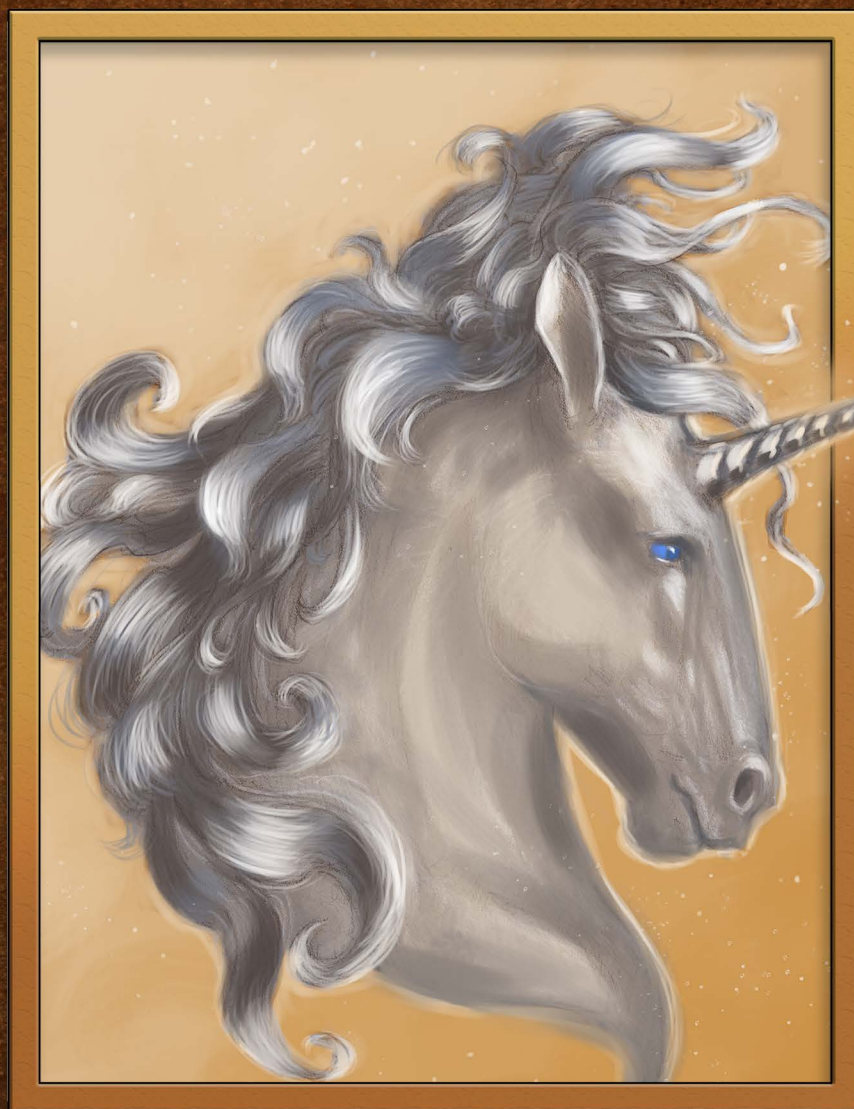


EPIC HIGH FANTASY

Shardar

GUIDEBOOK



MAGIC & COSMOLOGY

VOLUME I: LIGHT AND LIFE

EVIL BEAGLE GAMES PRESENTS

MAGIC & COSMOLOGY

VOLUME I: LIGHT AND LIFE

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FORWARD

First and foremost, any Game Master wishing to truly understand the foundational principles of this world needs to study and internalize this material. The Four Powers – and the beings that are connected to each of them – drive almost every major plot and happening in Shaintar. As well, being as real and impacting as they are, these and other mystical elements have a very strong place in the minds and souls of all sentient beings who reside here.

It is easy enough to simply say “That’s a being corrupted by Darkness. Thus, he’s evil – get him!” It will mean much more to you, and to your players, if you take the time to read through and understand what Darkness is really all about. Yes, it’s evil, but it is so much more than that.

So, too, are the other Powers more rich and complex than their surface presentations. You can tell much richer and more compelling stories when you can implement these deeper shades of meaning and more textured presentations of what is happening in the world.

The two volumes also delve into greater mysteries that stretch far back into the lost history of the world. Not only do these mythological revelations give you a powerful foundation for the past of Shaintar; they reveal the impending future that threatens everything the heroes of your stories and games are fighting for.

CHAPTER 1: FOUNDATIONS

To truly understand the lands, people, and nature of Shaintar, you must first grasp the very powerful forces that shaped its origins, and continue to shape its destiny even today. Shaintar is a land steeped in magic and mystery, and there is almost nothing of importance or significance that happens in these lands that isn’t in some way touched by the greater powers that define the magic and cosmology of the world.

COSMOLOGICAL HISTORY

In Shaintar: Legends Arise, there is a fairly significant Timeline and other historical information given. One of the sections is “The Time Before Time,” which speaks of the creation myth of Shaintar.

Which is pretty much balderdash.

Certainly, the allegory stems from the actual events of the time, but the truth is far more complex than the mere bonding-and-creation act as most inhabitants are taught. A whole universe extends beyond the borders of Shaintar and the Veil that surrounds her, and the land of today was dramatically shaped by forces from the great beyond.

BEFORE THE SHATTERING

As vast and imposing as the Kal-A-Nar Empire is to the people of Shaintar, it is but a speck in the eye of the giant that was the Empire of the Starfather. Seven stars and a least a dozen inhabited planets, united by Starfall Gates and Arcdrive Ships, fell under the eternal, generally benevolent rule of the Starfather and his family. His mate, once called the Radiant Mother (now, the Mother of Night), and his children and grandchildren (the Scions and Offspring, respectively) helped manage and rule this vast civilization. Aided by the techno-magical might of the Builders and other gifted beings, the family of the Starfather seemed destined to not only rule for eternity, but expand the Empire of the Starfather to distant stars and worlds beyond the Veil.

Sadly, the unbridled ambition and treachery of the duplicitous Mother of Night drove the Starfather mad with grief and rage at her betrayal, and that of so many of his children. The war that erupted between the two factions engulfed the entire Empire; no world or people went untouched by it, and billions died in the conflagration as cosmic powers and weapons of truly massive destruction were wielded with shockingly casual ruthlessness.

In the end, the Starfather saw only one way to end the madness that even he was hopelessly gripped within. The true key to his power was always the planet of Starfall, the single known source of the mystically-charged mineral known as *crysarium*. Infused from core to crust with this powerful substance, Starfall was the cosmological center of the Empire of the Starfather; via the mechanism of the awe-inspiring Eternity Spire – a crystalline tower that stretched from the surface of the planet to well above the atmosphere – the Starfather projected his power and his influence throughout the rest of his holdings.

The Eternity Spire enabled the Starfather, with the aid of the Builders, to construct a network of gates and relay stations that permitted enormous raw power to be projected across the Seven Stars and their orbiting planets. The Spire was the source of free energy for all beings, applied to nearly-endless mystic technologies

that met both basic needs and glorious luxuries for every citizen of the Empire. This was the keystone to the Starfather's utopia.

It was also the source of power that the Mother of Night and her favored children and followers coveted for themselves. It became the central focus of the conflict, making Starfall the final battleground of what became the War of the Spire.

In the end, there was only one way out of oblivion.

THE SHATTERING OF THE SPIRE

A complex and godlike being does not collapse in the same way a mere mortal might. The Starfather fractured, piece by piece, as the madness of the War of the Spire took its toll upon him. Various fragments of his being split off to be lost in Corelisia, drifting through both time and space. The main part of him continued to fight the war with every violent urge it had to expend.

Fortunately for those who exist today, a smaller, yet still significant part of the collapsing psyche of the Starfather encountered the only wielder of the Patterns to ever successfully work out moving through time as well as space.

Shayana the Traveler was an extraordinary and ambitious practitioner of sorcery, with a keen focus on the greater mysteries of the Patterns. While others of her ilk remain focused on the applications of sorcery to their existence in the here-and-now, Shayana remained forever fixed on the possibilities of travel via the Patterns. It was she who discovered the capacity to teleport from one place to another, a discovery that would forever immortalize her in the annals of magical development.

Her greatest achievement, however, would go mostly unknown by all but a very few scholars who delve the greatest secrets of Shaintar's history. Mostly, this is because she disappeared from her laboratory one day and never returned.

Shayana worked out time travel, against all odds and in complete violation of core cosmological laws. In doing so, however, she unraveled her physical form utterly and became a being of pure spiritual energy. She wandered the timeline (or timelines, depending upon with whom you discuss such matters), observing the earliest days of the Empire of the Starfather and viewing all of the possible futures as well. From her perspective, most of those futures entailed an ultimate end of all life as it is known, where everything is lost to utter Darkness or all-consuming Flame.



Though no longer a physical being, Shayana the Traveler was a force to be reckoned with, and she forced the Starfather to reckon with her as she confronted him near the end of the War of the Spire.

What exactly transpired in those initial meetings of the disembodied time-wandering sorceress and the Father of All Known Reality can only be speculated upon. Somehow, she convinced him to enact a plan that might save at least part of his realm. Far more importantly, she helped him work out a means to seed a future that may not be doomed to the Void or sheer oblivion. With the aid of two of his most loyal and beloved Scions – Targon, known as the Ranger, and Shanais, called the Druidess – as well as their daughter, Celesia, and the Faelakar Offspring known as Saiderin, Shayana and the fractured aspect of the Starfather still seeking to save some part of his people concocted a scheme that a tiny number of beings have come to know as the **Traveler Enigma**.

With the plan in place, the remaining fragments of the Starfather's psyche united to encourage their greatest whole to end the War of the Spire with one final, undeniable and ultimate stroke. In a shout of rage and wrath that echoed across all the worlds of the Seven Stars, he struck down the Eternity Spire and plunged the universe into darkness.

AFTERMATH AND ASCENSION

The Shattering of the Spire ended both the war and the Empire in one decisive, utterly destructive moment of such cataclysmic force, no one can truly know the full extent of the loss of life and property. Civilizations were snuffed out in moments, and entire planets were reduced to apocalyptic rubble. Time itself was torn asunder in some places, and all contact between the Seven Stars was shut off mercilessly and without recourse.

The Scions were stripped of all but the merest fraction of their personal power; a handful of these otherwise immortal beings destroyed for all time, while most were left broken, battered, and abandoned wherever they were at the moment. Their Offspring suffered even more, and their followers died by the millions.

The Mother of Night's physical form was utterly obliterated, and her spirit was cast deep into the Void, where she remains as of this writing. What remained of the Starfather's being, both physically and spiritually, fell into a deep torpor. Some believe his titanic body lay at the bottom of the deepest part of Starfall's oceans.

The particulate remains of the Shattered Spire formed what are now called the Mists of the Veil. The Mists cover much of Starfall, cutting off what few lands retaining life there are from each other. Anyone or anything traveling into the Mists is destroyed, or becomes forever lost in time and space.

Not all was lost, however. At the moment of the Shattering, Shanais and Targon infused the vast majority of their power into the continent and surrounding islands of what is now known as Shaintar. Instead of losing their power to the Shattering, their Father helped them use it to instead keep Shaintar relatively unscathed in the cataclysm. As well, large numbers of many races were transferred from other places on Starfall, preserving the diversity of sentient cultures at least for this one world.

Even as the Mists settled into place and tens of thousands of startled beings struggled to understand what was happening, Shanais and Targon used the last of their remaining cosmological might to raise five beings to a higher state – Vainar, Ceynara, Illiana, Dranak, and Zavonis. Upon Ascension, their task was to replace the now scattered and disconnected Scions as guides and guardians, ensuring that other Powers and Greater Beings from Corelisia and beyond did not gain undue access to and control over this one preserved realm remaining of the once-great Empire. Because Saiderin – whose part of the Traveler Enigma plan was to watch after the people and the state of Shaintar, pulling what strings were needed to ensure safety and stability – feared the potential and likely inevitable power of Light in the future, Ceynara was kept ignorant of the full nature of her role in things until Saiderin could be sure she would understand and appreciate the full responsibilities of care-taking the Power of Light.

This would prove to be a terrible, arrogant mistake on the Raven's part, but not his last one by any means.

Sadly, arrogance runs in the blood, as Saiderin's elder brother, Vainar, would prove. Seeking to control the Power of Darkness (rather than simply oppose it, as was his mandate upon Ascension), Vainar fell to Corruption even as he mastered its power. Not long after – only three centuries later – Ceynara succumbed to her growing sense of resentment and the masterful seduction of the Demon Lord, Uldor the Bright.

These two devastating falls from grace gutted the Ascended, leaving the state of affairs in Corelisia something of a wreck as the remaining three spent the vast majority of their time fighting off the forces of Vainar's Dark hordes and Ceynara's Flame-driven monstrosities. After millennia of struggle, both in the

physical realm of Shaintar and throughout the spirit world, Dranak, Illiana, and Zavonis finally concurred with Saiderin and Celesia that they must pool their resources to Ascend a new Soulfinder.

Saiderin refused their request for him to take his brother's place (of course, due to his part in the Traveler Enigma plan), instead insisting they choose his sister, Landra. Naturally, she accepted, for she and her brother had a plan to ameliorate the horrific damage being done by the constant warring of the Ascended and their Fallen counterparts. This plan manifested as the enacting of Landra's Covenants.

As for the Light, the Raven had simply given up on the Power he was never sure of.

His truest love and greatest confidant in existence, however, had not.

LINER NOTES – THE COVENANTS

One of Landra's first acts was to enact the Covenants – mystical laws that would enforce strictures against all of the beings of Corelisia in their dealings with Shaintar. She did this in response to the many devastating conflicts that had ravaged Shaintar over the centuries; direct battles between the Ascended, Demon Lords, Necrolords, and their otherworldly armies destroyed entire societies and changed the landscape from the damage done.

The Covenants act as a kind of balancing force; they do not utterly prevent one of the Ascended or other greater beings from direct interference, but they do exact a price for such actions. In a sense, the harder a being of Corelisia "pushes" upon the Veil, the harder it will push back (so to speak). One of the most poignant examples of this effect is that of Ceynara's entering into a century of sleep while the Gates of Hell were closed, all because she used her raw power against the avatar of Vainar within the realm of Shaintar during the Betrayal War.

The Covenants stand as a mighty convenient excuse for not allowing the Heroes (or anyone else) to call upon the "gods" or other beings at the drop of a spiritual hat. Even when they are serving the interests of the Ascended, the Heroes must accept that they have to do a lot on their own, since the Covenants stand in the way of their receiving too much in the way of direct aid.

The Covenants *can* be appeased in some ways, mainly through great rituals that take significant time and resources. This goes a long way towards explaining why the Greater Beings can do pretty major things, but only if the price of the Covenants is paid.

The whole point of the Covenants is to explain why such powerful beings as the Ascended and others don't just use their own mighty powers to accomplish what they want done in Shaintar. They need heroes because they actually need them.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LIGHT

Before the Fall of Vainar and the Seduction of Ceynara, the mighty Empire of the Golden Sun dominated much of the landscape of Shaintar. A civilization ruled by humans, the Golden Sun is believed by many scholars to refer to the ancient god still honored by some Youlin Aradi of the Eternal Desert – Raz'Dash.

Those scholars are, in fact, correct. Raz'Dash was a manifestation of an aspect of the Starfather, one that broke off during the War of the Spire with the intention of simply losing itself in the Celestial Halls of Corelisia. Instead, this aspect responded to the calls of the people of the Empire, seeking hope and guidance and protection from the many enemies that besieged their glorious Empire. While Saiderin bided his time, waiting until he felt he could fully trust Ceynara with the entire scope of her position, the Starfather aspect presented himself to a handful of people in the Empire of the Golden Crown and empowered them with gifts of faith and Light.

Raz'Dash grew in influence and fame for a short while, though the limits on his power were such that only a few of his faithful could truly be granted miracles. It was enough, however, to spawn a cult that lasts to the current day.

Part of the cult's success lay with Celesia who, in her primary guise as the Silver Unicorn, also granted gifts and mystical aid and guidance. These things she did as an ally and representative of the Raz'Dash entity, though he was not fully aware of who she was or why she was doing so. Her reasons, as it turned out, were firmly based in her belief that her beloved Saiderin had made a serious mistake in not trusting Ceynara, and Shaintar needed the Light sooner than he felt the Guardian Ascended was ready for it.

Sadly, this particular aspect of the Starfather was very weak and eventually burned out most of his mystical essence. As the Empire of the Golden Sun fell and was swallowed by the encroaching desert, so, too, did Raz'Dash fade into the obscuring fog of time. The Starfather aspect drifted into the Celestial Halls and fell into deep torpor.

Not until many millennia later – well over six thousand years, in fact – did a new patron of the Light appear, this time calling itself Archanon. In reality, the aspect of the Starfather that had so devastated himself before returned to matters of the world, not only fully healed but considerably more powerful and far wiser. Self-aware of his origins, He Who Was Raz'Dash now rectified his past with his present, more completely establishing his unique identity

from what he was once a part of. In doing so, he was able to channel the Light more completely, bringing it to a far wider population of followers.

His presence turned the tide of the Betrayal War, giving the Ascended the ally they desperately needed against the combined might and scheming of Ceynara's host and Vainar's cabal. He remains active to this day, and though not technically one of the Ascended, he plays along in order to keep the cosmological peace.

THE GREAT AND POWERFUL

Though the concept of gods is generally anathema to most citizens of Shaintar, it can be honestly said that beings of godlike power stride the universe and wield impossible power with their very wills. Those few who know the ancient and lost history-before-history can attest to these beings having the capacity to breath life into a world... or crush it utterly.

OF THE TIME BEFORE

What came before the Starfather and the Mother of Night? The cycle of creation begs the question of who or what brought them forth, and only speculation offers any answers. Were they travelers from another cosmos, or merely from stars beyond the night sky? Perhaps they were spiritual entities, much like the Fae, who decided to take on more corporeal existences to further their understanding of life.

Some scholars of cosmology believe the Starfather and the Mother of Night to be the children of gods far beyond the understanding of mortal beings. These gods reside in realities unfathomable to those who reside within normal space and time, creating life and worlds as gardeners plant and sew, and sculptors carve and shape. These two of their many creations stepped into our own reality, seeing nothing but the dark between the bright stars, and set to work.

The truth is elusive, and perhaps ultimately unimportant. What matters is how these two and their children and descendents now move and shape the worlds others reside upon.

THE STARFATHER

At one time, the most powerful being in the known universe, he is now a slumbering titan whose corporeal form lies at the bottom of the deepest oceanic trench of Starfall. The main of his consciousness is dormant as well, though it occasionally touches upon the dreams of the most sensitive and stirs the cosmic sands drifting throughout Corelisia.

LINER NOTES – CORELISIA, THE SPIRIT WORLD

Corelisia is the name of the vast spiritual realm (perhaps better described as a plane of existence) that exists Beyond the Veil from Shaintar and the rest of physical existence. Some refer to Corelisia as the Astral Plane, others call it the Aethereal World, while still others consider it the Land of Dreams. It has many more names as well; perhaps it is all of these things and more.

It is believed that, if one has the means and knows the way, they can travel through Corelisia and go anywhere. Scholars and observationists (those who apply procedures and techniques to examine theories and principles of existence) are aware that there are many other worlds and realms connected to Corelisia. They also know that traveling to these other realms is extremely dangerous, with the chances of returning to Shaintar remote at best.

Though it defies absolute definition, Corelisia is nonetheless of primal importance to the spiritual makeup of Shaintar and its people. It is the inter-connective web between the physical realm and all things mystical and magical, as well as realms that are defined primarily by spiritual laws rather than physical ones (such as the Abyss, the Eternal Forest, and the Celestial Halls). Places such as these may present in physical terms to visitors, but the laws that define them cannot be expected to adhere to the same expectations found in Shaintar or other places where biological existence is the primary form.

Corelisia is not a place where heroes go traipsing about, casually traveling to realms beyond. Experiences within this space should be carefully handled, and are major undertakings. Powerful and alien spirit beings will often be encountered, as well as the wandering spirits of those who never allied with a Power or idea in life (see *Matters of Life and Death* later in this volume). Without vast knowledge or a guide, travelers in Corelisia stand a very good chance of becoming hopelessly lost.

At the time of the Shattering of the Eternity Spire, numerous fragments of his spiritual being – some small, some large – splintered away from his central essence. Not all are accounted for. One is known by a handful to be the entity now calling itself Archanon; this same fragment was, at one time, the radiant god of the Empire of the Golden Sun, Raz'Dash. Another resides in the twisted mind of the Crystal Tyrant, though this fragment is very much in discord with his original essence.

The Starfather was a benevolent monarch, beloved (or at least respected) by the vast majority of the sentient beings he ruled over. He employed an extensive bureaucracy, comprised mostly of his Scions and their Offspring, to administer his

domains. The governors of planets and nations throughout his Empire enjoyed high degrees of autonomy, so long as they never abused their power. His greatest flaw, however, was in seeing the role he and his family played in the grand scheme of things as absolute and irrevocable, such that the “lesser” beings had no reason to ascend beyond a certain level of development and achievement. In the final days of his power, he came to understand this mistake, which he plans to correct should he return to the waking world.

THE MOTHER OF NIGHT

A being of impossible beauty and presence, she was called the Radiant Mother in the days when she was embraced by the Starfather as his soul mate. Treated in every way as his equal, the Radiant Mother was the Queen of the Stars, Empress of all she surveyed.

It was never enough. It could never be enough.

Born from the darkest reaches of the terrifying realm of spiritual Darkness called the Void, she was – is – constantly consumed by lust and hunger. For her, only the totality of reality under her singular control would ever satiate her, and only then as a springboard to reach out to other realities in order to bring them under the eternal Darkness that is born of her being.

She is the living embodiment of illusion, deception, and seduction; that she ensnared the heart and soul of the Starfather is testament enough of that. He named her the Radiant Mother and the Queen of Stars when he fell in love with her. With her, he bore many Scions – children she immediately began grooming to be loyal to her, first and foremost, even as she instilled her lust for power in each of them.

When she destroyed that love through her greed and treachery, the Starfather came to see who she truly was, and forever named her the Mother of Night from that moment forward. He might have remained ignorant of her base betrayals and terrible scheming, ultimately losing all of his empire and power to her as he was cast down, were it not for one single miscalculation on her part.

One of her most clever children was also one of her most noble-minded.

Once called the Hunter, Targon held his father in the highest respect despite all of his Mother’s attempts to undermine the patriarch of the family. Understanding early on what she was about, Targon played along with her scheming and her teachings, acting every bit the loyal son as his siblings of her womb did. The time came, however, just as she was

LINER NOTES – SHAINSTAR AND THE CONTINUUM

The planet of Starfall is part of a greater multiverse called the Continuum, which connects it to the myriad realms of the **Suzerain** meta-setting, as well as places like Morden (the world of the **Accursed** setting) and the strange, war-torn lands of **Battle for Oz**. Many realms have gods and greater beings of varying power, some of which vastly exceed the might of the higher powers that vie for control of Starfall.

For the most part, cosmological laws and forces prevent these universe-shattering powers from overreach of their grasp beyond their own realities. Recently, the **Godstrike Tempest** opened cracks in the seams between deep, dangerous places within the Suzerain multiverse and the Starfall reality; planet-wide storms wracked the lands of Shaintar and elsewhere as beings of unfathomable energy and hunger reached for the tantalizing source of cosmic power that is Starfall.

Though these plans have thus far been defeated, the fact that the Starfall reality is no longer alone in the Continuum is something that cannot be ignored by those who know.

about to launch her most ambitious and nakedly evil plot – Targon cast off his title as the Hunter, instead calling himself the Ranger and outing her and his rebellious siblings (and nieces and nephews) to the rest of the clan.

The fallout was devastating. Radiant Mother no more, the Starfather cast out the Mother of Night from his home and his life. He could not take away her power, and he was unwilling to openly war with her. Sadly, the seeds were planted, and the war he sought to avoid eventually did come, destroying everything his family built in the process.

At the end of that war, as the Eternity Spire shattered, the Starfather finally did lash out at his bride, casting her back to the Void from whence she’d come. In some ways, it was like throwing the salmon back into the river; she’s been gathering power and knowledge ever since, preparing for the day when her loyal children will find a means to return her to the bright stars she once ruled over.

THE SCIONS OF THE STARFATHER

The first generation of children in the bloodline of the Starfather were very godlike in their own right, especially in the eyes of the beings they helped rule over during the time of the Starfather’s Empire. While a majority were born also to the Mother of Night, quite a few came from other mothers who the Starfather mated with, both before and during his time with the one he called the Radiant Mother.

For reasons that might only be speculated upon (certain scholars believe such godlike power in a physical form has a kind of maddening effect), all of the Scions are possessed of a form of monomania. They are driven to select a path of some kind, one imbuing them with a title which supersedes even the name they were granted at birth. This title becomes their very being, setting a course they must pursue completely and with a passionate commitment to absolute mastery. The titles are broad enough to grant a fairly wide array of talents and skills, but if it can be said that the Scions had a weakness, it was this monomaniacal devotion to their personal agendas.

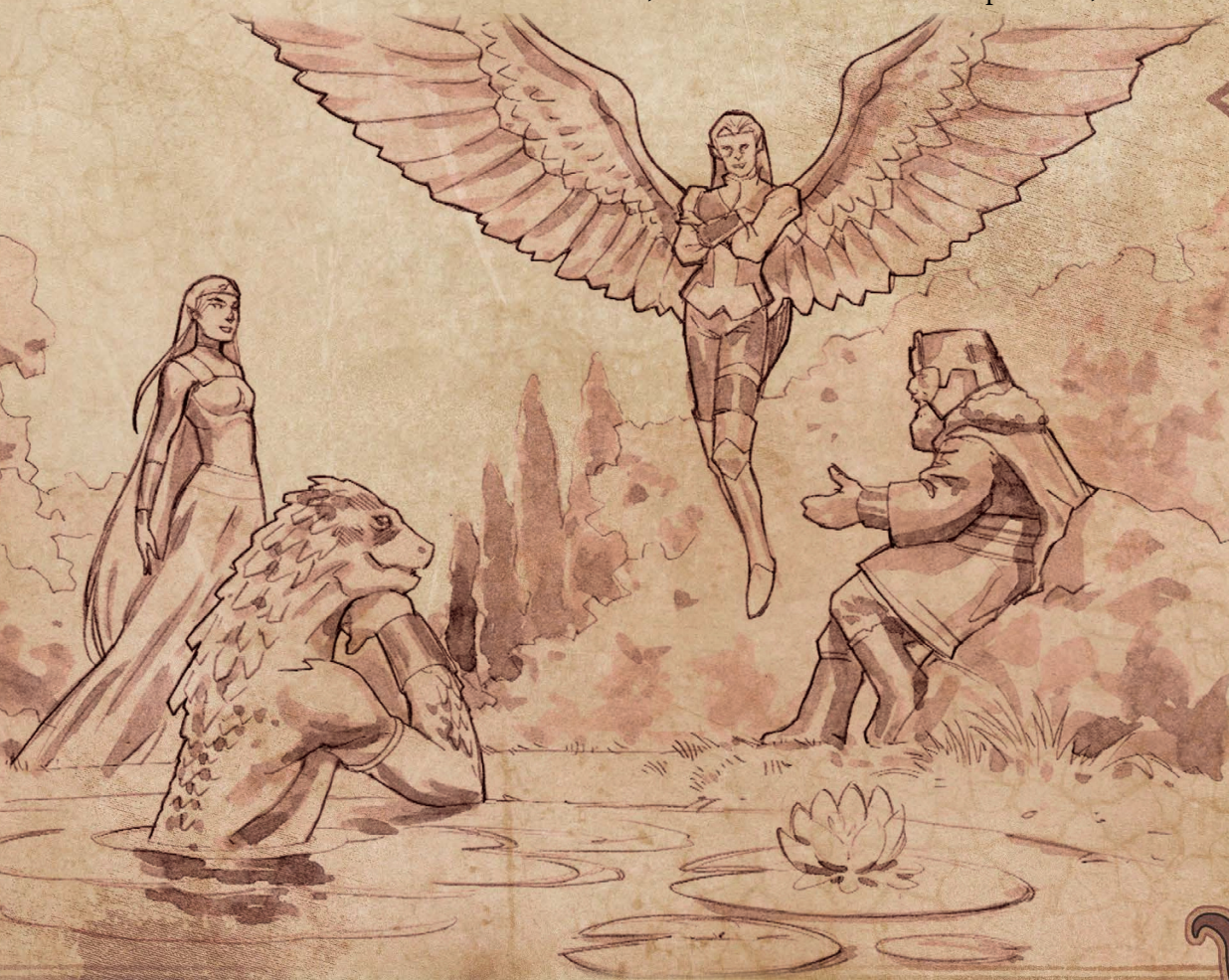
A large number of the Scions sided with the Mother of Night against the Starfather in the War of the Spire, while others either fought ineffectually on the behalf of the rapidly deteriorating Starfather or tried to remain neutral in the conflict. As part of the Shattering, the Starfather ripped the vast majority of the raw cosmic power wielded by his children from their grasp, casting them out of the stars and the surface of the worlds they were closest to. As most were on or near Starfall at the time, attempting to seize the Spire, this is where most of the Scions now reside.

The following is a list of all the known Scions who survived the War of the Spire, along with some basic information. While nowhere near as powerful as they were before the Shattering, each Scion is still a living cosmic force to be reckoned with.

Adam - The Fisher: Adam's mother is a mystery, even to him. He is a peaceful being who remains aloof and apart from all things. Little is known about what his true powers were or are, though at least a few ancient texts indicate he had some influence over Time. He was last seen in a small boat, far out to sea somewhere on Starfall.

Akabar - The Magician: A child also of the Mother of Night, Akabar is credited with bringing the knowledge of the Patterns and other forms of magic to the sentient races of the Starfather's Empire. This was done against the wishes of his father, and he was punished with exile to the farthest reaches of the Starfather's domain. Akabar was one of the first to join his Mother's cause when she launched the War for the Spire. His whereabouts are unknown.

Bern - The Blacksmith: The legends say Bern is the get of the Starfather and an aspect of the Living Mountain, called Brienn. Broad and powerful, his



love of metal and the working thereof was shared throughout the Empire. Loyal always to his father, he fought to preserve Starfall until the end. He is believed to reside with his mother within the Living Mountain now.

Branson - The Actor: Like his Mother, Branson crafted the arts of seduction and deception, and mastery of all aspects of truly becoming another entity became his life's work. He worked throughout the Empire of the Starfather to undermine his father's laws and authority, helping weaken the bonds of trust and functionality that made the Great Bureaucracy work. Legend has it he was buried in yet another role when the Spire was Shattered, and his whereabouts are unknown.

Cellia - The Sage: The collected knowledge and wisdom of the entire Empire was Cellia's to gather and to curate. Her great tower was believed to be the grandest and most complete library in all existence; when the Mother's forces came to raid it, she fought like a bear protecting cubs. In the end, the Sage's Tower disappeared in a flash of incalculable energy; no one knows if it was destroyed, or transported elsewhere beyond the Veil.

Creel - The Engineer: Creel wanted nothing more than to embrace the future possibilities of both magic and technology, taking the creations of the Builders and others and reconfiguring the future in an image of his own design. When his Mother promised him that future, he put his extensive knowledge and vast array of weapons and tools at her disposal. At the time of the Shattering, he was entrenched somewhere in the island-sized city called Citadel, beyond the Mists from Shaintar.

Delemarr - The Counselor: Another of the Mother's children enchanted with the power of deceptive words and schemes, Delemarr also embodied what it meant to be the "Power Behind Power," and he made it a life's work to establish himself as the chief adviser and counselor to anyone and everyone in charge of important places and things. He also became a master of law and how to manipulate it to his own ends. Though allies in the greater schemes of their Mother, the Counselor and the Merchant were often bitter rivals, and it is believed Delemarr was captured and imprisoned somewhere at the end of the War of the Spire by Jarek's agents.

Ellisandra - The Thief: Yet another child truly of her Mother, Ellisandra gained a reputation for being impossible to stop and impossible to catch. Nonetheless, with the help of her son, Evrin the

Operator, the Thief's half-sister Gennera – the Constable – laid a trap for her and finally brought her in to the maximum security prison she built and maintained for the most capable and dangerous criminals of the Empire. It is believed Ellisandra was still in the *Constable's Inn* at the time of the Shattering.

Fayla - The Healer: She brought the knowledge of medicine and related disciplines to the people of the Empire, all with her Father's blessings. Naturally, when the War began, she was on the front lines, helping all she could on either side of the conflict. Though a pacifist, she opposed the Mother of Night in all things; her own mother was said to be one of the greater angelic Fae from the realm of Corelisia that would come to be called the Celestial Halls. It is recorded that she was at her Father's side even as the Spire fell, ensuring his health and survival as best she could to the end.

Fierda - The Architect: Few fought more viciously than Fierda, the Architect and her half-brother, Creel, the Engineer. Where he sought change for the sake of more power and progress (often at the expense of both planets and people), she pursued elegant and homogenous growth that enhanced what was already there. Their battles turned from the philosophical to the forceful as they took sides in the War. Legend has it he devised a trap for her, and her whereabouts are unknown since the Shattering.

Gennera - The Constable: Being in charge of keeping the peace and enforcing the law among the Scions and their Offspring was no easy task, but Gennera was more than up to it. She brokered peace and mediated disputes where she could, but she also knocked a few skulls among her clan over the millennia as well. Ultimately, she built the *Constable's Inn*, a special prison meant to house (and hopefully rehabilitate) the most dangerous criminals of the Empire. No one is sure where it was (some believe it was actually built just beyond the Veil, in a kind of pocket reality), and it – and Gennera – disappeared after the Shattering.

Halligan - The Sailor: Like his brother, Adam, Halligan was among the Starfather's first Scions, there at his side when the Radiant Mother first came to the family. Whether among the stars or on the waves of a planet's oceans, Halligan was always happiest at the wheel of a craft underway. He brought navigation and sailing to the people of the Empire, among other things. Legends say he went sailing in search of the Fisher even as the Spire crashed down from the firmament.

Imeera - The Priestess: Always simpler of mind and desires than most, the Mother of Night coddled her daughter Imeera rather than include her in the early plans made against the Starfather. Imeera literally worshiped both of her parents, creating religion and spirituality among the peoples of the Empire while she was at it. Her Father eventually asked her to put a stop to it, realizing she was also creating sources of conflict and a preference for adulation and desire to be led over taking responsibility for one's actions and needs. This rejection of her efforts broke her, which is when her Mother brought her into the fold. In the end, the spiritual aspects of Darkness became the core of the Priestess' religion, and many believe she had a hand in creating the Nether and the Necrolords. It's also believed she may reside within the Nether even now, hidden since the Shattering.

Jarek - The Merchant: Arguably the Mother of Night's most clever and capable child, the Merchant was far more involved in planning for the aftermath of the War for the Spire than he was in fighting said War. The Scion responsible for the advancement of commerce and business among the peoples of the Empire, resource management and planning became the true passions of Jarek. Part of his brilliance was the early befriending of his brother, Thall, the Seer. The two of them became the most dangerous players in the greatest game of all, the outcome of which remains to be determined. Jarek is believed to be in the lands of Shaintar these days.

Kayla - The Artist: The concept of Beauty and all the forms of artistic expression are the gifts Kayla brought to the Empire; none could challenge her passion, and she wanted nothing to do with the squabbles and trials the rest of her family were prone to. Her mother was said to be a pure Fae spirit of impossible beauty, a spiritual embodiment of passion, which explains a great deal about Kayla. When the Mother of Night's forces ravaged cities and gardens without a care for what was lost, however, she threw down her brushes and took up her carving tools, wielding them for battle instead of creation. She was captured in battle by Rorrick, the Warrior, and she's believed to be his enslaved mate even now, hidden away in a fortress somewhere on Starfall.

Langstrom - The Alchemist: Though not so bitter rivals as the Merchant and the Counselor, there was always a less-than-healthy competition between Langstrom and Akabar. The chief conflict came from each one's claim of having true mastery over the secret powers of the universe. However, where the Magician preferred direct action and demonstration of his powers, Langstrom acted through agents and

followers, letting them demonstrate the efficacy of his creations while he remained safely tucked away in his fortress/laboratory. He is believed to be there still, on a planet far away and cut off from Starfall since the Shattering.

Norvos - The Tyrant: Promised dominion over all the sentient beings of the Empire, Norvos was his Mother's most devout servant in her efforts to topple the Starfather. He led the armies of the Mother in the War of the Spire, speaking inspirational words about freedom for all from the oppression of the Starfather. On the fields at the foot of the Spire, he clashed in single combat with his half-brother, Ollivar, the Knight. He would likely have fallen in that clash if not for Zayne, the Assassin, interfering. As the Spire crashed down around him, he and others were carried away by the powers of the Shaman; he's been licking his wounds and planning his revenge ever since in the Warrior's Fortress, waiting for the Merchant to call him back to action.

Ollivar - The Knight: One of the few Scions ever born to a mortal mother, Ollivar may well represent the best of what humans could be. He defended everything right and moral about the Empire, while always acting as a word of conscience and compassion for his Father. He faced Norvos, the Tyrant, at the base of the Spire. His body was lost in the Shattering, and scholars wonder at what might have ultimately happened to him.

Querres - The Bard: Like his brother, Targon, Querres rejected the teachings of his Matriarch. Gifted with beauty of face and speech from the Mother of Night, and inspired by the collecting of knowledge and wisdom that the Sage undertook, the Bard set out to both collect and share the stories of all the Empire. He considered his purpose noble and pure in its own right, though he ultimately found himself doing what he could to support Targon and Shanais when he learned of their plans as the War turned badly. Legends say he is wandering Corelisia itself since the Shattering, searching for the lost Sage's Tower.

Reanna - The Builder: Reanna has the distinction of being the only Scion not actually born of the Starfather. She was, instead, adopted. The daughter of the same avatar aspect of the Living Mountain, Brienn, who bore the Starfather's son, Bern, Reanna was raised among the rest of the Scions and learned all she could about the universe beyond the Mountain. She fought alongside her half brother during the last days of the War; the two fell in love, and she also resides once again in the Living Mountain with the Blacksmith.

Rorrick - The Warrior: Believed to be unbeatable in combat, Rorrick was known to be the most skilled fighter and the most cruel Scion of them all. Brutal, ruthless, and obsessed with being the greatest at his craft more than any of his siblings, Rorrick reveled in killing his opponents as much as he relished the fruits of victory. He was violence incarnate, prone to berserker fits; he was usually unleashed at the head of the most barbaric hordes and sent to destroy all before him. At some point during the final Battle of the Spire, he found himself face-to-face with Kayla, the Artist, who somehow managed to impress him with her passion-empowered prowess even as he was dazzled by her incredible beauty. Naturally, he defeated her, captured her, and left the field of battle even before it ended to sequester her away in his hidden Fortress.

Shanais - The Druidess: Born of the Starfather and a powerful Fae spirit from the Eternal Forest, the powers of Life have always flowed strongly through Shanais. She was one of the first to suspect the Mother of Night's true nature, which made her an early target for removal as the Mother moved forward with her plans. When Zayne, the Assassin, came for his half-sister, however, he discovered his brother was more than prepared to defend the Druidess. In the green and verdant Forest, Targon was more than a match for Zayne, and the two left the matter bloodily unsettled. Shanais was a key part of the final plan to preserve the magic and beauty of Shaintar when the Spire was shattered, alongside her chosen mate, Targon.

Targon - The Ranger: A planner and a schemer surprisingly the equal of his mother, Targon pretended to ally with her agenda while integrating himself fully with both the Eternal Forest's culture and in the lands of Shaintar, upon Starfall itself. In falling in love with Shanais, he went truly "native" and stood with her and the Starfather as the War for the Spire broke out. While Ollivar led the overt forces that defended the Spire, it was Targon who orchestrated the more covert actions and coordinated with Shayana the Traveler, Saiderin, and his own daughter by Shanais – Celesia – to enact the final plans that might yet spell the return of the Spire and the greater glory of the civilization of old.

Thall - The Seer: Only two of the Starfather's children were ever granted the gift of prophesy and foresight, and neither fared well for the burden of those gifts. Thall, the Seer, is frequently uncertain of which reality he resides in at any given moment; his mind slides between possibilities based on the ever-shifting Patterns of the universe. In order to limit the madness of his state, as well as gain a stronger sense of

surety about his visions, he had Creel, the Engineer, help him construct a citadel floating in the depths of space near a particular Locus, one that anchors him to a limited number of possible futures and enables him to parse his visions with at least some modicum of predictability. More importantly, remaining in his Citadel of Sight grants him greater periods of clarity... and sanity. In helping the Merchant, Thall hopes for a restored Spire that he can directly connect with to gain greater mastery of the future.

Tiva - The Dreamer: The other of the Starfather's children to gain visions of the future (as well as many other things) is Tiva. So terrible was the burden of the endless stream of visions the greater Continuum poured through her mind, she fell into a coma at the age of 12. For all that her body has been comatose and immobile for millennia since, her spiritual form can sometimes be encountered drifting through Corelisia, where she seems to thrive. She avoids contact with most other beings, however, because she fears what her knowledge will do to the paths of those who learn too much about their possible futures. She did try to help her Father during the War, however, and she became a subtle, well-hidden part of the Traveler Enigma plan yet to be revealed.

Toras - The Magistrate: When the War for the Spire erupted, Toras didn't immediately join with his Mother's forces. His decision wasn't one born of altruism or loyalty to his Father, but simply out of his abhorrence for the chaos and disruption of the order of the Universe as he'd striven his whole life for. It was only when Jarek, the Merchant, approached him and convinced him (promising a more orderly and perfect society could be his to mold if only the power were in the rightful hands) that the Magistrate finally took an interest in the outcome of the conflict. He was trapped on Starfall when the Spire fell, where he's built an empire of his own, that of the Steel Cross.

Yulli - The Shaman: The Starfather's love of the weak – his intolerable willingness to boost and support those who could not thrive on their own – drove Yulli to utter distraction. A civilization of billions must be allowed to cull its diseased, malformed, and incompetent from the greater whole; Nature cannot possibly thrive when extraordinary efforts are taken to respect and nurture the weak. For the universe to grow the way it should, the Strong must rule. Yulli believes this with obsessive fervor that even unnerves his siblings, and he fought the War of the Spire with passionate madness. When the Spire fell, he disappeared somewhere on the surface of Starfall.

Zayne- The Assassin: The perfection of a crafted murder is Zayne's greatest passion. Though skilled in combat of all forms, he much prefers ending a life quietly, cleanly, and without his target ever knowing he was there. He had no problems being an instrument of policy for his Mother, so long as she kept him relatively busy with satisfying challenges. She chose to use the Assassin sparingly, never wishing to squander his gifts or give her opponents too many opportunities to learn his methods or a way to stop him. The day came when he was nearly undone, however, by his brother, Targon, the Ranger. That day in the Eternal Forest, Zayne discovered fear as well as defeat. He's not been seen since.

THE OFFSPRING

While the Scions are the first generation of children born of the Starfather, the next two to five generations (depending on the strength of the Starfather's blood in a particular line) are considered his Offspring. Offspring are never as powerful as their Scion parents, though some achieve rather impressive might, prowess, or talent in their own right.

While Offspring are not subject to the monomania of their parents, they often choose a pursuit for which they become very well known. Others are more complex beings, serving grand schemes and great purposes. Still others go about their lives and personal pursuits, either oblivious to their potential or not caring to get involved in the games and schemes of their sires.

Some of the known Offspring are –

Arkus the Battle King: Son of Rorrick the Warrior, Arkus seeks to exceed his father's achievements. He strives for combat excellence, but also for mastery of battle at the tactical and strategic level. *See Shaintar: Legends Unleashed, page 141 for more information.*

Ceynara, Queen of Hell: She could have been her father's redemption. Instead, Ceynara embodied the cruelty of Rorrick, the Warrior, with plenty to spare.

The Crystal Lord: Once known as Julian the Opportunist, the son of Thall, the Seer, the being now known as the Crystal Lord is the vessel of a particularly corrupt aspect of the Starfather. *See Shaintar: Legends Unleashed, page 144 for more information.*

Dranak the Stonewalker: The Ascended of Earth is also the child of Bern, the Blacksmith, and Reanna, the Builder. He was the natural choice for his position among the chosen of Shanais and Targon.

Evrin the Operator: The Constable's most favored son, Evrin continues to work for her in the aftermath of the Shattering. He works tirelessly to uncover and oppose the Merchant's many schemes. This gives some reason to believe Gennera hasn't truly disappeared, instead having gone into hiding. *See Shaintar: Legends Unleashed, page 146 for more information.*

Galena the Clever Tinker: Another Offspring influenced by her parent, Galena follows in the footsteps of Creel, the Engineer. She is far less avid about changing the universe, however, preferring to simply examine, experiment, and invent for the sake of it. She's no altruist, but she's not necessarily anyone's enemy, either. *See Shaintar: Legends Unleashed, page 147 for more information.*

Harkor ki Doman, Emperor of the Kal: The son of Norvos, the Tyrant, and Imeera, the Priestess, Harkor the Endless is arguably the most ambitious – and most insane – of any of the Offspring. *See Shaintar: Legends Unleashed, page 148 for more information.*

Illiana the Waverider: Illiana's mother was clearly a dregordian of some great merit, for her father is Halligan the Sailor. Scholars who know this truth argue constantly about how it could even be possible.

Landra the Soulfinder; Saiderin the Interloper; Vainar the Fallen: The three siblings who arguably most shaped the earliest days of Shaintar (and the parts of Corelisia most closely connected to it) call the ephemeral Dreamer their mother. This, of course, begs the question of how, and who the father is...

Shayene kes Harkor, the Emperor's Judgment: Daughter of Harkor and one of the most feared assassins in the known world. Some in the know whisper about who her teacher may be. *See Shaintar: Legends Unleashed, page 152 for more information.*

Zavonis the Windmaster: The Ascended of the Sky's hard and judgmental demeanor can be attributed to his being the son of Toras the Magistrate. Fortunately, he has far more noble aims than his father.

There are many more Offspring scattered all over Starfall, and many of them quietly go about their business within the realm of Shaintar. Most have a means of navigating the Mists of the Veil in a fashion that permits them to come and go across the surface of Starfall with relative security. Relative, but not perfect – more than a handful have been lost in space and time to the utter chaos of the Mists.

CELESIA, THE SILVER UNICORN

Two Offspring require a deeper examination in this work, for they are the two most important individuals in the whole of Shaintar for many different reasons. Saiderin – brother to Vainar and Landra, son of the Dreamer, and the chief architect of the final plan that preserved Shaintar in the wake of the Shattering – is one.

His partner and his mate, Cesia, is the other.

The only daughter of Shanais and Targon, Cesia is the vessel into which the two Scions poured all of their greatest hopes and dreams for the future. She also carries a significant amount of the Starfather's energy, a reservoir he specifically granted her in his last moments before his fall.

In many ways, this made her the living symbol of Hope itself, as well as the spiritual embodiment of what Shaintar represents to the rest of the universe. She is easily the most powerful Offspring in existence because of this link to the lands and the people of Shaintar, yet this also makes her peculiarly vulnerable to great cataclysms and changes on a regional or continental scale.

Cesia is primarily a being of Light; she is her grand-sire's granddaughter in all the most beneficent aspects he exhibited. She embodies not only Hope, but the concepts of Community, Justice, and genuine Good. Her destiny has always been to keep these concepts safe and strong, bringing them forth into Shaintar as it grew and developed in the aftermath of the Shattering of the Spire. Like her parents, and a handful of other Scions and Offspring who were brought into the Traveler Enigma plan in the final days of the War, she became a willing tool towards a grand, difficult goal.

Unlike the Starfather, Cesia has enormous confidence in the capacity of the average mortal being. Rather than merely shepherd them through their days from birth to ending, she feels they must be uplifted and given primacy over their world and their lives. She strives to inspire, focusing in equal measure on heroes to defend and artists to create. She worked in the earliest days of Shaintar to help create language and laws, community and compassion. This is why her image is so prevalent in books, art, on the walls of ancient cities, and in random places throughout the wilderness of the land.

In the Fae, she saw the capacity for beauty both fleeting and eternal, and through them she worked to ensure all forms of expression and communication



flourished. The dwarves were the keepers of lore, ancient and newly discovered, and she did all she could to make certain not all forms of scientific and technological progress was lost to Saiderin's bitter antagonism against the Builders.

Celesia worked subtly among all the other races, looking for ways to encourage their gifts towards a greater good. Dregordians showed the way towards discipline and order for common cause; the goblinish were natural masters of collective living and mutual support; the brinchie were beacons of passion and the urge to live each day with purpose.

There is even a popular legend (recounted in many bard songs and at least one play) that the Silver Unicorn walked with Kor during his journey across Shaintar, both guiding him and learning all she could about his nature. Some believe she is the one who pointed out the island that would one day bear his name, and it is said she believes the Korindians are the conscience of the rest of the sentient beings of Shaintar.

Finally, she worked to instill all of these exceptional qualities in the humans, who she saw as the ultimate expression of the Future that Might Be. In 2390, she encouraged the skilled eldakar philosopher and diplomat, Cyria Eridor, to travel east into the human-dominated lands that would eventually become the Kingdom of Galea; the purpose was to find a noble, strong leader who would unite the lands and lead to what would one day be the Southern Kingdoms. The Silver Unicorn had learned the power of long-term planning from her beloved Raven.

For all that she's spent much of life inspiring hope and seeding the garden of the land she was given to nurture, Celesia has also established Shaintar as her protectorate. Though she's always had to husband her resources, lest she leave herself too vulnerable to the many enemies who would seize any opportunity to unmake her and her plans, the Silver Unicorn is as much a warrior as she's a nurturer when the circumstances call for it. In the days before Landra's Covenants, she fought and slew more than her fair share of Necrolords and Demon Princes on the fields of Shaintar.

Because she resides primarily in the Eternal Forest (at the insistence of both her parents and her mate, and the rest of the Ascended besides), she is subject to the Covenants; for this reason, she's more likely to choose promising beings to act as her champions in Shaintar instead of acting directly. At times, however, she will be seen walking the forest pathways or standing atop a high peak in Shaintar itself. Though

the Covenants affect her, her unique tie to Shaintar grants her far more leeway in time spent in the living and breathing world, and what she can still do there.

When she is seen, she has two forms she prefers. Most often she is encountered in her eponymous equine form – shimmering silvery-white coat, with shiny argent mane, tail, and fetlocks. Her eyes are a pale blue-silver, and of course, she has a glittering white-silver horn. Light emanates from her whole being as a soft glow.

Her other form is that of a pale, luminous female, usually of human or Fae presentation. However, she's been known to present herself in the form of every race of Shaintar, and can transform into any living being she chooses at will. Most often, her hair, long and flowing, is the same as her mane in unicorn form, and she has the same pale blue-silver eyes. She tends to prefer blue and green colors for what clothing she chooses to wear.

SAIDERIN, THE RAVEN

The Wanderer. The Interloper. The Guide. The Weaver of Infinite Strands. Saiderin bears all of these titles and many more besides. He also bears the burdens that come with each and every one of them.

It is said that no being loves Shaintar more than the Raven; when one realizes that Saiderin is deeply in love with Celesia – the living, breathing spirit of Shaintar itself – this truth is impossible to argue. Celesia convinced him of the rightness of her parents' plan to shelter a part of Starfall and preserve many of the races that would otherwise be lost in the final cataclysm, even though it meant binding her own spirit to that part of the world to enact the plan. Once convinced, Saiderin was forever committed to protecting Shaintar at all costs.

As a long-range planner and schemer, the Raven is nearly the equal of his uncle, the Merchant. With the War for the Spire drawing to its terrible, inevitable conclusion, Saiderin helped convince the Starfather of the viability and value of Shayana's plan to restore the Spire, even though it meant scattering her spiritual essence across Starfall (trapped within the broken remains of a stone tablet he asked Dranak to carve). He had a key role in much of the final strategy, convinced that its ultimate conclusion would one day release his beloved Celesia from the bonds she undertook to protect Shaintar.

Aside from his love for Celesia, Saiderin's most driving motivation is his desire to avoid what he holds to be the mistakes of his family's past. More succinctly, he is driven by three convictions:

His hatred of the machines and technology of the Builders, which he holds primarily responsible for the destruction of the Starfather's Empire and the loss of billions of lives.

His love of Life – Nature, Sky, Earth, and Sea – and what he sees as a more natural, more spiritual, and more magical way of existing that is superior to the Time Before the Shattering.

He believes that the mortal races produce beings of exceptional quality and potential, and that the heroes of these people should be the front line champions of Shaintar and of Starfall.

Acting in accordance with these convictions, the Wanderer spends countless hours and days seeking out those who will actively stand against the forces of Darkness and Flame that threaten his beloved land (and, thus, his soul mate). He also promotes the aspects of Life his sister and her Ascended companions stand for; he honors and respects Light, too, though he leaves the majority of its promotion to the Silver Unicorn and Archanon.

In the earliest days of Shaintar, as the Mists of the Veil took hold of the rest of Starfall and the chaotic energies of the Shattering remained incoherent and malleable, the Weaver of Infinite Strands worked his most powerful ritual of magic ever. He wove what came to be known as the Raven's Cloak, a field of cosmic energy that concealed Shaintar from the rest of Starfall and the universe beyond. The Cloak permeates the Patterns and the parts of Corelisia that touch directly upon Shaintar; while it does nothing to prevent creatures of Darkness of Flame from seeing and interacting with Shaintar, it *does* hide Shaintar from even more dangerous and alien entities from much farther away.

At the same time, the Cloak spatially shifts certain elements out of normal reality in Shaintar. This includes the vast majority of crysarium embedded in the earth and stone of the lands, as well as the Filaments of cosmic energy that flow across the land and sky, and the Locus points where they intersect. Not surprisingly, the Cloak also actively shifts the ancient Builder citadels, factories, and other edifices out of Shaintar's reality, making them all-but-impossible to discover.

At least, this *used* to be the case. The Cloak, however, is failing. Over the last couple of years, its energies have waned significantly, first resulting in the increasing presence and awareness of the Filaments and Loci. As well, vast crysarium deposits have been discovered, oftentimes in long-active mines (and more than a few thought to have otherwise been played out).

LINER NOTES – “By the Feather and the Horn!”

This is perhaps the most common oath in the Southern Kingdoms, whether spoken in passion or used as a commitment of one's word. It's a testament to the importance of both the Silver Unicorn and the Raven to all who respect Life and Light, and who cherish the lands of Shaintar for what they are.

Both are guides and guardians, choosing heroes and champions among the strong, the talented, and the courageous of Shaintar in order to protect the lands and their people from threats without and within. Those selected by Celestia gain the effects of *Chosen of the Horn*, as presented in *Shaintar: Legends Arise*.

Saiderin, despite his best efforts, grows ever more connected to the spirit realm of Corelisia. As he does, he becomes more bound to the very Covenants he aided his sister, Landra, in conceiving and implementing. Though this now hinders his direct interventions to a small degree, it also enables him to select his own champions in a fashion that results in their receiving boons related to his patronage. This status is called *Chosen of the Feather*, and grants the following per-Rank boons:

Novice: +1 to Spirit rolls

Seasoned: +1 to any roll (Trait or Damage) when spending a Benny

Veteran: +1 Initiative Card (stacks with Level and Improved Level Headed)

Heroic: Draw and play one additional Adventure Card per session. If Adventure cards are not used, the character may declare a single Trait roll per session as rolling an automatic Ace result on both dice.

Legendary: Spend a Benny to invoke the effect of the Interloper Adventure Card (All Allies gain +1 to all rolls for the rest of the scene or combat). This stacks with that card if it is also played. As well, when said Benny is spent, all Shaken Allies are become unshaken. This effect can be used multiple times per session, but only once per scene.

As limited as their spiritual reserves are, it's exceedingly rare for a single entity to find they are the Chosen of both.

With the failing of his Cloak, Saiderin has been scrambling to deal with the consequences, trying to prepare Shaintar for what is coming. He knows the Builders are now back, mostly due to their capacity to reclaim their homes and factories, as well as to access the now-revealed bounties of crysarium. He's fairly certain that's what's drawn the Merchant and others of his extended family from beyond the Veil into the lands of Shaintar, as well.

Immortal and powerful as he is, the Raven is also ancient and drained. He's exhausting himself as he works day and night to offset the gains of those he

sees as Shaintar's enemies. This makes him irritable and hard to deal with sometimes. It also makes him vulnerable.

Like Celesia, Saiderin is most often encountered in one of two forms. Usually, his presence is known when an abnormally large raven is seen in the area, or huge raven feathers are found floating down to the ground. Though a true raven's voice is little more than a growling caw, the Raven lets out a piercing raptor cry when he makes his presence known (perhaps his one true bow to vanity).

In exceedingly rare instances, Saiderin might be encountered in his Faelakar form. Dressed in pale green or tan robes, he has a strong, powerful build. He also has long, flowing, raven-black hair and eyes as green as emeralds. His features are immortally beautiful, but those few who can say to have seen him in most recent times say there's something "off," as though he were carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders.

He is.



LINER NOTES – USING THE OFFSPRING IN THE STORY AND GAME

The Scions are walking Plot Devices; they simply are not meant to be encountered in any fashion where the PCs should be in any direct conflict with them. For those GMs and players wishing to go for such a conflict, guidelines for "statting up" a Scion can be found on Page 112 of *Legends Unleashed*.

That's also the section where you find the Offspring template, used to create any such entities for your game. As a general rule, it's a Bad Idea to have Player Characters as Offspring, unless you are really ready to delve into a more superheroic style of game. Having said that, I've experimented with a couple of Legendary characters awakening to their Offspring nature over time. I do so by allowing them to spend Level Ups (remember, at Legendary, it's once every ten XPs) to take an Offspring Template ability in the following order:

Advanced Form.

Immortal.

Hardy.

Blood of the Starfather, the first Power. Use *New Power* for additional such Powers later.

Inherent Gifts, the first Power. Only after at least three Powers are taken for *Blood of the Starfather* may *New Power* be used to take another *Inherent Gift*. Offspring should always have half-again as many *Blood Powers* as they have *Inherent Gift Powers*.

Most often, Offspring function as exceedingly tough and capable opponents, often sent against the most powerful Heroes who are interfering with their Scion patrons' schemes; Arkus the Battle King (Page 141, *Shaintar: Legends Unleashed*) is a prime example of such a threat, as is Shayene (Page 152, *Unleashed*). By the time a hero group is facing Offspring, they may well be entering the end game of whatever major story arc the GM had planned all along. Alternately, interacting with Offspring may simply represent moving well past the boundaries of a typical Shaintar campaign and entering into Beyond the Veil territory.

Saiderin and Celesia represent a different kind of Offspring encounter, that of patrons and guides, capable of gifting heroes with great benefits while embroiling them in terrible circumstances. In many ways, they represent the Gandalf-and-Galadriel entities as presented in the *Lord of the Rings* movies – mysterious and challenging, encouraging the heroes to work out how best to deal with the terrible threats they face.

At one time, Saiderin was one to dive in with staff and spell and fight alongside those he guided; time, and the increasing demand on his body and soul, have put such days behind him. This is why he now gifts some folks with his *Chosen of the Feather* blessing.

THE ASCENDED

The elevation of the beings known as the Ascended represents the demarcation between the Time of the Shattering and the birth of the realm called Shaintar. All part of the grand plan of the Starfather, Shayana the Traveler, and Saiderin, the Ascension was a powerful symbol of their belief that the time of the Scions was over, and the elevation of mortal, less godlike beings was the key to a better future.

Rather than standing as gods over the lessers below, the Ascended were installed as both gatekeepers for the powers that some might call upon for need or for improving their world, and as guardians against those forces determined to shape Shaintar for their own, less noble (or downright evil) goals. Mentors, patrons, and protectors, the Ascended were meant to be a part of better future envisioned by those still reeling from utter disaster.

The loss of Vainar and Ceynara forever altered the balance, and the four who stand now do the best they can in a cosmos that challenges them at every turn.

LANDRA, THE SOULFINDER

The Covenants will always be Landra's most profound legacy, ensuring once and for all that the mortal beings living in Shaintar (and elsewhere in Starfall) would be allowed to chart their own destinies without the constant threat of civilization-ending powers being unleashed upon them. Her conception of this powerful cosmic weaving upon the Patterns (aided by her brother, Saiderin) was nothing short of brilliant, and her willingness to forever tie herself to this concept was an act of enormous personal sacrifice.

When Vainar let himself be consumed by Darkness and Ceynara allowed the Flame to turn her into a demoness warlord, the lands of Shaintar were constantly devastated by wars fought with apocalyptic powers. Knowing a simple barrier seal would never stand against such might, she instead worked out how to tie a flexible, reactive Pattern seal to the immortal essence of an Ascended; after that, it was a matter of convincing the three remaining Ascended – Zavonis, Dranak, and Illiana – to expend significant quantities of their own personal reserves to raise her up and help her with the final binding.

She walked away from life and family to forever be tied to her place as the Lady of the Eternal Forest. Her role as the Seal of the Covenants restricts her among the Ascended most of all. Worse, with the weakening of the Veil and increased incursions not

only from the Abyss and Nether, but from other parts of the Continuum besides, she must remain constantly vigilant with her management of Life energies, spiritual forces, and mystical shields to protect Shaintar as best she can.

This is the love Landra has, boundless and resolute. Her love for her brother, Saiderin, and his mate, Celesia, drove her to Ascend in his place when the time came. Her love for what is good and vibrant and living in Shaintar drives her to struggle eternally to protect it all as best she can. Fortunately for all of Shaintar, the Love of Landra is one of the most powerful cosmic forces in all existence.

ILLIANA, THE WAVERIDER

Though not common knowledge, most learned scholars are aware that there are only two races truly native to the continent of Shaintar – humans, and dregordians, which originated in Shaintar by all evidence. Naturally, when the time came to choose an Ascended for the Path of the Sea, she who would be the Lady of the Boundless Sea and mistress of all its power, the Offspring daughter of the Sailor was the only true choice.

The mystery of how a Scion's daughter is a full-blooded dregordian can only be relegated to the mercurial cosmic forces at work within the children of the Starfather. Illiana's father gave unto her a divine spark, but the nature of her biological being derived solely from whoever her mother was.

Illiana is the most serene of the Ascended, the epitome of a dregordian who long ago calmed her Beast. She is resilient and flexible, as one who is of water might be expected to be, yet she is indomitably strong and relentless when she is moved to act. Illiana also seeks to inspire acts of creativity and the pursuits of enlightenment wherever she can; while this is especially true among her own people (who continue to need such things most, she feels), Illiana takes great effort to show favor to all beings as she can.

Granted, her main areas of influence are the seas surrounding Shaintar, as well as the rivers and streams that flow through the lands. Sailors, boatmen, fisher folk, and those who live on the shores and by the grace of the water's bounty are her closest and most devoted adherents. Those who travel by way of river or ocean often beseech her for calm waters (though they know to also petition Zavonis for fair skies – but not *too* fair – as well).

As well, those facing trials of strength, whether they be of body, mind, or spirit, sometimes find a connection with the Waverider at the most critical moment. This is especially true if such a trial has an outcome that is important where the Tenets of Life are concerned.

Illiana is a warrior every bit the equal of Dranak and Zavonis, yet she is usually the one urging calm and diplomacy wherever possible. She was the first of the three to accept Landra's proposal for the Covenants, and she often lends her strength to the Soulfinder to reinforce the Seal.

DRANAK, THE STONEWALKER

If any were born to their role in the cosmos, Dranak was. The son of the Blacksmith and the Builder, Dranak is the archetypical dwarf in every imaginable way. Sturdy, strong, resolute in every decision to the point of intractability, and often bordering on perverse in his morbid fatalism, Dranak is at the same time joyous and full of life at the most somber and disastrous moments.

The Lord and caretaker of the Living Mountain takes his duties seriously, though he delights in taunting Zavonis with the idea that he does not. His domain is the very foundation of the lands of Shaintar, in a cosmological sense. He husbands the power and the strength of the Eternal Mountain in order to ensure the eternity of world.

The Stonewalker's influence is strongest in the hills, mountains, and underground realms, though where any stands on a patch of earth or stone, they might feel Dranak's resolute support if they stand for Life. Health and sturdiness of mind, body, and soul are his main concerns for the beings of Shaintar who fall under his protection. He is also a source of support for anyone facing a challenge to their resolve, or who must endure a trial of great length or immense pressure.

Naturally, he is closest to the dwarves of Shaintar, but he seeks to be a source of support for any who revere the Tenets of Life. Though he certainly grants no support to those who invade and destroy the lands of Shaintar, Dranak has an obvious and natural connection to the Builders. Those who reject the road of conquest and warfare often find they have a new spiritual patron in him.

Along with Zavonis, Dranak is the most active in direct conflicts with other Greater Beings and outside forces that attack Shaintar (and Starfall). He's the most likely to suffer the consequences of the Covenants if he feels a particular moment of action calls for it.

ZAVONIS, THE WINDMASTER

The Lord of the Endless Skies may well be the most aggressively dedicated of the Ascended, sometimes to the discomfort and frustration of his compatriots. Zavonis is his father's son, and while he does not have the amoral ruthlessness of the Magistrate, he does possess the passionate determination to uphold his goals and agenda, suffering little in the way of opposition or obstruction.

The Windmaster was among the wave of winged fae entities to transform themselves from spirit beings in Corelisia to the physical aevakar that took up residence in Shaintar. He is believed to have been, in fact, one of the first, leading others to follow the Faelakar who had otherwise given no thought to invite their angelic cousins in the grand experiment of biological existence. His parentage doubtless had a great deal to do with his ambition and his leadership.

Zavonis draws upon the Endless Skies for his power, and his influence touches all beings, albeit in a more ephemeral and subtle way than the other Paths. The alacrity and speed of body, mind, and soul are influenced by the Windmaster's Path, and he is often considered a patron of anyone in need of swift resolutions or rapid transport.

At the same time, the fury of storms are his to draw upon, and he does so with relish and wrath whenever he feels the situation calls for it. Like Dranak, he is a warrior-minded entity who sees himself in constant battle against the enemies of Shaintar. It is said he flies through the far reaches of Corelisia, on constant patrol for new threats. He urges this same vigilance in all who revere him and call upon his blessings.

One thing the Windmaster does very rarely is manipulate or interfere with the weather patterns of the world. He learned early on the potential devastation of such actions, and thus he tends to act only in very small ways if at all.

THE REALMS OF THE ASCENDED

Each of the home planes of the Ascended – the Eternal Forest, the Boundless Sea, the Living Mountain, and the Endless Skies – is a highly idealized manifestation of one of the Four Paths. As with all things in Corelisia, these places may present in physical forms to those who have opportunity to visit them, but they are constructs of pure Essence rather than simple matter.

In other words, the Living Mountain is the essential and spiritual concept of earth and stone, given form,

LINER NOTES – WHAT ARE THEY REALLY DOING?

With the prevalence of the Raven and the Silver Unicorn in the lives of the heroes of Shaintar, it seems that the Ascended themselves are mentioned rarely and in normally distant terms. Though they do choose some rare folks to grant Blessings to (see above), for the most part they appear to be apart from most day-to-day matters within Shaintar, even during many crises that might otherwise call for their involvement.

For example, the people of Shaintar wondered often – and loudly – about where Zavonis was during the Thundering Skies events, spawned by the Godstrike Tempest. The whole of Shaintar was covered in hurricane-level storms; where was the Windmaster, and why did he and the other Ascended not interfere in this?

The answer is – they did! Zavonis, Dranak, and Illiana led their spiritual forces directly into battle with alien hordes of Tempest monsters and the godlike beings that mastered them. Landra weaved powerful rituals of protection and healing, locked as she was in the Eternal Forest. Ultimately, wounded and exhausted, the Ascended and their forces successfully defended Shaintar and the region of Corelisia that surrounds Starfall, even as great and dedicated heroes fought mightily against other forces determined to bring violent entropy to the world.

This is the lot of the Ascended, more and more. They struggle against the increasingly dangerous powers of the Continuum even as Saiderin, Celesia, and their Chosen do all they can in Shaintar itself.

rather than mere rocks and soil. The Boundless Sea is the Sea incarnate, rather than simply water and waves.

These are places of power, and they breath that power into Shaintar and the rest of existence as the four aspects of Life. Not only does this provide druids and others with gifts of magic, it brings vitality and energy to the very foundations of existence. If ever one of these four realms were to fall to something like Corruption or the entropy of Flame, a weakness would permeate existence that would ultimately lead to infirmity and death (or worse) for all.

Most of those beings who reside in the Realms of the Ascended are beings inherently of those places – animals and fairy beings in the Eternal Forest; sea creatures in the Boundless Sea; avians of all manner in the Endless Skies; and creatures of the deep earth and the high peaks of the Living Mountain. Those who have an affinity for Life will find their way to these places when they pass; some will choose one locale and spend their eternity there, while others may travel freely among them all as best suits.

Those who serve tend to gardens, create and repair structures, husband creatures, and combat evil and dangerous forces from throughout Corelisia and far beyond in order to ensure the safety and vitality of their homes. Some are occasionally sent into the mortal world for a time to aid in particular quests and situations that threaten the physical and metaphysical worlds alike.

OF THE LIGHT

Though the Power of Light has been present for as long as everything else, a lack of a present and active champion left it unknown and of far lesser impact than Life, Darkness, and Flame for a very long time. All of this changed at the end of what is now known as the **Betrayal War** (see Page 137, Shaintar: Legends Arise), when the being known as Archanon presented himself in full to the people of Shaintar. To begin with, he had only a handful of priests and paladins as adherents in the world, but he had rather vast resources to call upon from the Celestial Halls as well.

ARCHANON, LORD OF LIGHT

Though he recalls his existence as a part of the Starfather entity, the being that is now revered as Archanon fully inhabits and embraces this new singular identity. His journey began as a fractured, aimless spiritual shard of a god, sheared off at the moment of the Shattering. His essence would have faded to nothing had angels of the Celestial Halls not found him and carried him to safety in the tumultuous and destructive chaos that rocked all of Corelisia in the aftermath of the end of the War of the Spire.

Healed and nurtured by the pure essence of the Light, this Starfather shard set out almost immediately to do *something*. He did not fully understand what the Light was, only that it was a kind of benevolent power he thought to bring to the world and somehow make things better again. He was but a fraction of the whole he once knew, driven by guilt and regret and a need to act somehow. The beings of the Celestial Halls were also driven by a desire to serve – in the truest sense, they were created by this need (see below) – so they followed this broken but determined being that they sensed was meant to lead.

The Lord of Light first reached out to the people of the Empire of the Golden Crown, the great civilization of the earliest days of Shaintar. He became Raz'Dash, the God of the Sun and the Lawgiver. In his name, the rulers of the Empire sought to bring all the lands

of Shaintar under benevolent and civilized rule, lifting the still-refugee peoples in other parts of the continent out of despair and barbarism.

Sadly, the impetus of power and rule overshadowed the benevolence intended; in Raz'Dash's name, bringing order evolved into subjugation, and then slavery. The earliest Demon Lords tricked many of the Light's followers into worshipping them for strength and mystical might, while the First Thirteen of the Nether also managed to corrupt many powerful and influential leaders of the Empire. Because the Lord of Light had set out from the Celestial Halls too soon, he was not powerful enough to truly oppose these new enemies. A war erupted between his forces and those of both Flame and Darkness, and this war brought a terrible and catastrophic end to the Empire of the Golden Crown.

Wounded from battle as well as his utter failure, the Lord of Light retreated to the Celestial Halls. There, he healed again, but he also studied, meditated, and sought understanding and enlightenment to ensure he did not repeat his mistakes. The beings of the Celestial Halls closed the gates and hid away with him, retreating from the rest of existence for a long while. In this way, they erred again, for without their resources and guidance, Ceynara was left floundering in her search of understanding of the Light.

The day finally came when the Lord of Light sought to once again reach out to the mortal world. After some study of the current circumstances, he decided to use a different tactic; he reached out to the Grand Archcardinal of the Prelacy of Camon in the guise of Archanon, using visions and divine inspiration to lead the man to a kinder, gentler Church. Sadly, the forces of Darkness and Flame once again interfered, taking direct advantage of the schism this new Archanon entity was creating in the Church. Thus began what came to be called the Betrayal War.

Ultimately, it resolved in victory, in no small part because the Lord of Light fully embraced his role as Archanon

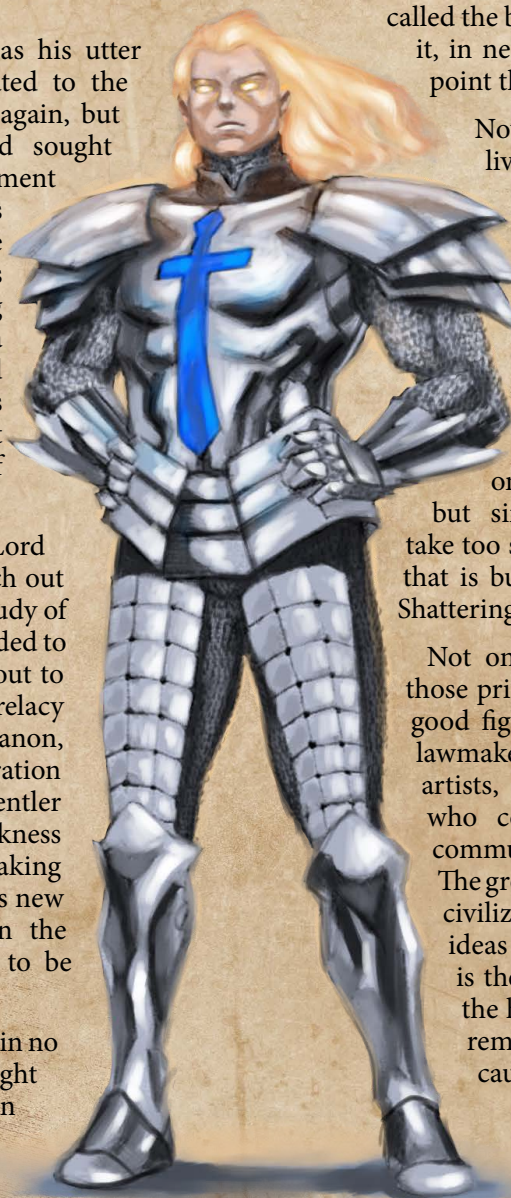
and brought Light to new followers all over Shaintar. Thus began both the Church of Light and Archanon's very real presence in the mortal world once again.

Archanon now fully understands what the Light is, and he recognizes how intricately it is tied to the very will of the living people of not only Shaintar, but throughout the mortal plane. That which sustains and powers him is, in turn, fueled by the primal desire of sentient beings for order, community, justice, law, and a demarcation of right and wrong that represents a benevolent society in which they desire to live.

In other words, he is the primary manifest symbol of the gestalt of what the majority of thinking beings see as Good. This gestalt long ago coalesced in the dream-stuff of Corelisia as the Celestial Halls (*see below*), and it turns out this gestalt construct called the broken shard of the Starfather to it, in need of the very leader and focal point that Archanon has become.

Now Archanon seeks not only to live up to that which he was called to embody, but to ensure that the necessary flow of energy from faith in and desire for Good continues to sustain the Halls. He understands the symbiotic relationship at work, and he also understands the very real danger to that relationship if the forces not only of Flame and Darkness, but simple greed and self-interest, take too strong a hold on the new world that is building in the aftermath of the Shattering.

Not only does he work to empower those priests and paladins who fight the good fight; he seeks to inspire leaders, lawmakers, community builders, artists, builders, and anyone else who contributes to creating strong communities and benevolent societies. The growth of mortal societies towards civilizations that embody positive ideas and maximum benefit for all is the only path he can see to avoid the horrific disasters he will forever remain convinced he is guilty of causing.



THE CELESTIAL HALLS

As described above, the location in Corelisia now called the Celestial Halls is a gestalt manifestation of the desire of sentient beings for the greater concepts of Good. The coming of the Lord of Light gave it even greater structure and purpose, and it now appears to travelers and those who reside there as a great city in a field of golden light, with shining edifices of white marble, silver gates, and golden arches and pathways.

LINER NOTES – MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Corelisia is made up entirely of spiritual energy, usually referred to as Essence. Just as advanced science presents that all things physical are ultimately broken down into the building blocks of molecules, atoms, and quarks (or even smaller units, perhaps), so are all things metaphysical in Shaintar ultimately constructs of Essence in one form or another.

Thus, the spark of life that exists in all living things is a concentration of Essence focused into that living thing. As the entity grows, so does the Essence within them. When living things die, that Essence is released back into Corelisia. If the entity in question was what we would call sentient (a thinking, self-aware creature), then that Essence usually retains cohesion and purpose - it is a soul.

There are many things that might happen to a soul once it is released into Corelisia. This almost always depends on the beliefs and practices of the being whose soul it is. Some souls (if they never really knew what they believed) might wander and explore Corelisia for any amount of time, discovering untold possibilities, or perhaps nothing at all - depending, it would seem, upon their state of mind and desires. Others - those who followed very specific paths and beliefs - will likely meet similar souls and other spirit guides to help them find the place or places they seek upon their passing.

Those allied most closely with Life will almost certainly find their way to one of the realms of the Ascended, while those who revere the Light will find themselves in the Celestial Halls. For such spirits, there is rest and celebration, but there is also service. Some will take up the call of combating powerful spiritual enemies, where they risk their immortal forms to diminished cohesion, or even outright obliteration if they aren't careful. This is the ultimate expression of bravery, to risk your very eternity.

Then there are the souls of those who ally themselves with more sinister and evil forces. Depending on their standing and the favor their "gods" may show, they could find themselves made into the images of powerful spiritual beings within the realms of those they served. More than likely, the baser and least among them will find their spiritual energy simply consumed or perverted to some darker or more devilish purpose, and they will be forever subjugated (if they are lucky) or utterly destroyed.

There are two kinds of residents of the Celestial Halls. The first are essentially the natives of the realm, those spiritual beings that were first called and drawn to the shining city of dreams. A significant population of winged spirits - of the same type as those that went on to become aevakar in Shaintar - took up residence in the Halls, and they came to be known as Angels. As well, many thousands of fallen warrior spirits from conflicts and wars from time immemorial drifted to the Halls, seeking to serve in death as they had in life. These transformed into the Celestial Wardens. Both of these entities tend to be the ones sent by Archanon into the physical world - albeit briefly - to help where the need is greatest.

The second form of resident in the Celestial Halls is that of the Rewarded - those spirits for whom the Halls are a pure and simple kind of heaven. Many find a form of service or activity that fulfills, while others simply abide as beings of peaceful thought or passionate inspiration.

CHAPTER 2: POWERS OF LIGHT AND LIFE

This chapter delves more directly into the lives and experiences of those that deal directly with Light and Life, either as practitioners who channel or invoke these Powers, or who live their lives closely intertwined with the mystical bonds created through alignment with the Powers. In other words, this is where we deal with the game elements and other important aspects of being someone tied to Life or Light.

LIFE

Life is Essence Embodied, directed to a purpose of physical and spiritual design. It is the beating heart of a child, the flow of a river through a green-and-gold plain, and the air breezing through a stony valley into the lungs of a young miner strolling home. Life is the spirit within living things, the divine spark that defies pure entropy and chaos in favor of birth, growth, and the orderly change of passing on.

In simplest terms, Life is the benevolent Power of living existence across the universe.

Life gives meaning to the living, yet it is also given meaning by those who understand and choose to define it. This is where the Four Paths come from - the gestalt-driven categorization of the recognized elements of Life. From the earliest days of thinking beings seeking to examine their existence beyond mere survival, Life has been broken down into the

LINER NOTES – THE ESSENCE OF EXISTENCE

Essence is the mystical foundation of the universe. It is believed that all living things are infused with a discrete portion of Essence, and that sentient beings are the ones who have such Essence that has become aware of itself. This is the very crux of Life itself.

If one were to touch raw, unadulterated Essence in its purest form, they would receive such a rush of warmth and energy that they would be forever changed. Unfortunately, such an experience could accidentally kill a being, or drive them mad, for Essence in such a state is energy in its most potent form, full of unlimited potential. Pure Essence was never meant for fragile beings born of flesh.

This is why users of magic must learn ways and means to access Essence in a manner that is safer and more manageable. Those various approaches are the subject of this book and its companion volume.

However, as studied and quantified as Essence is, it remains at its heart a great mystery that will likely never be truly understood in its fullness by anyone. It is, after all, magic...

Air that is breathed, the Water that is drunk, the Earth that is stood upon, and Nature that provides vegetation and animals for food and shelter.

Modern scholars – especially observationists – make convincing arguments for how Life *should* be more complexly evaluated, categorized, and presented. The Power of Life, however, responds just fine to the mental and spiritual constructs used to interact with it based on the simple Four Paths, providing little compunction to change things. The eldest and most learned druids are happy to explain that Life needs no definition – only those who interact with it do – and it is happy to deal with mortals as they need it to.

DRUIDS

Those who are called to reach out and truly connect with Life are most often called druids (though the terms *shaman*, *wise one*, and *healer* apply in less civilized areas). Some are born to the Paths, learning from childhood how best to serve Life and the world around them. Others come to the walk of a druid late, inspired and touched by the flows of Life in a way that leads them to take up the calling.

The majority of druids study under and work with others of the same training, most often via the auspices of the Druidic Council at Mindoth's Tower. Banding together for mutual support, consistency of training, and to influence political matters in favor of the goals of Life, the Druidic Council tries very

hard to balance unity of purpose with individuality and freedom of personal pursuits in matters of Life and the world.

There are plenty who walk the Paths of their own accord, however. Some were tutored by independent druids of greater experience, while others simply worked out the magic of Life on their own (though often with spiritual guidance from Life spirits and faerie beings). Though many more orthodox druids might believe the single best way is to follow the guidance of Mindoth's Tower, there really isn't a truly right or wrong way to channel Life, so long the basic tenets of the Paths are adhered to.

BEGINNING DRUIDS

For those just beginning their walk as a druid, starting with a d4 in the Channeling Skill and no AB, these rules apply. Called an **Initiate**, the character selects a single Power from the available Novice choices. They are considered to be practicing with this Power, and it will become one of the two they begin with once they finally achieve the *Druid Edge*.

They *can* use this Power, though with great difficulty. First, they cast as per the *No Power Point* Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds Deluxe*. If they succeed, they must make an immediate Spirit check at the same penalty or suffer a Fatigue level. If they fail, they suffer an automatic Fatigue level and must roll their Spirit to avoid a *second* Fatigue level!



LINER NOTES – OBLIGATIONS: THE FOUR PATHS

The *Druid Professional Edge* refers to the *Hindrance, Obligations (Major: Four Paths)*. Formally trained druids come to know these as expressed below:

We shall be as the Sky, bringing succor and aid to all in need, no matter where they are. Like the storm, we shall rain down wrath and ruin on the forces of Darkness and Flame, and like the gentle breeze, we shall rejuvenate the lands and the people.

We shall be as the Sea, bringing strength and sustenance to all in need, and like the River, we shall reach the near and far places. We shall be implacable against our foes, but fluid and adaptable as situations and reason call us to be.

We shall be as the Earth, resolute and solid, giving foundation to all in need. We will hold fast against the forces of destruction, be unchanging against the temptations of corruption. We will be firm for those who call upon us, and embrace them with the armor of our will and our ways.

We shall be as Nature, life-giving and soul-nurturing to all in need. We will nourish as the Green does, enliven as the animal realm does, and brace the spirits of those who love Life with its warmth, its energy, and its eternity.

Initiates may never use a Power beyond its most basic capacity; *Bolt* may only be cast as a single 2d6 missile, and *Boost Trait* may only affect a single target. As well, no Raise effects are possible.

If an Initiate chooses *Succor* as their practice Power, the Power may be used up to its full effect. Those choosing *Healing* may elect to automatically suffer a Fatigue level when casting; this eliminates the penalty for casting as an Initiate (though Wound penalties still apply). Initiate Healing can *only* heal wounds (not remove poison or disease).

DRUID TRAPPINGS

Druids in Shaintar enjoy **Fluid Trappings**; this means they do not have to select game-affecting Trappings when choosing a Power, and may instead apply the Trappings they wish at the time of channeling a gift. The following are some clarifications and additional Trappings for Druids:

Breath of Life: Any beneficial gift channeled upon another may also bring them relief from the Power of Life. For a single added Essence, any target or targets of a Power like *Boost Trait* or *Armor* or *Healing* may have *either* their Shaken status removed *or* one Fatigue level removed. The druid must have the *Succor* Power for this Trapping to be used.

Everwood Summoning: The Powers of *Bolt* and *Smite* can be transformed into manifestations of Everwood. Each *Bolt* cast this way costs +2 Essence, and transforming a wooden weapon (such as a club, staff, or batch of arrows) into Everwood via *Smite* costs +3 Essence.

Living Wood: The last line for this Trapping only applies to offensive Powers that have either a Duration or a lasting effect. Getting a raise against the Entangling aspect will not “avoid” damage.

In addition to the **Cold/Ice** and **Electricity** Trappings from SWD, the *Deafen* effect from **Sound** is also available (as a thunderclap).

POWER CLARIFICATIONS

The following Powers need a bit of alteration to work more in keeping with visions for Shaintar. **These modifications can be considered to apply to all spellcasting types, not just Druids.**

Fly: For Druids, the Fly Power is redefined to allow a base Pace of the caster’s Spirit x2, or Spirit x4 for double the Power Points. The Greater Fly effect for High Magic *doubles* these values. *Note that other spellcasting types will base the Fly Pace on whichever Attribute applies to their spellcasting (Smarts or Spirit as appropriate).*

Greater Healing: Druids can also use this Power to try and heal a mind that has been permanently affected by Fear. Use the same rules for healing Permanent Crippling Injuries. This use of the Power cannot be used for any Hindrances that were taken at character creation; this only works for Phobias that are incurred in play, or to get rid of the Mark of Fear.

Growth/Shrinking: Growth may only be used to increase a creature’s Size five steps total.

Shape Change: Because verbalization and the capacity to perform articulate gestures is necessary, Druids cannot cast while shifted into an animal form. They *can* maintain spells they’ve already cast.

Smite: A weapon with *Smite* cast upon it is considered magical for purposes of affecting creatures that require magic to be hurt, and similar circumstances.

Summon Ally: Druids can only summon those beings listed as Life Spirits in the Shaintar books.

FAMILIARS

A somewhat popular idea in Shaintar, further experience with the incorporation of druid Familiars indicates some clarifications and adjustments are in order.

First, *all* Familiars are considered **Life Touched**, which means they are a step above the more common varieties of their species. Very specifically, this means they do *not* have the (A) designation next to their Smarts; they are considered sentient and of normal intelligence, rather than “animal intelligence.” Life Touched is related to Soul Bright, and a Life Touched creature may, in fact, ultimately manifest as a Soul Bright being. If a druid keeps the same Familiar until they reach Legendary Rank, their companion may then fully manifest the Soul Bright advantages.

LINER NOTES – FAERY COMPANIONS

As the Veil recedes a little more each day, the reclusive faeries have discovered they must choose to be in the world or not. Some few who choose to remain among mortals are willing to select a druid to share their gifts with.

While a faery companion may be *considerably* useful, it's important to note that they are exceedingly curious and not particularly wise about the ways of the world. They will often get themselves into serious trouble, and drag their druid companion with them into it.

Faery Companion

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d4-2, Vigor d4

Skills: Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Tracking d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 3; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities

Aerobatics: +2 to Agility rolls to perform aerial maneuvers; -1 to be hit by Ranged if unencumbered.

Faerie Magic: Faeries gain *Cantrips* and *Legerdemain* Powers automatically, and have access to the Druid Powers List (Novice Powers only) as they develop. They use their Spirit as their casting roll, and use the *No Power Points* Setting Rule from SWD.

Flight: Wings allow flying at Pace 6

Low Light Vision: Fae ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

Size -2: Fairies are tiny, barely over half-a-foot tall.

Small: Attackers subtract 2 from their attacks to hit.

PS – GMs who hate me for this can blame **Ross Watson** for convincing me they were missing.

Soul Bright actually needs some adjusting as well. Rather than building a Soul Bright creature as a Novice character, instead assume it is a Novice and then give it five Level-Ups to Seasoned Rank. If the creature is from a lesser Rank than Heroic, level it up further as appropriate; a horse should be leveled to Veteran, a wolf to Heroic, and a cat to Legendary.

Finally, treat all Familiars as Allies for purposes of experience. Rather than track points for them, just roll a d6 at the end of any session they are a part of; on a 5 or 6, they gain a Level Up. They may take Rank-restricted Edges based on the druid's Rank.

BLESSINGS OF THE ASCENDED

Though druids are the most connected to the Ascended, there are a few who – channelers or not – embody the virtues and goals of a given Ascended so strongly that they gain that Ascended's Blessing. Game Masters should award only one of these to any given character, and only to characters (druid or not) who clearly honor and revere a specific Ascended and act in accordance with that Ascended's nature and desires.

*Special thanks to Raven's Flock member, **Howard Brandon**, for suggesting and coming up with the various Blessings that appear in this book.*

The Blessings of Dranak, Stonewalker, the Scholar, the Maker, the Lord of the Living Mountain: Those chosen by Dranak epitomize the skill and knowledge of the Dwarves, gaining Dranak's Inspiration (+1 to all Knowledge rolls, and +1 to Repair rolls). They also gain the Durability of Stone (gaining +1 to Vigor checks).

The Blessings of Landra, Soulfinder, Healer, Protector, Lady of the Eternal Forest: Those selected by Landra embody Life itself, gaining Landra's Touch (+1 to all Healing attempts, magical or otherwise), and Landra's Embrace (+1 to Spirit rolls).

Blessings of Illiana, Waverider, Wise Poet, Calming Mediator, the Relentless, the Lady of the Boundless Seas: Those who are touched by Illiana gain Illiana's Voice (+1 to Persuasion rolls), Illiana's Peace (+1 to resist Taunt, Intimidation, Fear, and Puppet), and Illiana's Welcome (+2 to Swimming and Vigor checks in water).

Blessings of Zavonis, Windmaster, the Watcher, the Swift Traveler, the Storm King, Lord of the Endless Skies: Those chosen by Zavonis to watch over Shaintar gain Zavonis' Sight (+1 to Notice checks), and Zavonis' Swiftiness (+1 Pace). They also gain +2 to resist negative effects from weather.

LIGHT

Light is most easily described as Essence Intensified. While Life is the benevolent aspects of primal existence at work in the world, Light is the Power that represents the will of sentient, conscious thought imposed upon the world in some way. Specifically, it is the gestalt of most living beings desiring order, justice, and general good in their existence. The cosmic battery that is the foundation of Starfall coalesces and magnifies this collective will into real, usable energy.

This Power has always been, but not always has it been active; the history in previous sections covers this in greater detail. The omnipresence of white silver is the clearest indicator of the force of Light having some impact throughout Shaintar's history, but only in the last century or so has Light truly been actively known as the "Fourth Power." In that century, however, Light and its adherents have done a great deal to make up for lost time.

The collective will of benevolent sentient beings ensures that Light is oriented towards defending against the enemies of innocent people, as well as attacking and destroying the monsters and demons that would plague the realm. Light is not a subtle energy, instead manifesting in bright displays and celestial music. While those who follow Life tend towards a gentle and quiet interaction with that Power, the followers of the Light are given to grand displays, overt acts, and great speeches. Light will defend all, attack when necessary, and always inspire.

PRIESTS

Though there are always unique stories and exceptions, the vast majority of those who follow the road of a priest do so as a matter of choice, determination, study, and training. Most often, a priest is someone who grows up in the Church, either born to a member of the clergy or ecclesiastic staff, or as a member of the Church. They are raised with teachings and philosophies of the Church, and they undergo training to become a priest fairly early in life.

Others may come to the calling of a priest later in life, often through some epiphany or powerful and affecting experience. Not a few are converts from the Church of Archanon; seeing the wrong of their leaders and their fellow faithful, they often literally see the Light and take up its calling. Though they must still undertake some form of training and (if they choose to seek an official role within the Church) education, such converts often enjoy a fairly rapid integration.

LINER NOTES – CHURCH OF LIGHT TITLES AND HIEARCHY

Based on history, tradition, and the real needs of structure and organization that the Church requires to function, there are a number of roles and titles that a member of the clergy might take on and ascend towards.

Novitiate: Students in the first part of their education and training for the clergy of Light are known by this rank.

Predicant: The first rank of the Church, indicating someone who has taken up the calling and the study to serve the Church in a priestly capacity. It should be noted that there are no racial or gender restrictions for any rank in the Church of Light. Predicants are very often seen as minor functionaries in every facet of the Church's structures and operations.

Deacon: Those who have no desire to take on the full vestments of the clergy, yet seek to serve the Church in logistics, bureaucracy, and other facets, may be named Deacons. They are not considered on the ascending ladder of service in the hierarchy, and may well have other another profession or calling they attend to as well.

Curate: The next official rank above Predicant is that of Curate. Anyone who is actually empowered with Light is of at least this Rank once they fulfill basic training and education. These are the lower leaders of the Church, though some simply set out to bring the Light to the rest of Shaintar and never look back.

Monk, Friar, Nun: There are a number of special orders that have developed over time, either as offshoots of orders that exist in Camon, or utterly independent of general Church structure. Some may be found within Archanaya, but most are scattered throughout Shaintar. Their members are generally outside of the core Church structure, using the ranks indicated as needed. They are generally considered equivalent of Curates.

Vicar: The next official rank in the Church structure. Vicars are often the highest ranking priest in a town or village, or else they fulfill important roles in the bureaucracy of the Church.

Bishop: Bishops are often found as the highest-ranked priest in a large town or small city, and they head departments within the Church's structure.

Archbishop: Regions are tended to by Archbishops, who also see to most of the high offices within the Church and handle many diplomatic and political duties.

Cardinal: There are six Cardinals, overseeing the highest offices of the Church. There is a Cardinal of Education; a Cardinal of Works; a Cardinal of the Treasury; a Cardinal of Outreach; a Cardinal of Justice; and a Cardinal of Defense.

Patriarch/Matriarch: The person who leads the Church in all things, which is currently His Excellency, the Most Holy Liam O'Brannagh. The title changes as appropriate to the gender of the office holder.

The vast majority of those who find their way into the service of the Light make the pilgrimage to Archanaya, the city-state that is the sovereign home of the Church. Unsurprisingly, the city is run by the Church's hierarchy, much as is true in the Prelacy of Camon. Archanaya, however, is greatly beholden to the Southern Kingdoms, vastly reducing the chance of that particular history repeating itself.

There are also churches, temples, cathedrals, compounds, and shrines scattered throughout Shaintar, mostly within the Southern Kingdoms. Anyone seeking the comfort and security of the Light will find it in one of those places, and an increasing number of priests and paladins are receiving their education and training in such locales. There are also still a few groups – primarily in the Eternal Desert – who revere Archanon's Raz'Dash persona, and he's chosen to let quite a few of them experience the Light via that more ancient practice.

LINER NOTES – OBLIGATIONS CHURCH OF LIGHT

The *Paladin* and *Priest* Professional Edges refers to the Hindrance, *Obligations (Major: Church of Light Tenets of Faith)*. Formally trained members of the Church come to know these as expressed below:

In the name of the Light, we shall Protect all who cannot protect themselves from the forces of Flame and Darkness, as well as those who simply act out of selfishness, greed, and malignancy.

In the name of the Light, we shall seek the forces of Flame and Darkness where they are, and we shall drive them out of the lands and the world.

In the name of the Light, we shall bring Justice to those in need of it, avenging the wrongs done to good and decent beings while ensuring law, order, and civilization are protected against crime, chaos, and anarchy.

In the name of the Light, we will oppose oppression and tyranny; though we honor law and order, we shall never let these be used as tools of subjugation or abuse against innocents and free beings.

In the name of the Light, we shall work to make the world around us a better place, free from fear and pain, full of hope and promise. We dedicate our bodies, minds, and spirits to these goals, always and in all ways.

BEGINNING PRIESTS

Novitiates – those with just a d4 or d6 in their Faith Skill and who do not have the *Priest* Edge – are able to practice with one of the Powers available to Novice priests. Like druid Initiates (*see above*), they choose one of the two Powers they are going to have when they do finally take the *Priest* Edge.

They may attempt to use that Power with their Faith Skill, using the *No Power Points* Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds Deluxe*. If they succeed, they must make an immediate Spirit check at the same penalty or suffer a Fatigue level. If they fail, they suffer an automatic Fatigue level and must roll their Spirit to avoid a *second* Fatigue level!

Novitiates may never use a Power beyond its most basic capacity; *Armor* may only provide +2 protection, and *Healing* may only remove 1 Wound. As well, no Raise effects are possible.

As well, *Healing* as a Novitiate cannot remove disease or poison. Novitiates *can* cast with an added -1 penalty to gain the Illumination Trapping (from Shaintar: Legends Arise).

PRIEST TRAPPINGS

Priests in Shaintar enjoy **Fluid Trappings**; this means they do not have to select game-affecting Trappings when choosing a Power, and may instead apply the Trappings they wish at the time of invoking a miracle. The following are some clarifications and additional Trappings for Priests:

Holy Ward: For any benevolent ongoing Power, the priest can choose to replace the normal Raise effect with the effect of *Arcane Resistance*, as per the Edge.

Illumination: If a player *elects* to make Illumination a permanent part of a given Power (meaning each time it's invoked, *Light* always happens as well), there is no added Essence cost involved. For example, if *Armor* will always have the *Light* effect on it when invoked, it only costs 2 Essence.

White Silver Invocation: The Powers of *Bolt* and *Smite* can be transformed into manifestations of White Silver. Each *Bolt* cast this way costs an additional Essence, and transforming a metal weapon (such as a dagger, sword, or batch of crossbow bolts) into White Silver via *Smite* costs +2 Essence

POWER CLARIFICATIONS

The following Powers need a bit of alteration to work more in keeping with visions for Shaintar. **These modifications can be considered to apply to all spellcasting types, not just Priests.**

Bless: With the change to *Boost Trait* in *Savage Worlds Deluxe*, Bless needs an upgrade. The cost for the Medium Burst Template version is only 3 Essence, while the Large Burst Template version costs 5. Additionally, it only costs 1 Essence to maintain it past the initial duration.

Curse: Apply the same modifications as for *Bless*.

Divination: Priests cannot use this Power to determine information about the future, though it *can* be used to gain celestial advice about a possible course of action. On the other hand, those of the Celestial Halls are genuinely well-disposed to the faithful; they don't tend to be particularly cryptic, and if they can conceivably answer a question about another being, no opposed Spirit roll applies.

Light: Remember that the *Light* effect from a priest counts as sunlight, which is particularly bad for certain beings of Darkness.

Summon Ally: Priests can summon those beings listed as Celestials in the Shaintar books, as well as the Bodyguard and Sentinel entities listed in the core rules.

PALADINS

The Church of Light has a small standing army, located in Archanaya. As well, most temples are encouraged to have their clergy train in basic combat, and in more dangerous areas, they are authorized to hire respectable mercenaries.

However, the true defenders of the Light are those priests who also pursue a martial path, and those who are called as paladins of the Light. These men and women may train as soldiers to serve the Church, or they may have been on a completely unrelated path in their life when they were called to the Light. However it happens, such people become firmly committed to the Church of Light and the tenets of the Celestial Halls, ready to fight evil wherever and whenever it strikes.

There is the formal Order of the Paladins of Light, headquartered in Archanaya and headed by the Cardinal of Defense. A second, smaller faction of paladins – the Justicars of Light – directly serve the Cardinal of Justice. The former order is primarily focused on defending the Church and its faithful, as well as seeking out the forces of Flame and Darkness and combating them. The latter group is trained in the laws of the Southern Kingdoms, and they are highly revered as judges and mediators.

There are many paladins in service to Archanon and the Light who never even see the walls of Archanaya, having found their walk with the Lord of Light in their own way. As well, there are quite a few roving priests who also become paladins, and paladins who discover such an affinity for the Light that they begin invoking miracles as a priest. When encountered, these “paladins at large” are usually just as revered and respected as any who trained in Archanaya.

BLESSINGS OF ARCHANON

Priests and paladins are not the only ones the Lord of Light and his servants find worthy of patronage and support. Many good and honorable people who revere the Light and its principles do so with only conviction and courage, rather than formal training or a specific calling. These individuals might well find themselves blessed.

The Blessings of Archanon, Lightbringer, Holy Guardian, the Defender of All: Those who embody the virtues Light are blessed with Archanon's Might (+1 damage rolls vs Flame and Darkness), Archanon's Grace (+1 to recover from Shaken when facing the forces of Flame and Darkness), and Archanon's Conviction (+1 vs Fear, Intimidation, and *Puppet*).

