attacks against the forces of Arasteen, following some pattern that only he understands.

The Red Man

Simultaneously one of the most enigmatic and feared of all known corrupted, the Red Man is feared particularly throughout Urbana, where he tends to be seen far more often. His background is a mystery, but his inexplicable tendency to act in the national interests of Urbana, often at the expense of other nations or even the Urbanan people, have given rise to a popular rumor that he was once an Inquisitor of the Eye who sold his soul to the Darkfall in order to better aid his master, Lord Urbane. Whether this is true or not, no one can say. Certainly the Iron Tyrant himself seems unlikely to have accepted the service of the corrupted when he is known to loathe nocturnals above all things, but it is possible that he considers the Red Man a disposable asset, or even that the Red Man acts on the Iron Tyrant's behalf but without his knowledge. Regardless, his tendency for explosive violence is such that few have ever laid eyes upon him and survived.

The Red Man, standing nearly nine feet tall, is a twisted monstrosity with grossly emaciated limbs. Despite this appearance, however, the Red Man possesses incredible strength, and he is more powerful by far than the strongest human or even powerful jurak warriors. He is almost completely impervious to damage, ignoring virtually every form



of physical damage and succumbing only to damage from magical sources, although even this heals incredibly quickly. The Red Man's skin is a ruddy color, and he has both black hair and a moustache that are strangely well trimmed at all times. His eyes are completely absent, as if they had never existed, with flesh having grown seamlessly over the sockets. Likewise, his mouth has grown shut and does not open, eliminating his ability to speak. The only known way to defeat the Red Man is to strike where his eyes should be, an extremely difficult task that can, if successful, temporarily destroy his body. Unfortunately, he has proven capable of resurrecting himself even from this damage, although it takes a significant amount of time and energy to accomplish this.

Terablix the Autonomous

The dangers of mechemagic are often forgotten in the face of the many advantages the new discipline offers to the people of Aden. Nothing more clearly illustrates the dangers than the tale of Terablix, the Lord of the Lost Ghetto. Originally conceived as little more than a machine of vengeance, the golem that would become Terablix was assembled slowly over many months and years, as a disgruntled mechemage working in one of the many factories of Mekanus smuggled out various parts to assemble it.

The mechemage was a low-ranking official, and as is so often the case in Urbana, was terribly abused by his superiors. The mage's simple plan for vengeance was to create a golem that would punish his abusers, but he reckoned without the many different enchantments the various components he stole bore – and the dangerous interactions between them. When the mage finally conducted the ritual that would activate the golem, he could not have anticipated the backlash that would not only kill him, but would inexplicably grant the golem self-awareness. Awakened in that instant, the golem almost immediately gave itself to the Darkfall in order to gain the power it required to ensure its survival.

Its already considerable size and power more than doubled by the blessings of the Darkfall, the golem calling itself Terablix shattered the ramshackle building where it had been created and went on a rampage throughout Mekanus, killing anything that stood in its path and destroying anything that presented an obstacle to its goal: the Lost Ghetto of Mekanus. Upon reaching the sealed city quarter, Terablix scaled the wall and disappeared within, which the city's defenders were pleased to allow it to do, given that they seemed completely incapable of stopping it. Within the Lost Ghetto, Terablix quickly established itself as the supreme ruler of that damned quarter, ruling over it like a king, and it continues to do so to this day. What its ultimate purpose is, no one knows for certain, but all citizens of Mekanus fear the day that Terablix the Autonomous chooses to remain within the Lost Ghetto no longer.

THE SCOURGE OF SYLDAN

Welcome to the village of Syldan! If only the circumstances of your visit could be somewhat more pleasant. You see, Syldan has the distinction of being the settlement closest to the searing heat of the Burning Coast in the ruins of the nation of Aramyst. It's a very difficult place to call home, but those who live here either refuse to leave, mostly because they lived here before the Darkfall, or they simply don't have anywhere else to go (mostly the case with a handful of refugees from the Burning Coast who have settled in the region).

The Burning Coast in Aramyst is quite possibly the one place in all the Known Lands that is the most antithetical to life as it is experienced by the civilized races of Aden. Very few have dared to venture into the region of immolation in the decade since the Darkfall, and even of that small number, only a fraction of them have emerged alive. Of those who have escaped with their lives, none have been truly intact. Burns are the least of their worries, for they heal; the mental trauma of having delved into the nightmarish hell that the once-great cities of Aramyst have become is something that does not seem to fade over time.

The western boundary of the Burning Coast is largely bereft of settlements. Most of those that existed prior to the Darkfall fell to nocturnals shortly thereafter or were abandoned during the flight from the region by those who survived the immolation. The only village of significant size that remains in the region is Syldan, and it clings to survival by the very thinnest of threads.

Before the Darkfall, Syldan was a small, idyllic village that was more or less founded by a handful of reclusive scholars who fancied a more remote location than the cities of the coast to conduct their research and discuss their theories. The only thing that stood in that area prior to the scholars' involvement was a small number of farming families that happened to have collected in the region. The combination of the scholars' generosity as well as their desire for the amenities of their former home caused the small, scattered community to grow into a true village, but it did not grow much larger than that; the founders wished it to remain quaint and comfortable.

When the Darkfall happened, the inflammation of the coast was visible from the village. The event terrified everyone, and a great many who could do so chose to flee from the region, heading west in the hopes of reaching safety. Few did, cut down by the nocturnals as they

tried to reach a safe haven that did not exist. The few survivors who escaped the region added their tales of terror to the chorus, ensuring that those who dwelled to the west had no inclination to venture back toward the coast. Those who remained behind would have no aid from their kinsmen beyond the boundaries.

Syldan stands alone.

SCENE ONE: ATTACK AT THE BARRICADE!

Like so many surviving villages in modern Aden, the village of Syldan is protected by a carefully maintained, if somewhat impromptu, wall. This wall serves as a barricade for all the horrible things outside the village that would love to prey upon its denizens, and as such it is carefully monitored for any weakness or shortcoming; most villagers spend at least a part of their day checking it, and there are a reasonable number of men and women within Syldan who do nothing else except service it. Maintaining the wall is much more difficult than it seems, simply because there are regular attacks that keep the wall exterior in a constant state of damage and disrepair. Days where such attacks take place are depressingly common, and as fate would have it, today is one of those days.

There is a sudden chorus of ringing bells as sentries stationed at the barricade send the signal that the village of Syldan is under attack by nocturnals. The villagers around you, men, women, and children alike, drop what they are doing and make their way toward the wall in case there is a breach. There are weapons at every section ready to be taken up. Those unable to fight for whatever reason hole themselves up indoors and begin blocking the doors. "C'mon!" a young boy, perhaps no more than eight years old, yells at you, tugging your shoulder. "They need help at the wall!"

A group of refugees emerges from the Ashen Forest, running for their lives, monsters snapping at their heels. This is a larger attack than usual, with a significant number of the nocturnals that the people of Syldan call "skin cats" attacking the northern and northwestern portions of the wall. There are nearly two dozen of the creatures in all, and while the militia can handle many of them, they cannot handle that many. The player characters will be sorely needed if there is to be any chance of a successful defense.

Characters that prefer ranged attacks will have their choice of targets as the cats rush the wall and attempt to leap it or scale it. While the packs are thinned quite a bit, many still make it to the wall, and of course they will manage to scale a portion of the wall well within reach of the characters.

Syldan Defenders

There are no citizens of Syldan who have not been forced to fight for their lives on many occasions, and even the children who call the village home are more skilled in combat than any outsider might ever realize. Most members of the village rotate through the city guards, but

WHY ARE WE HERE?

That is an excellent question, and fortunately one with a number of answers. The characters may be natives of Syldan, of course, which makes things pretty simple. If they are only visiting, then they may know folks who live in Syldan or perhaps they have been in the region looking for lost treasures of Aramyst, which is a pretty common thing among traveling adventurers, who either search for such things for themselves or, in some cases, are hired by refugees from the Burning Coast to pursue some lost item of great value to them personally. Any of these options, or an option you choose, should be sufficient!

For more information on Syldan, its surroundings, and its citizens, you can pick up Thunderscape Vistas #2: Besieged Village at DriveThruRPG.com for the full story.

there are some who serve there permanently. To those opponents who might expect simple villagers to offer a minimal threat, these full-time guards can be a considerable, sometimes fatal, surprise.

Attributes

Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Farming) d10, Notice d8 (+2), Repair d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d10, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (6+1)

Gear: Mostly bows and slings while the attackers are approaching, and spears and pikes when they are close enough. A few have leather armor.

Edge: Alertness, Brawny

Skin Cats

The otherwise nameless skin cats are a relatively common form of nocturnal found in the regions immediately surrounding the Burning Coast of Aramyst, and occasionally farther west. Predatory and powerful, they are a significant threat to any who encounters them, as they rarely travel alone, but rather work together in packs. Skin cats are large creatures, roughly the size of a large mountain lion, with six legs, four eyes, no fur whatsoever, and a gaping maw that could swallow a man's arm whole without difficulty (and do so whenever the opportunity arises). They are extremely athletic, well out of proportion for their size, and some of their most powerful specimens have on occasion been able to leap over the barricade and gain entry to Syldan. Such occurrences are fortunately rare but inevitably bloody when they do occur.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (6+2)

Special Abilities

- ✧ **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6
- ✧ **Fleet Footed:** Skin Cats roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- ✧ **Low Light Vision**
- ✧ **Pounce:** Skin Cats can pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1D8" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. However, when performing this maneuver, its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action.
- ✧ **Size:** Large (+2 to be hit, +2 Toughness)

The Hidden Truth

The attack on the barricade, while a deadly situation that threatens the entirety of Syldan, is sadly a relatively commonplace occurrence. Enough so that most villagers do not look at it too closely, instead feeling only relief that it was endured without significant loss of life. And in most cases, that response is sufficient, because skin cats are not among the Darkfall's intelligent minions, as they are little more than cunning but unintelligent beasts. However, in this case, there is more to the story.

An incredibly powerful corrupted spellcaster called Typhon, once a protector of the village, now hungers for its destruction and the recovery of a lost secret he hid there many years ago. Typhon has attempted to destroy Syldan on several occasions, but has always been turned away by its defenders, in particular a very young ferran warrior named Hannah (a fact that sends Typhon into a destructive black rage when he dwells upon it for too long). Now, he has a different plan in mind, something different than his previous attempts.

Typhon allied himself with a terrible creature known as a Darkspawn, capable of incredible feats of infiltration and manipulation, and devised a plan. He employed the skin cats to herd a wandering group of refugees towards the wreckage of a steamwagon recently destroyed by nocturnals. The Darkspawn was waiting there, apparently the sole survivor, and it explained them its "parents" were on their way to Syldan for shelter when they were embushed. Before anything else could be said or done, the skin cats renewed their attack, and the survivors fled to Syldan, taking the Darkspawn with them. Typhon has high hopes that

the Darkspawn will create such an unstable situation within Syldan that the village will at long last fall to his more direct minions.

SCENE TWO: A MOMENT'S REST

There is an almost unnatural silence that falls over the village once the attack is done. The refugees are directed to Creator's Circle, the wounded are treated, the corpses of their enemies are put to the torch, and the worst damage to the wall starts to be repaired almost immediately. In another settlement, perhaps now would be a time for relaxing and recovery, but for the people of Syldan, the former is a luxury they cannot afford. Many villagers offer the characters their thanks, although it is a subdued affair rather than a jubilant one. One older woman approaches to speak with them.

"Hello, friends," she says simply. "Thank you for your help. Every extra pair of hands is a blessing when the nocturnals attack." She takes a moment to adjust the blood-stained bandage on her left forearm. "We have little to offer in the way of thanks, but I'll see to it that you have accommodations at the Fifth Season. The rooms are acceptable, but the food is the best in the village." She smiles. "Just don't tell Farrell I said so. He'll get a big head." She offers her right hand. "I'm Leona. They call me the mayor. I'll take it, I suppose. Come with me and I'll take you to the Public Quarter."

The Public Quarter

Syldan has never been a popular place for tourism, but presence of even a half dozen such powerful arcanists as the Creators has ensured that there are always scholars, salesmen, experts, and a variety of other individuals in the area seeking an audience for one reason or another. The Public Quarter is the portion of the village that was given over for such pursuits, and although it is not large, it houses a number of prestigious inns and taverns as well as at least one public library. Or that is to say that it did house those things; few have survived the chaos that has endured since the Darkfall. As advertised, the Fifth Season has accommodations that are mediocre at best, but the food is quite excellent, particularly given the small size of the village in which it is located.

During this momentary lull in the violence brought to Aden by the Darkfall, the characters may find themselves embroiled in all manner of village happenings. This is an opportunity to introduce new characters or plots that you may have planned for your campaign, or it can simply be an opportunity to explore Syldan a little bit more. Some minor encounters that might prove suitable could include:

- ✧ The characters are witness to a heated debate between a married couple who have discovered that their only surviving child, a daughter, has signed up to join the exterior repair crew, the most dangerous duty in the entire village. The father does not want her to do it, whereas the mother is more supportive.
- ✧ A small child, too young to help defend the village, timidly approaches the characters and asks if they are brave adventurers, then follows it up by asking if it's true that nocturnals like to eat the smallest children first because that's what his brother says.
- ✧ Two men are haggling ferociously over a barter they are trying to arrange. One man has a handful of slightly overripe fruit and the other has a battered but still lovely pendant. Apparently one of them wants the pendant for his wife but the other isn't sure it's worth the fruit, and they seem to be arguing themselves in circles.

Leona, Mayor of Syldan

Leona is the de facto ruler of Syldan, and most call her the mayor even though she was never elected to that position. The last true mayor of Syldan was her husband, a man some years her senior who perished in the chaos following the Darkfall. As she had been his closest and

wisest advisor for many years, she fell into the role easily. Leona never had children of her own, and considers the people of Syldan her family now. She clearly carries great sorrow in her heart, perhaps even more than might be explained by the death of her husband, but she does not speak of such things, and will politely but firmly decline any attempt at conversation regarding her personal life.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Law) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Repair d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Anemic, Heroic

Edges: Charismatic, Command, Inspire

Gear: 2 pistols, 2 daggers, chain hauberk

INTERLUDE: COOLER HEADS PREVAIL

As the characters are enjoying their brief respite in the Public Quarter, they soon are witness to a troubling altercation. Two men who, by their dress, are originally from Carraway, are arguing vehemently with Leona, the mayor who put the characters up in the inn. Leona is attempting to remain calm and trying to calm the two men, but they aren't particularly interested in calming down, apparently. If the characters care to overhear, they can glean the following information:

- ✦ The men are "newcomers," a group of refugees from outside Syldan who ended up within the village after the Darkfall caused the Burning Coast to spring into existence. The newcomers apparently occupy an otherwise abandoned region of the village called Creator's Circle.

- ✦ The men are demanding additional supplies for their contingent. Leona is calmly attempting to assure them that they are receiving the same rations that everyone else in the village has been afforded, but that they are not getting more than everyone else because she knows they want to try and stockpile provisions in order to try and leave the village and survive the trek west to another, larger settlement.

- ✦ The men are further insisting that some of the supplies they have been given have already spoiled, suggesting they were not good in the first place, and that some of the herbal remedies they have been given have soured as well. With a fever running through many of the newcomers, they want more medicine to treat their families, but Leona is reluctant to take medicine allocated to the wall guards for the newcomers.

- ✦ Leona agrees to send the village herbalists into the Circle to try and stem the fever's spread, and will re-examine the situation with the rations. The men are not satisfied, but leave regardless.

SCENE THREE: A BUNGLED BURGLARY

Late in the evening, there is a disturbance downstairs at the Fifth Season, where the characters are staying. There is a loud crash at first, followed shortly by muffled shouting and then a series of bangs and thuds, all coming from the kitchen area on the first floor. Given that the characters are staying roughly above the kitchen, it's a simple matter for them to hear and, presumably, they will go downstairs to investigate.

The kitchen is in disarray. Farrell, the portly human who serves as the innkeeper, is lying insensate on the floor, bleeding from a small

cut above his eye. Several shelves have been knocked over and pots are lying everywhere. A lone man is busily shoving food into a bag, only stopping when he realizes you have entered. He looks up at you with panic in his eyes, and you recognize him. He was one of the men arguing with Leona earlier today, and it seems like he's taken it upon himself to solve his perceived problem with rationing.

Burglar

The thief in this instance seems surly and recalcitrant, which he is, but these traits are exacerbated because of the clever manipulation by the Darkspawn currently plaguing the Syldan newcomers.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Farming) d8, Notice d8 (+2), Repair d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: 2 daggers and leather armor.

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor), Greedy

Edge: Alertness

Presumably the characters will apprehend the burglar, in light of his act of violence against the innkeeper, or at least be able to identify him to Leona and her authorities. This will result either in his arrest or, perhaps more dangerous, the city watch heading into Creator's Circle to apprehend him for his actions. Either way, the characters should realize, as Leona does, that they are standing on the edge of a major problem.

The Hidden Truth

The gentleman responsible for the burglary is indeed one of the men from the conversation with Leona earlier in the day. Under different circumstances, he may well have been prompted to engage in robbery anyway, but not until the situation became much more dire. Under the influence of the Darkspawn, however, his baser and darker impulses rose to the fore quite quickly, and he came to steal supplies because the creature contaminated what little supplies the newcomers already had on hand. His apprehension and detainment will be the spark the Darkspawn needs to turn the entire village into a powder keg of resentment and, hopefully, violence.

SCENE FOUR: RIOT

There is some leeway in how this particular scene plays out, depending largely upon the actions of the characters in the previous scenes. Presumably, one of the following took place:

- ✦ The characters detained the burglar and handed him over to Leona's authorities to suffer an appropriate (but humane... the people of Syldan are compassionate despite their circumstances) punishment. In this instance, once word of his arrest gets out to the newcomers (likely the following day), tensions rise and by nightfall, there is a horde of rioters preparing to storm the Public Quarter for food, freedom, and restitution, not necessarily in that order.

- ✦ The characters may have merely identified the burglar to the authorities, who will set out for Creator's Circle at once. In this case, their presence exacerbates the already tense situation and the riots take place within the hour, centered first in the Circle and then spreading outward.

- ✦ The characters may do nothing (for whatever reason!). In this case, when Farrell recovers, he will go to Leona and tell her what has happened. His description is sufficient for her to identify the perpetrator, and things unfold as before, with the authorities heading into the Circle the morning after the robbery.

Regardless of what form the hostilities take, the riot is essentially inevitable, having far less to do with the presence of the Darkspawn than with long-standing resentments and hostilities (the Darkspawn didn't hurt, though). Discovering the creature's involvement should be difficult, but well within the realm of possibility. Leona should at some point express disbelief that the supplies the newcomers have been given have spoiled already, given their freshness. If the characters investigate this claim, however, they will discover that the food and medicine is virtually rotten, which Leona will insist is impossible. Small traces of a black ooze will be the only clue that something strange is amiss. How the characters proceed from that point is anyone's guess, but ultimately a confrontation with the Darkspawn should be inevitable.

Creator's Circle

Before the birth of Syldan, the region it now occupies was merely pleasant wilderness broken occasionally by farmlands. The wizards that wished to create a 'vacation home,' of sorts, selected a sparsely populated region with some agriculture and constructed private estates there, complete with luxurious accommodations and workshops necessary to continue their arcane studies as they saw fit. Creator's Circle is the name that was given to the cluster of these estates by the villagers who gathered to the wizards' banner, and they have remained. Six estates were constructed, although only four were present at the time of the village's birth, and they remained the village's most notable feature for centuries.

During the Darkfall, Creator's Circle was home to the most violent fighting when the people of Syldan were attempting to defend their home. Only one of the wizards that called the neighborhood home, Claudius, was in the village at the time, and he wielded his magic with great vigor and skill to save the people he regarded as his friends, but ultimately he was struck down even at the last moments of the battle. Creator's Circle was virtually destroyed, with none of the estates emerging intact. Several were destroyed completely, while others remain merely severely damaged.

In the years since the Darkfall, Creator's Circle remains the most significantly damaged part of Syldan, and none of the villagers have the time, resources, or inclination to enact major repairs. The neighborhood has become home to refugees from the coast, who have carved out minor accommodations for themselves within the ruined homes. These individuals, known as "newcomers" to the village residents, refuse to move into the village proper and make homes for themselves in the vacant regions there, something that has continued to drive a wedge between the original villagers and the refugees over time.

Newcomer Rioters

The newcomers of Syldan are a frustrated and bitter lot. They are under the persuasive influence of the Darkspawn, to be sure, but the creature's manipulation proved easier than usual, and it found that it could affect a larger number of subjects than normal simply because they were already predisposed toward action against the natives. It is an unfortunate and unpleasant truth that in the world after the Darkfall, men sometimes need very little encouragement to turn upon one another.

Attributes

Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: daggers and short swords, some have a pistol, leather armor.

Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean

Edge: Quick, Two-Fisted

Darkspawn

The aptly named Darkspawn is one of the Darkfall's most insidious creations. Born of some primal fear of children or, perhaps more likely, the tendency of children to eventually replace their parents, the Darkspawn appears as a human child, most frequently female but not

exclusively, and roughly six to eight years of age. Clever and devious in the extreme, a Darkspawn can manipulate virtually anyone to bring out their worst and darkest emotions. The Darkspawn can also take the form of a viscous, noxious ooze that can squeeze through almost any opening, making it a potent infiltrator as well. The creature can secrete tiny portions of itself to poison living beings or contaminate other commodities, including food or drink.

❖ (Wild Card) Attributes

Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Disguise) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Stealth d10

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (6+2-1)

Gear: Whatever tools are readily available to a child. Unless it fears it has been discovered, the Darkspawn almost never carries weapons or anything that could betray his disguise.

Special Abilities

❖ **Face of Innocence:** Charisma +2 for any check related to maintaining its disguise or manipulating others into doing its bidding.

❖ **Immunity:** The Darkspawn is immune to poison and disease.

❖ Low Light Vision

❖ **Poisonous (-4):** First dose makes the victim Fatigued (-1 to all Trait checks) for 2 days. Second and subsequent doses, if ingested while the previous dose is still in effect, inflict the loss of one die of Vigor. If this would drop Vigor below d4, then death results 2 days later unless treated.

❖ **Shapeshifter (Limited):** The Darkspawn can take on the form of a boy or girl which then becomes his solid shape. It's unable to mimic clothing or any other item, so it must steal clothes from his victims. This particular persona is fixed until the creature decides to adopt a new one. This change of appearance requires 24h and is not done lightly, because it weakens the Darkspawn. While reshaping and the 6 following days, the Darkspawn loses the following abilities: Poisonous, Turn to Ooze, and Viscous Body.

❖ **Size:** Small (-1 to be hit, Toughness -1).

❖ **Turn to Ooze:** The Darkspawn can turn into a black ooze (or revert to its child identity) with one regular action. While liquid, its Pace is 4, and it can climb on walls, hang from ceilings, or seep through tiny openings. In this form, its attacks are limited to grappling, and it can "see" and "hear" from any part of its mass. Note that it's only turning its body into ooze, not its clothes, which are left behind during the transformation along with any other item it was carrying.

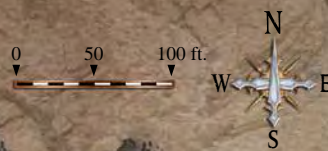
❖ **Viscous Body:** The Darkspawn's tar-like body makes it particularly resilient to damage. It gains Toughness +2, a +2 bonus to recover from being Shaken, and suffers only half-damage from non-magical attacks (environmental hazards, such as fire or cold, affect the Darkspawn normally).

AFTERMATH

Presumably, the characters will successfully root out and destroy the cancer growing within Syldan and, in doing so, end the conflict between the natives and the newcomers. This is not a resolution, of course, because there are still many hard feelings between the two groups, but it is a convenient reason for everyone to forget the problems that led up to this particular conflict. If the characters remain within Syldan, they will most likely find themselves caught up between the two groups again in the future, assuming of course that they manage to survive the constant assaults by the nocturnals that want to destroy the whole village.

ASHEN FOREST

SYLDAN VILLAGE



CREATOR'S CIRCLE

MERCHANT'S QUARTER

SYLDAN'S POND

THE INNER FIELDS

THE NEIGHBORHOODS

THE PUBLIC QUARTER

TOWARDS THE BURNING COAST →

THE NATIONS OF ADEN



SAVAGE THUNDERSCAPE BACKERS

Our most sincere thanks to our supporters from Kickstarter, without whom none of this would have been possible!

Cartographer's Society & Heroes of Aden

Jeremy Kear, Jerry Linscott

Thunder Scout

Luke Gregory

Misari Giantslayer

Mike "Otaku Mike" Brodu, Mike Colson, James Dalton, Joe Frost, Jeffrey Kidwell, Charles Myers, David A. Nolan, Matthew Schenck, Jeff Scifert (Editor of Awesomeness – SC), Michael Sim CH, Brandon Snyder, Michael V, H.G. Wells, probably

Arastinian Paladin

Alan Bahr, Bigmageusa, Justin Burr, Paul Buss, David Cummings, Cryaxe, G. Davies, Kevin Donovan, GM Draeus, Michael Emrick, Eversong, Edgar G, Jeremy Gale, Brian Gosell, Joseph Hepler, Brian "Nitehood" Johnson, Christian Lindke, Clinton Monn, Jacob "Ryoku" Mourn, My Name on the Backers List, Qabal69, Michael Ramsey, Jeffrey Rinkel, Mark S, James "Ghostman" Schrecengost, Jeremy Seeley, Mark A. Siefert, Jarrod Simpson, Richard G. Skibba, Seth Spurlock, Paul Stabile, this is not necessary, D.J. Trindle, Paul D. Watts, SE Weaver, Mike Wells, Andreas Wiegand, Dina Wilkens

Le'Ciel Exarch

Tommy "Slawdawg" Acuff, Jens Alm, Anonymous, Eric Barnard, Steve Beleck, John Bennett, Robert Bersch, Remi Bilodeau, Alan Bray, Derek M. Brown, Travis Bryant, CgWrks, Keith E. Clendenen, Adam M Coleman, Mario Corodva, Savage on RPG'ers~Tim Davis, Phillipe Deville, Scott Dexter, Joerg Diener, Jake Dodd, Pablo "Hersho" Dominguez, Don't Worry About That, Stephen Dragonspawn, Chris Emmerson, Marc von Gernler, Becky Glenn, Greymyst, Felix

Grothkopp, Boyd Kleen, Ed Kowalczewski, Liz, Steve Lord, Scott Maynard, Randy Mosiondz, My Name in a Thank You Page, Scott Neal, Once And Future Biggest Savage Worlds Fan, Charlie Payne, Pascal "Plageman" Pflugfelder, Xose Oscar Lopez Rascado, William Reger, David Rego, David Ross, Jim Ryan, Michael "Mammut" Sauer, Kristian Serrano, The Smiley, tanic5, Tristan Smith, Sean P. Soderlind, Trip Space-Parasite, Ben Stilson, Daniel Swenson of Dungeon Crawlers Radio, Michael Taylor, James F Tillman, Simon Ward, Jay Watson, Ron Wilhelm, Peter Wood, Wulfgar, yes

Watcher of the Eye

Vincent Bezic, Chris Chambers, Togashi Chigau, Jason Corley, Scott Crosson, Falingard, Godu, Jon Goodwins, Michael Hill, Jimmy Hyde, Karlen "The Spider Watcher" Kendrick, Jere Manninen, Andrea Martinelli, No, Richard Percy, Chris Snyder, Steven D Warble, Drew Wendorf

Steppes Raider

Svend Anderson, Architech99, Norbert Baer, Tomas Burgos-Caez, burningcrow, Matteo "Ceppe" Ceppetelli, Kenneth Cooper, Darkspi, William Dawson-Ekberg, Steve Dodge, Nathaniel Early, Aleksandr Ermakov, John Haynie, Marcel Hill, Emrys W. Hopkins, Ratimir Ismailobrat, jOrdi, Gustavo "Tanaka" La Fontaine, Chris Moore, Name, Ron "Khaalis" Owen, Bruce Paris, Jeff Prather, Guillermo Ortega, R. Kal Ringenbach, Dave S, Roy Sachleben, Manuel Sambs, Kevin Shinnars, Michael Sprague, Sure, Steven Thum, Why Not?, surprise me, John Swan, Morry Veer, Melior Via

Urbanan Militia

Birgit Summerfelt

Syldan Villagers

Dace, Gordon Fancher, Jenny Langley, Dylan Tobias

SAVAGE THUNDERSCAPE THE WORLD OF ADEN

AN EPIC WORLD OF STEAM AND DARKNESS

In Aden, a thousand-year Golden Age of prosperity gave rise to an unprecedented development: the fusion of magic and technology into a unique discipline called mechamagic. Arcane power, steam power, and gunpowder changed the world almost overnight. The Golden Age ended, and the Age of Thunder began. It seemed there would be no limit to the industry and ingenuity of man.

Until the Darkfall.

A supernatural cataclysm of unknown origin, the Darkfall plunged the world into darkness as the sun was blotted out for only a moment. In that moment, every nightmare and horror imagined by the people of Aden sprang into existence, and the world was thrown into chaos. Villages were wiped from the face of the world, entire cities burned, and tens of thousands perished in an instant. It seemed that the world would die in flames.

But Aden will not die so easily.

Now, ten years later, the people of Aden struggle to survive in the face of unrelenting assault by horrors beyond imagining. It is a world of magic, a world of industry, a world of horror.

It is the world of Aden.

Thunderscape: the World of Aden is a setting and mechanics sourcebook compatible with the **Savage Worlds** role-playing game. Within the pages of this book you will find the following:

- * Details on the different races of Aden, seven of which are new to this work!
- * New Edges of all types, including new Arcane Backgrounds!
- * New spells, new technology, and new equipment!
- * A sample bestiary of creatures from Aden!
- * And much, much more!

